



Islamabad POST

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Fortifying front lines must be accelerated: President Zelensky

Detailed News On Page-08

Orban urges EU-Ukraine strategic ties

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Rafael Nadal says he will return Brisbane

Detailed News On Page-06



As truce collapses

Israel massacres over 109 Gazans

Palestinian Presidency holds US responsible for Israel's resumption of aggression on Gaza

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: The Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip has entered its 56th consecutive day with the renewal of Israeli airstrikes and shelling on Friday morning, following the temporary humanitarian ceasefire that lasted for seven days amidst demands for a comprehensive halt to the Israeli genocidal war. The number of people killed in Israeli attacks since the expiration of the truce has now reached 109, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health. Hundreds of people have also been wounded. The Israeli army resumed its bombardment of Gaza this morning, targeting residential areas and refugee camps across the densely populated territory. Ashraf al-Qudra, spokesperson for the Ministry of Health in Gaza, has appealed to "every living conscience" to allow the opening of the Rafah crossing amid an "extremely catastrophic" humanitarian crisis. "The medical aid that entered Gaza during the truce is only enough for one day," al-Qudra said in a statement. "The health sector in Gaza is out of service in every sense of the word," he said. There are only three hospitals functioning in Gaza which are not equipped to receive a large number of patients, he added. His comment came after Israeli air attacks resumed after a fragile seven-day truce, killing at least 70 people in a few hours. Medics are struggling to help patients who are piling up on hospital floors amid a shortage of beds. PM Pedro Sanchez tried to defuse tension between Spain and Israel during a call with Israeli war cabinet member Benny Gantz. On X, Sanchez said in the call with Gantz he reaffirmed that Israel is a partner and friend of Spain. "Israel has the right to defend itself against this terrorist attack, but I reaffirmed that Spain finds the death of civilians in Gaza unbearable and that Israel must comply with international humanitarian law," he wrote. Gantz also said on X that he had emphasised to Sanchez the "terrorist Hamas must be

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Qatar urges rapid int'l action

DNA

DOHA: Gulf emirate Qatar, which mediated the weeklong Israel-Hamas truce, urged on Friday swift international action to stop the resumption of Israeli violence in the Gaza Strip. The Qatari Foreign Ministry, in a statement, said it stresses that continued bombing at the end of the pause "complicates mediation efforts and exacerbates the humanitarian catastrophe in the Strip, and ... calls on the international community to move quickly to stop the violence." It added "its condemnation of all forms of targeting civilians, the practice of collective punishment, and attempts to forcibly displace and displace citizens of the besieged Gaza Strip, and its demand for an immediate cease-fire." Qatar has been engaged in intense negotiations, with support from Egypt and the United States, to repeatedly prolong a truce in Gaza that had lasted a total of seven days after two extensions. The agreement was designed to be continued if Hamas could release 10 hostages per day. But after the truce expired Friday morning, the Israeli army said its combat operations had resumed. Late Thursday, eight more Israeli hostages were freed under the terms of the deal. Qatar's Foreign Ministry confirmed negotiations between Israel and Hamas "are continuing with the aim of returning to a pause." The emirate added it

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Briefs

CM Naqvi opens Dadhocha Dam

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi Friday officially inaugurated the construction of the Dadhocha Dam in the Rawalpindi region. A special inauguration ceremony was held at the site, about 25 km away from Rawalpindi while Syed Mohsin Naqvi laid foundation stone of the project as a chief guest. Later, he inspected the ongoing progress of the dam in detail. According to sources, the project estimated at Rs 12 billion marked a significant step towards fulfilling Rawalpindi's increasing demand for water after its completion.

Bugti not in favour of summoning ex-army men

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti believes summoning former army chief (ret'd) General Qamar Javed Bajwa and former Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) DG (ret'd) General Faiz Hameed for investigation in the 2017 Faizabad sit-in case would not be beneficial for the country. "Moving forward is always in the interest of Pakistan," he said during an interview 'Doosra Rukh' which will be aired later today.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

ECP to issue polls schedule this month

However, the ECP notified the final list of delimitation of constituencies

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) said Friday that the much-anticipated schedule for general polls would be issued 54 days ahead of the February 8 elections - expected to fall in the third week of December - as the political temperature in the country soars. In June, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government amended Section 57 of the Elections Act to give powers to the election organising body for fixing a date general election date, while defining the timeline of procedures from the announcement of the polls' schedule till the polling day, which is about 54 days. During an informal conversation with journalists, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja was asked when the commission would release the election schedule. In response, he said: "Count 54 days backwards from February 8." The CEC mentioned that the updated constituency lists had been released, and all other election prerequisites were being completed smoothly. He said the ECP has been proactively handling election-related responsibilities ahead of schedule.

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Al-Azizia: Nawaz Sharif appeal fixed

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday fixed for hearing former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme leader Nawaz Sharif's appeal against his conviction in the Al-Azizia reference on December 7. The National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) appeal to increase Sharif's sentence has also been scheduled for hearing. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mian Gul Hasan Arangzeb will conduct the hearing, Express News reported. The capital's high court had admitted applications for the revival of Sharif's appeals against his conviction in

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£190 million NCA: NAB files reference against Imran

Other suspects named in reference are Imran Khan's wife, PTI leaders Zulfi Bukhari, Shahzad Akbar, says lawyer Zia-ul-Mustafa Nazeer

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Friday filed a corruption reference against former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife and other suspects in the £190 million settlement case. According to DNA News, the reference was filed by NAB's Deputy Prosecutor General Muzafar Abbasi, along with investigative officer Umar Nadeem, in an accountability court in Islamabad. The registrar office is examining the reference. Apart from Imran Khan and his wife, other suspects named in the reference are PTI leaders Zulfi Bukhari, Shahzad Akbar, lawyer Barrister Zia-ul-Mustafa Nazeer and three others. In total 8 people have been named in the reference. The filing of the reference comes days after the federal cabinet gave the go-ahead to conduct the jail trial of the PTI chairman in corruption cases. According to media the cabinet summary, moved by the Ministry of Law and Justice, was approved via circulation. The anti-graft watchdog had requested the ministry to allow the trial to be held in Adiala jail considering the law and order situation.

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Bilawal Bhutto takes dig at Nawaz Sharif

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Friday that by discarding the outdated ways of thinking, people would have to be made stakeholder in economy and politics. Addressing the Balochistan High Court Bar Association in Quetta, Bilawal said he fully realised grief and pain of the Baloch people. "We will have to introduce a new era of politics," he said. The PPP chairman said, "We will move forward eliminating by politics of hatred, division and ego. Insha Allah the PPP will form new government. First of all, we will give Baloch people their rights." He said when Asif Zardari launched Haqooq-e-Balochistan (rights of Baloch people) programme, it was a victory of the people living in

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NATIONAL DAY OF THAILAND

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Umar Saif, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Ambassador of Thailand Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Dean of Diplomatic Corps Mohammad Karmoune, Ambassador of Morocco and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Thailand. - DNA

COP28 PM represents Pakistan in opening session

Invites Dutch firms to invest in Pakistan

DNA

DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has attended the opening session of the World Climate Action Summit. On this occasion, he held informal talks with various world leaders including British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and the Prime Minister of Denmark Ms. Mette Fredrickson.

Related news and pictures on Back Page

Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar also held informal conversation with British King Charles III on the occasion of 28th Conference of the Parties in Dubai. Meanwhile, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar held a meeting, today, with President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of Maldives Mohamed Muizzu on the sidelines of the high-level segment of COP 28. He also met Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte wherein he invited the Dutch firms to invest in agriculture, horticulture, water management and renewable energy sectors of Pakistan.

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Pak asks Kabul to take steps against terrorists

No Kakar-Modi meeting planned on COP28 sidelines in Dubai: FO

ANSAR A BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has once again asked Afghan authorities to take immediate and effective steps against terrorist entities operating from their soil. At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad today, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch voiced concerns over the presence of terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan. She said these terrorists continue to attack Pakistan and cause loss of life. The spokesperson said Pakistan desires to have peaceful and friendly relations with Afghanistan. We have great sympathies with our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan who have suffered a great deal because of difficult humanitarian and security situation. She said Pakistan has advocated

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Pakistan bound by UN conventions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Ayesha A. Malik on Friday observed that Pakistan was bound by the United Nations conventions that protected the rights of refugees. She passed these remarks as a three-member bench of the apex court took up a petition seeking restraining orders against the caretaker government's decision to deport illegal Afghan nationals. The bench also comprises Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Yahya Afridi. In November, the government initiated a

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Mushaal briefs UK MPs on IIOJK rights abuses

Mushaal Mullick briefed the parliamentarians about human rights abuses by the Indian government in the occupied valley

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick Friday attended a meeting of cross-party British Parliamentarians, convened by Member Parliament, Chairperson APPG on Jammu & Kashmir, Debbie Abrahams at a virtual platform from London. Besides British Parliamentarians, members of the civil society and human rights organisations also participated in the virtual debate, which circled around the state of human rights affairs in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Mushaal Mullick briefed the parliamentarians about human rights abuses by the Indian government in the occupied valley. She particularly raised

the issue of gross violations of human rights against women and children in IIOJK. The special assistant urged the international community to take notice of the treatment of minorities, particularly the forced conversions of the Christian and other minorities under the RSS ideology, inside India. Mushaal said that Kashmiris were deeply concerned over attempts to alter the demographics of IIOJK. She urged the world for making suitable efforts to resolve longstanding issues of Kashmir according to UN resolutions and aspiration of people of the held valley. She called upon the international community to uphold international human rights obligations and help implement the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions on Jammu & Kashmir. She strongly urged the British Parliamentarians to play their role more actively in halting human

rights violations and repealing draconian laws including demographic engineering in IIOJK. Mashaal said that her husband Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Yasin Malik was a political prisoner and had been languishing in the Tihar Jail, India for years. "Their young daughter has been deprived of meeting her own father and she was seriously concerned about the health and well-being of Yasin Malik", she added. She expressed reservations that Yasin Malik would be awarded a death sentence against his appeal scheduled for hearing early next month. She appealed to the UK Parliamentarians to raise their concerns over this injustice. Mushaal thanked the participants for inviting her to speak to the British Parliamentarians and human rights activists through APPG-Kashmir forum.

87 new cases of dengue in Punjab

DNA

LAHORE : Punjab remains in the clutches of the dengue virus with 87 new cases reported on Friday. The latest health department data reveals a total of 14,258 confirmed cases in the province. Lahore leads with 6,494 cases followed by Rawalpindi, 2,626, Gujranwala 1,512, Multan 1,365, and Faisalabad 842. The situation persists with Lahore reporting 44 new cases, Rawalpindi two, Gujranwala 20, Multan five and Faisalabad 13 cases. Additionally, Sheikhupura, Sahiwal, and Jhang each reported one case within 24 hours. Currently, 94 Dengue patients receive treatment in various hospitals with 53 in Lahore district hospitals. Health Secretary Ali Jaan Khan urges citizens to maintain clean surroundings and cooperate with health teams combating the outbreak. For Dengue-related assistance or complaints, a free helpline is available at 1033. Vigilance and proactive measures are crucial to end dengue in Punjab.

Dow University of Karachi starts MBBS, BDS admissions

KARACHI : Dow University of Health Sciences Karachi has started MBBS and BDS admissions from today and in this regard the University has issued an advertisement. As per the published advertisement, admission forms can be submitted today from 1st December to 11th December. Students who have passed in MDCAT will submit their documents and admission forms for admission. Applications for Merit and Self-Finance are required from the candidates who have the certificate of permanent residence in Sindh in the government universities of the province. Prospectus, application form and admission form are available online on the website of the respective universities. Admission forms can be submitted along with documents to both campus.—APP

Railways accidents reduced significantly in last 3 months

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan Railways has beefed up precautionary measures to reduce passengers train accidents and only six minor accidents with no casualty took place on the entire railway network in the country during the last three months (September to November). "Only two train accidents have taken place in September, no accident happened in October and four train accidents occurred in November due to effective steps of the department," an official in the Ministry told APP. The drastic decrease in accidents has been witnessed due to the efforts being undertaken to reduce trespassing at un-manned level crossings and unauthorized locations, he added. "Our staff is continuously monitoring the railway tracks across the country and conducting thorough inspection of the trains as the safety of the passengers is the top priority of the department," he said. The official said the de-

partment was taking several steps to improve the Railway services including the issues related to tracking maintenance that was given top priority. He said the punctuality of trains was improved and all the trains were being monitored, reviewed, and rectified while to facilitate passengers, a mobile application "Pak rail live" has also been launched for real-time tracking of trains. To a question, he said that first aid posts are established in Assistant Station Masters offices and Police Help Line Centres at all Railway Stations where paramedical staff/staff trained in first aid is available along with first aid box/emergency kits round the clock. He said the first aid box/emergency kits were available with In-charge Guards in all running trains who were trained in first aid and provide first aid to ill passengers. The official said that Pakistan Railways is also set to introduce the 'Train Driver Assistant System' (TDAS) to help train drivers a clear view of the railway tracks up to an

impressive distance of 700 meters. "The technology aims to enhance the safety and efficiency of train operations during adverse weather conditions, particularly in the presence of dense smog and fog." The system, he said the TDAS is set to revolutionize the way trains navigate through foggy landscapes. It promised not only to avert potential accidents but also to facilitate smooth rail travel when visibility is severely compromised. He said the capabilities of this digital system extended beyond improved visibility; it can also identify and monitor vital elements such as signals, level crossings, gates, track obstructions, and other potential hazards within the same 700-meter radius. The official said the system is not only expected to facilitate timely train movements on foggy days but will also be instrumental in averting accidents during severe foggy weather, enhancing the overall safety and efficiency of Pakistan's railway network.



ISLAMABAD : Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Obayek Arif Osmanoov called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik here at Minister office.—DNA

2,100 children of martyrs, heroes provided jobs: IGP

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar has said that alive nations never forget their martyrs and heroes, brave martyrs and ghazis who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty of protecting the country and citizens will always live in our hearts, all measures have been taken for the welfare of the families of such brave martyrs. IGP Punjab said that 2100 children of martyrs and officials who died during service were provided with jobs, department is providing plots for construction of houses to all the martyrs who embraced martyrdom before 2017. He said that more than 15,000 departmental promotions were given in the last few months which are more than the total promotions of the last twenty years. Next month and in January 2024, another 3,200 more will be

given promotions based on merit and seniority. He further said that service delivery, welfare of force, take care of families of martyrs will continue. He expressed these views while addressing the families of police martyrs at Gymkhana Dera Ghazi Khan on Thursday. According to the details, IGP Punjab Dr Usman Anwar paid a special visit to Dera Ghazi Khan. Additional Chief Secretary Home Shakeel Ahmed was also accompanied by IGP Punjab. On reaching Gymkhana Dera Ghazi Khan, Regional Police Officer Dera Ghazi Khan Captain Sajjad Hasan Khan (Rtd) and District Police Officers received the IGP Punjab. Under the chairmanship of IGP Punjab Dr Usman Anwar, a ceremony was held to give plots to the families of martyrs of DG Khan Region Police at Gymkhana Club. In the ceremony, IGP Punjab met the families of police martyrs who were specially invited from across the region and listen the prob-

lems faced by them and issued orders to solve them immediately. IGP Punjab distributed ownership rights letters of residential plots to the families of 36 police martyrs before 2017. The families of 08 martyrs of Dera Ghazi Khan, 13 martyrs of Rajanpur and 15 martyrs of Muzaffargarh district have received ownership letters. In the ceremony, IGP Punjab paid tribute to the martyred police and families. RPO DG Khan Captain Sajjad Hasan Khan (Rtd) in his address said that plots have been given to the families of 59 martyrs before 2017 in DG Khan region, department will serve the families of the martyrs and provide full treatment for their problems. District Dera Ghazi Khan Head Constable Noor Muhammad, Constable Muhammad Arif, Ayaz Ahmed, Muhammad Salim, Faiz Al Hasnain, Muhammad Iqbal, Ghulam Abbas, Fakhr-ud-din, Muzaffargarh District ASI Latifullah, and others.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Syed Jamal Shah taking keen interest in a painting during painting exhibition title "Quwat o Akhuwat" at COMSATS Art Gallery in Federal Capital.—ONLINE

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES						
A Donor Funded Project seeks to hire dynamic and career oriented professionals on contract basis for the following positions						
S.No	Name of Position	No of Positions	Quota	Qualification	Place of Postings	
1	National Coordinator (SS) COVID-19 HIV/AIDS	1	Merit	MBBS/BDS with Masters in Public Health from HEC recognized University. Minimum 06 years' experience of post MPH working in Public Health Programs. Preference will be given to the candidates having experience of working in infectious disease management. Age limit: 50 Years.	Federal	
2	Grants Coordinator COVID 19	1	Merit	MBA with 3 years of experience in public health programs. Experience of working in COVID 19 will be preferred. Computer skills particularly working on MS Office is mandatory. Data management, analysis, presentation, report writing along with good communication and skills, both written and verbal along with proficiency in relevant regional/local languages are highly desired. Job requires extensive travelling. Candidates with relevant regions will be preferred. Max Age 50 years.	Federal	
3	Psychologist (SS) COVID-19 HIV/AIDS	3	Merit	Master Degree in Clinical Psychology / Nursing/Medical Sciences/ Communication/ Behavioral Sciences from HEC Recognized university 5-7 year of experience of handling clients suffering from the mental stress etc. Experience of advocacy and awareness and relevant work experience in organization. Work experience of counseling related to Public Health preferably HIV/AIDS. Female candidate will be preferred as counselor has to work with Gender Based Violence cases. Experience in Counseling/Psychotherapy, Good Communication Skills Both Written and Verbal in English are Highly Desired. Max Age 50 years.	ICT, R.Yar Khan, Bahawalpur.	
4	Data Entry Operator (SS)	4	Merit	Bachelor Degree in Computer Science /IT/ Engineering or Bachelor Degree with Diploma in Computer Sciences. At least two year of work experience as data entry operator with reputed firm/organization. Working on health projects will be added benefits. Max Age 50 years	Sargodha, R.Yar Khan, Faisalabad, Lahore.	
5	Program Officer COVID-19 HIV/AIDS	1	Merit	MBBS/BDS with Masters in Public Health from HEC recognized University. Minimum 05 years' experience of post MPH working in Public Health Programs. Preference will be given to the candidates having experience of working in infectious diseases. Age limit: 50 Years	Federal	
6	Counselor	2	Merit	Master Degree in Clinical Psychology / Nursing/Medical Sciences/ Communication/ Sociology/ Behavioral Sciences from HEC Recognized university. At least one year of work experience of counseling related to Public Health preferably HIV/AIDS. Female candidate will be preferred as counselor has to work with Gender Based Violence cases. Experience in Counseling/Psychotherapy, Good Communication Skills Both Written and Verbal in English are Highly Desired. Max Age 50 years.	Federal	
7	Lab Technician	2	Merit	BSC in medical laboratory technology or equivalent from recognized institution. Minimum 3 years of Post qualification experience of working in clinical laboratory in a reputable institute/Laboratory, with knowledge of basic principles, practices and quality assurance procedures applicable to clinical lab. Higher relevant qualification and experience in Tuberculosis and/or Microbiology laboratory will be preferred. Max Age 30 Years.	Federal	
8	Laboratory coordinator COVID-19	1	Merit	Masters in Microbiology/ Molecular biology or equivalent plus Master in Public Health or M.Phil. in Microbiology from HEC recognized institute /university. Minimum five years of Post qualification experience of working in Public Health sector including at least two years' experience of working in reputable high volume laboratory. Good knowledge of technologies and equipment used for molecular diagnosis. Knowledge about ISO certification of the laboratories. Higher relevant qualification and experience in Tuberculosis and/or Microbiology laboratory will be preferred. Self-driven, target oriented individual with Excellent interpersonal, communication and presentation skills. Max Age 45 years.	NRL - Federal	
9	Bioinformatician COVID-19	1	Merit	M.Phil. in Bioinformatics/Genomics/Computer Science/Molecular Biology or equivalent. Minimum 3 years of Post qualification experience in a reputable institute/organization with experience running bioinformatics analysis pipelines, including familiarity with standard tools such as BWA, GATK, IGV, Salmon/Kallisto/RSEM, SAMtools, Picard, BEDtools, BCFtools, etc. At least 1 publications in the last five years in internationally peer reviewed journals. Max Age 45 years.	NRL - Federal	
10	Senior Molecular Biologist COVID-19	1	Merit	M.Phil. in Molecular Biology/Microbiology/Biotechnology/Biochemistry or equivalent, Ph.D. in Molecular Biology/Microbiology/Biotechnology/Biochemistry or equivalent will be preferred. Minimum 5 years of Post qualification experience in a reputable organization with hands on experience in molecular biology techniques like sequencing especially next-generation sequencing, PCR oligo-nucleotide & probe synthesis and relevant techniques. At least five publications in last five years published in internationally peer reviewed journals. Age Limit 45 Years.	NIH - Federal	
11	Senior Bioinformatician COVID-19	1	Merit	M.Phil. in Bioinformatics/Genomics/Computer Science/Molecular Biology or equivalent, Ph.D. in Bioinformatics/Genomics/Computer Science/Molecular Biology or equivalent will be preferred. Minimum 5 years of Post qualification experience in a reputable organization with experience running bioinformatics analysis pipelines, including familiarity with standard tools such as BWA, GATK, IGV, Salmon/Kallisto/RSEM, SAMtools, Picard, BEDtools, BCFtools, etc. At least five publications in last five years published in internationally peer reviewed journals. Age Limit 45 years.	NIH - Federal	
12	Senior Lab Technologist COVID-19	1	Merit	Master in microbiology or biochemistry/ molecular biology or equivalent. Candidates with advanced research degree (M.Phil, PhD) in molecular or microbiology will be preferred. Minimum Fiveyears' Post qualification experience of working in molecular biology/genomic lab in a reputable high volume laboratory (Preferably ISO certified 15189) Experience of working in research projects will be preferred. Self-driven, and quality conscious individual with good writing skills are encouraged to apply. Age Limit 40 years.	NIH - Federal	
13	Molecular biologist COVID-19	1	Merit	Master in molecular biology/biochemistry/ or equivalent with advanced research degree (M.Phil, PhD) in the same field from HEC recognized institute. Minimum five years' Post qualification experience of working in a high volume molecular biology volume laboratory (Preferably ISO certified 15189) in a reputable institute/organization. Candidates having experience of laboratory network and implementation of QMS program and research project implementation experience will be preferred. Self-driven, target oriented and quality conscious individual with Excellent interpersonal, communication and presentation skills. Max Age 45 years.	NRL - Federal	
14	Laboratory Technologist COVID-19	1	Merit	Master in microbiology or biochemistry/ molecular biology or equivalent. Candidates with advanced research degree (M.Phil, PhD) in molecular or microbiology will be preferred. Minimum three years' Post qualification experience of molecular biology in a reputable high volume laboratory (Preferably ISO certified 15189) Experience of working in Tuberculosis/microbiology laboratory and research projects will be preferred. Self-driven, and quality conscious individual with good writing skills are encouraged to apply. Max Age 35 years	NRL - Federal	
15	Lab Technician	1	Merit	BSC in medical laboratory technology or equivalent from recognized institution. Minimum 3 years of Post qualification experience of working in clinical laboratory in a reputable institute/Laboratory, with knowledge of basic principles, practices and quality assurance procedures applicable to clinical lab. Higher relevant qualification and experience in Tuberculosis and/or Microbiology laboratory will be preferred.	NRL - Federal	
16	Hospital Coordinator	1	Merit	Bachelor with 2 years' experience in Health Sector. Candidates Resident of districts will be preferred. Females are encourage to apply. Max Age 50 years	1- Hyderabad	
17	Paramedics for Mobile vans for COVID-19	4	Merit	FSc with diploma in Paramedical Studies. 1 year working experience in vaccination & counseling. Candidates having experience in COVID-19 vaccination will be preferred. Max age 50 years.	1- Muzaffarabad, 1- Gilgit, 1- Gujranwala, 1- Hyderabad	
18	DIVISIONAL DHIS-2 COORDINATOR	2	Merit	Bachelor, preferably with IT qualification. A minimum of 2 years' experience, preferably in health related programmes providing technical support, liaison & coordination. Familiarity with functioning of health care facilities. Max Age 50 years.	Islamabad, Quetta	
19	IDRS Riders	15	Merit	Matric. Applicants with Intermediate shall be preferred. Personal Hygiene is key as each riders is the front line of worker. Riders will have bike's and android mobile phone. Good customer service skills, empathy and an understanding of complaints (should any arise). Be able to use initiative and use problem-solving skills. Excellent communication skills (oral and written). Proven ability to deliver quality outputs in a timely and efficient manner to meet deadlines. Ability to manage other additional tasks assigned by the supervisor. Max Age 50 years.	7 AJK, 2 GB, 1 Quetta, 5 Hyderabad	

Interested candidates may apply online. Please visit www.ntb.gov.pk/career/ within 15 days of the publication of this advertisement. Last date of submission of application is 16th December 2023. Government employees must apply through proper channel. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interviews, No TA/DA will be paid. (ONLY APPLICATIONS APPLIED ONLINE WILL BE ACCEPTED) Admin HR officer contact # 051-9255387.

PID (I) No. 3391/23

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



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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

Serena Hotels sponsors music festival 'Mystic Melodies'

The event featured live performances by renowned artists Hadiqa Kiyani, Irfan Ali Taj, talented students of Lief Larsen Music Center and students from the School of Disabled Children showcasing the country's musical heritage, allowing attendees to connect with the heart and soul of Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels under its Cultural Diplomacy initiative joined hands with the Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan, UNESCO, the Aga Khan Foundation and KOICA to host a musical evening 'Mystic Melodies' to promote the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan through folk music. This event aimed to showcase the cultural expression via creative industries to develop understanding of the folk music traditions of Pakistan. A substantial turnout of guests graced the event, including distinguished dignitaries, diplomats, the Austrian Ambassador, the Egyptian Ambassador, Federal and Provincial Ministers, Government Officials representatives from the corporate sector, members of the business community, and media professionals. The attendees enjoyed the vibrant traditions, melodious tunes, and captivating performances that reflect the essence of Pakistan's cultural identity. The event featured live performances by renowned artists Hadiqa Kiyani, Irfan Ali Taj, talented students of Lief Larsen Music Center and students from the School of Disabled Children showcasing the country's musical heritage, allowing attendees to connect with the heart and soul of Pakistan. The Lief Larsen Music Center was founded in April 2011 at the Altit Fort which provides facilities for traditional musicians and performers of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral to train youth in different traditions and genres of mountain music. The Minister of National Heritage and Culture, Mr. Jamal Shah, was the chief guest at the event. In his speech he delved into the significance and impact of these programs, shedding light on their collective contribution to cultural preservation, architectural excellence, and the promotion of music as integral components of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's overarching vision. His insightful briefing illuminated the audience on the diverse facets of these initiatives and their role in fostering



a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage. Over the past two decades, Serena Hotels has played an important role in bringing Pakistani culture into the hearts and minds of the people. Serena has consistently supported cultural diplomacy initiatives

led by the Strang Art Gallery, the musical platform Sarangi, and the Craft Bazaars, all of which have significantly contributed to showcasing and nurturing young talent. Serena Hotels is excited and honored to present itself as a platform to celebrate

the cultural richness of Pakistan. The aim of these initiatives is to create an atmosphere where attendees can not only enjoy spectacular performances but also gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the diverse traditions that make Pakistan unique.

Chinese manufacturers forecast cooperation in Pak agri sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese machinery manufacturers have forecast cooperation in Pak agriculture sector, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. Self-propelled plant protection machine, potato harvester, sugarcane harvester...a dazzling array of agricultural machineries developed by China National Machinery Industry Corporation (SINOMACH) attracted attention from all directions at 2023 China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE). "If there is any demand in Pakistan's agricultural

sector, it can be through inter-governmental scientific and technological cooperation, whether it is machinery or technology, and we would love to expand bilateral cooperation space," Li, a researcher at SINOMACH told CEN. As a central enterprise group with the largest scale, the most complete business chain and the strongest R&D capabilities in China's machinery industry, SINOMACH has begun to expand its global cooperation territory very early. "Only our subsidiary YTO International Ltd has exported more than 65,000 units (sets) of agricultural machinery by far. Including

Pakistan, its business scope covers more than 90 countries and regions," Li added, "which divided into five major business units: Russian, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, America and Africa region. As for technical training, Li mentioned that since the establishment in 1956, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Mechanization Science Group Co., Ltd (CAAMS) has trained more than 4,500 international students. When it comes to successful case, the Tef Agriculture Small Mechanized Development Project of Ethiopia developed by CAAMS solved global problem of

teff cultivation by addressing the characteristics of small grain size and easy lodging. "Topography, climate, soil, and hydrological conditions vary widely in different countries and regions, thus to make agricultural machinery truly meet the local needs, such as the needs of farmers in Pakistan, we must conduct systematic research and develop localized machinery." Another CISCE exhibitor, Xingjiang Tianye Water Saving Irrigation System Company Ltd, also echoed in the field of agricultural machinery, of which water-saving irrigation system is of primary importance.

Expert urges community engagement, awareness for HIV prevention

ISLAMABAD: Health experts have called for greater community engagement, media awareness campaigns and awareness of safe needle-use practices for people living in remote areas on the occasion of 'World AIDS Day' on Friday to ensure May Pakistan meet the global goal of ending the scourge of AIDS by 2030. National Coordinator for Strengthening Common Management Unit (CMU) for TB, HIV/AIDS under the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Dr Razia Kuniz Fatima while talking to a private news channel said that It is very important to take the necessary precautions to stay safe from AIDS. She urged all stakeholders including media, influencers and community leaders to create awareness about HIV/AIDS to prevent its spread. "Every year, the day reminds us that ending the HIV epidemic requires collective efforts at the community level, innovative thinking, and reaching the most marginalized populations and improving access to health services," she said. Highlighting the seriousness of the situation in Pakistan, she revealed that Larkana was a high-risk area for HIV/AIDS in Sindh in 2022, adding that only from January to November there were more than 970 cases were reported. - DNA

IRSA releases 89,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 89,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 44,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1496.93 feet and was 96.93 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1175.35 feet, which was 125.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,100 cusecs and 28,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 58,400, 45,000, 39,900 and 10,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala. -APP

Pak elected as chair of CWP's Conference of States Parties

ISLAMABAD: Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the OPCW, Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar has been elected as chairperson of the 28th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction. The position will be for a period of one year. The position of chair is rotated among the five regional groups in the CSP and the candidature of Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar had been proposed to the 193-member conference by the Asia Group. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction (CWC) - with 193 States Parties - is a comprehensive disarmament treaty, eliminating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. The Conference of States Parties comprises all states parties to the CWC and is the principal organ overseeing the implementation of the Convention. It is a matter of great honour for Pakistan to have been elected to this prestigious position and reflects the confidence of states parties in Pakistan's diplomacy and commitment to the CWC.

Severe flour crisis in twin cities feared

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The flour mill owners have warned of a flour crisis engulfing the region and affecting millions due to the wrong policies of the Food Department. Flour mills have planned to stop the supply of flour to the market due to the conditions imposed by the Food Department, which will deprive the masses of affordable flour. In a statement today, the Pakistan Flour Mills Association said that all the responsibility for this crisis will be on the policies imposed by the Food Department. Flour mills cannot function because of undue interference and restrictions of the concerned authorities, which should be noted, the statement said. The Food Department has abolished the subsidy and is now buying wheat at Rs 3,900 per 40 kg and selling it at Rs 4,700 per 40 kg. Now, the 130 flour mills of the Rawalpindi region are being pressurized to buy twenty-five percent of the wheat from far-flung districts of Punjab, including Bhakkar, Jhang, Muzaffargarh, and Bahawalpur. The Flour Mills Association further said that buying wheat from these districts and delivering it to flour mills in Rawalpindi and Islamabad costs up to five hundred rupees per 100 kg due to high transportation costs.



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Briefs

ANF seizes
142 kg
drugs in 13
operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in a crackdown against drug smugglers managed to recover 142 kg of drugs and arrested 16 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that in an operation, 474 grams of Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a passenger netted at Islamabad International Airport. The accused, a resident of Peshawar, was leaving for Jeddah by flight number PA-270. In another operation, a passenger travelling to Qatar by flight number QR-0621 was arrested at Allama Iqbal International Airport. In the third operation, 940 grams of Ice drug was recovered from the trolley bag of an accused, resident of Sarogodha. In an operation at Allama Iqbal Airport, 950 grams of Ice drug were recovered from a trolley bag of a passenger. The accused, a resident of Kasur, was leaving for Bahrain by flight number GF-765. 842 grams of heroin hidden in a passenger's shoes was recovered at Faisalabad International Airport. The accused, a resident of Muzaffargarh, was leaving for Saudi Arabia by flight number FZ-392. During an operation, 3 kg heroin was recovered at the Cargo Services Office located near Railway Station Lahore. 5 kg Ice drug was recovered from a parcel booked for Australia at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 3 kg Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a passenger, a resident of Abbottabad, arrested near Faizabad, Islamabad. One kg of cocaine was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near Chungi No. 26 Islamabad. 100 intoxicated tablets (ecstasy) were recovered from the possession of a motorcycle rider nabbed from the Chungi Amar Sadhu area in Lahore.—APP

SSP
Operations
holds 'Khuli
Kutchery'

RAWALPINDI: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations, Hafiz Kamran Asghar on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi held a 'Khuli Kutchery' in Police Lines Headquarters here Friday to address grievances of the people. According to a Police spokesman, Police Officers under Punjab's open door policy are holding 'Khuli Kutcheries' to provide relief to the citizens. He informed that the SSP issued directives to the officers concerned to take action and submit a report on the complaint submitted by the citizens in 'Khuli Kutchery'. The SSP on the occasion said that the 'Khuli Kutcheries' were being held to provide the citizens immediate relief and addressed their complaints besides it also helped improve standards of policing. The SSP issued orders to the officers concerned to complete inquiries and send reports within given time frame. He said that all-out efforts were being made to ensure dispensation of speedy justice purely on merit to the people and improve service delivery standard.—APP

UAE, Pakistan relations
excellent, says envoy

Message of the Ambassador H.E. Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, on the Occasion of 52nd Union Day of the United Arab Emirates

METAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: On December 2 of each year, the UAE commemorates its National Day and the anniversary of the establishment of the Union in 1971. On this day, 1971, the rulers of the Emirates signed an agreement to unify the seven emirates and establish the United Arab Emirates as one united and prosperous country. The celebration in UAE comes this year with the visionary leadership of the president His Highness Sheikh Muhammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, His Highness Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum the Vice President/Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai and the trust-worthy members of the Supreme Council, whom declared this year 2023 the "Year of Sustainability" under the slogan "Today for Tomorrow" to raise awareness about environmental sustainability and address the challenges associated with climate change. The UAE is currently hosting the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) at Expo Dubai until December 12. The conference brings together world leaders and experts in an effort to mitigate the risks facing our planet. Through this global conference, the UAE prioritizes accelerating sustainable development goals and expanding the scope of energy transformations. The focus is on ensuring that the outcome of this global event con-

sists of actionable mechanisms, not just promises, by translating agreements into tangible realities and achievements. In the face of today's global challenges, climate change stands as one of the most significant. The UAE remains a global leader in adopting effective policies to address these challenges. The country has undertaken a significant set of policies as part of these efforts, including economic diversification with a focus on a green economy, diversifying energy sources with an emphasis on clean and renewable energy, promoting energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, and sustainable urban planning, among others. The UAE has always viewed climate action as an opportunity to contribute practical solutions to a global issue that affects all countries. This is especially true given its economic diversification efforts and its commitment to creating knowledge, skills, and jobs for future generations. In alignment with the visionary leadership of the UAE, the COP28 presidency aims through its plan based on four pillars: accelerating the transition to a more organized, responsible, and equitable energy sector, developing climate financing mechanisms, improving quality of life and livelihoods, and supporting the previous pillars by fully involving everyone in the conference's work system. The goal is to achieve significant reductions in emissions and build a sustainable future energy system. The COP28 presidency will support the increase of energy ef-



ciency by 2030 through tripling the production capacity of renewable energy sources, doubling low-carbon hydrogen production, and providing sustainable cooling systems accessible to everyone. The UAE reaffirms its commitment to climate and sustainability issues, not only at the local level but also on the international stage. This commitment is aimed at preserving the environment and ensuring a better future for generations to come. The UAE actively seeks to lend a helping hand to countries and communities worldwide in facing the challenges associated with climate change. The UAE has solidified its commitment to space exploration, celebrating astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi's significant space mission as the first Arab astronaut to conduct a lengthy stay and spacewalk on the International Space Station. These space endeavors follow the landmark achievements of Hazza AlMansoori, the first Emirati in space, and the suc-

cessful deployment of the Hope Probe in 2021, showcasing the UAE's resolute advancement in the space sector. The United Arab Emirates demonstrates the highest levels of determination and resolve in realizing its vision to be among the leading countries in the field of space, advancing science, technology, innovation, and building a sustainable space sector. The upcoming 2024 launch of the "Mohammed bin Zayed SAT" (MBZ-SAT) satellite, set to be a paramount addition to the nation's space exploration efforts, will enhance the UAE's contributions to global space science. As part of its ongoing pursuit of sustainable development, the UAE places significant importance on supporting climate change mitigation programs. This enables communities to continue their economic and social progress without being adversely affected by climate challenges. To ensure the success of these efforts, the UAE shares its expertise and experiences with other countries, in addition to providing technical assistance to ensure the best outcomes. The United Arab Emirates has emerged as a leading model in the field of sustainable economic development on the global stage. It adopts ambitious strategies aimed at achieving a balance among economic growth, prosperity, and environmental preservation. The nation has achieved an unprecedented milestone in its foreign trade during the first half of 2023, hitting over AED 1.239 trillion and marking an increase of 14.4% this year. The UAE is actively pursuing the estab-

lishment of a knowledge-driven and diversified economy, buttressed by scientific and technological advancements. It is committed to bolstering the economy's resilience and sustainability while seeking novel opportunities, based on the conviction that robust partnerships are instrumental in fostering regional prosperity and unlocking extensive economic possibilities. To realize this forward-looking vision and ambitious goals, the UAE has formalized comprehensive economic partnerships with several active global economies, and is in the process of negotiating additional partnerships with a number of countries to be finalized by the year's end. On this occasion, we recall the dedicated efforts of the Late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, "May Allah bless his soul with peace" in consolidating the excellent relations and unique friendship between the two brotherly countries that withstood various tests and the scope of our cooperation kept expanding with the passage of time and now covers various fields. Finally, I would like to express best wishes and congratulations on this occasion to the wise leadership of UAE and thanks and gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for their kind emotions towards the United Arab Emirates as they are celebrating here with us the occasion, and pray that the relationship of two countries may succeed the wider horizons of greater achievements for the betterment of the two countries and its peoples.

Consortium
of Artificial
Intelligence
to be created

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH-the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, in its first annual progress review meeting of Consortium of Excellence, decided to establish a consortium of artificial intelligence, emerging technologies and vaccination development. In the meeting held here on Friday, there was an intensive discussion session in which the heads and representatives of the member universities participated and tabled a host of result-oriented recommendations for certain programs as part of the future plan of action. It was deliberated and resolved to offer courses in healthcare entrepreneurship, blended academic programs in medical sciences and, for enhancing inter-university collaboration, offer scholarships, joint degree programs, and open new campuses and sign a memorandum of action. Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, earlier in his address, gave a comprehensive presentation on the achievements of the consortium. He said today's meeting is a felicitation and recognition ceremony of the contributions of the CCoE member institutions, which have contributed immensely to achieve the objectives of the consortium. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that the consortium comprises over top universities which represent the finest academic and research institutions of the OIC world, and the generosity, vision, academic excellence.—APP

IG assures to improve
security in markets

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Inspector General Islamabad Police said that cameras being installed in the commercial centers and markets will be connected to the Safe City Project in order to provide a peaceful and safe environment to the business community for business promotion. He said this while inaugurating the installation of security cameras in I-8 Markaz along with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan lauded the efforts of traders to

install security cameras in the I-8 Markaz on self-finance basis and said that the traders of other markets and commercial areas should also follow their precedent so that these cameras can be connected with the Safe City Project that would help to control crimes and further improve the security situation in the markets. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said thanked the traders of I-8 Markaz for installing security cameras in their market on a self-finance basis that would strengthen the hands of police in controlling crimes. He said that efforts would

be made to further improve the security in markets and industrial areas in co-operation with the police. He said that the traders of other markets should follow the example of I-8 Markaz to improve security in their respective business areas. He assured that ICCI will cooperate fully with Islamabad Police to make the capital a crime-free city. President Raja Fayyaz Gul and Secretary General Zahid Qureshi, Traders Welfare Association I-8 Markaz said that the Association has installed security cameras in the market with the support of traders to help the police in controlling crimes. They hoped that traders of other markets

would also join this campaign and play a role in making Islamabad a crime-free city. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that the business community and the police have an important role in making Islamabad a safe and conducive city for business and investment and hoped that both institutions will continue to cooperate to fulfill this national responsibility. He appreciated the efforts of the I-8 Markaz Association and traders to install security cameras because it will reduce crimes in this market and facilitate the better growth of trade activities.

Alvi directs MCB to
investigate corrupt officials

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday directed the Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB) to investigate and initiate criminal proceedings, including the registration of FIRs, against corrupt bank officials of Gojra Road Branch, Jhang. The bank officials were involved in bank fraud. He also directed MCB to return Rs 3.093 million to a customer who had been swindled out of his money through the connivance of a tea boy and bank officials posted at the branch. The president gave these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by MCB against the decision of the Banking Mohtasib directing the bank to pay the complainant a sum of Rs 3.093 million. As per details, Muhammad Munir Ahmed etc (complainants) were maintaining a joint account at the MCB's Gojra Road Branch, Jhang Sadder. They complained that upon reconciliation of the account in March 2021, they found a huge shortfall in their account balance and that 292 deposit slips totalling Rs 3,941,660/- were not credited to their account. They also held valid deposit slips duly signed and stamped by the bank officials for the deposits. They approached the bank for the redressal of their complaint but the Bank rejected their claim on the basis that a tea boy, posted at the branch, used to visit their laboratory for cash collection and the deposit slips were affixed with a Utility Bills Received stamp instead of "cash received" stamp. They further contended that the tea boy was employed by a third-party organization that had already lodged an FIR against him. The bank stated that it was not responsible for the personal dealings of the customer with the tea boy which took place outside the Branch premises. Feeling aggrieved, they approached the Banking Mohtasib for redressal of their grievance. The Banking Mohtasib accepted the complaint and directed the Bank to credit the complainant's account with a sum of PKR 3.093 million and report compliance within 40 days. Subsequently, the Bank filed a representation against the Mohtasib's decision with the President. The president conducted a personal hearing of the case at Aiwan-e-Sadr and rejected the Bank's representation. In his decision, the president stated that the Bank's denial of the claims of the Complainants on the ground that the deposit slip neither had the required "Cash Received" stamp nor was validated with any system entry was not tenable as the receipt was a bona fide document and admittedly issued under the signature of the bank's authorized Teller Services Officers (TSO) who had been penalized in terms of dismissal from Bank's service. He further observed that the bank branch had violated the procedures by not complying with the bank's own SOPs, introducing on its own a new system of signing deposit slips.—DNA

COMSTECH organizes CCoE annual
progress review meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH organized its Consortium of Excellence 1st annual progress review meeting on Friday. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH welcomed the participants and gave a comprehensive presentation on the achievements of the consortium. He said today's meeting is a felicitation and recognition ceremony of the contributions of the CCoE member institutions, which have contributed immensely to achieve the objectives of the consortium. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that the consortium is comprised on top universities. Prof. Choudhary said that the member universities represent the finest academic and research institutions of the OIC world, and the generosi-

ty, vision, academic excellence and research achievements are of these institutions are nationally and internationally recognized. Prof. Choudhary informed that the concept of creating an alliance of finest institutions of the OIC emerged from a very intensive and thought provoking discussion between the top intellectual and education experts. He said that it was envisaged that COMSTECH being the only inter-governmental organization, hosted by Pakistan should deploy the excellence exist in the OIC region for the benefit of youth of the Ummah. Accordingly, the alliance was created and given an appropriate name "COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence". Prof. Choudhary appreciated the contribution of the CCoE member institutions and said that your willingness to open your doors for the education

and training of young students and scholars from Muslim countries and Muslim minorities in non-OIC countries is exemplary by all definitions. There was intensive discussion session in which the heads and representatives of the member universities participated and tabled host of result oriented recommendations for certain programs as part of the future plan of action. It was deliberated and resolved to offer courses in healthcare entrepreneurship, blended academic programs in medical sciences and, for enhancing inter-university collaboration, offer scholarships, joint degree programs, and open new campuses and sign a memorandum of action. It was also decided to establish a consortium of artificial intelligence, emerging technologies and vaccination development. The representatives of Islamic Uni-

versity of Technology, Bangladesh, TUBITAK, Turkey, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia, Kazan Federal University, Tajikistan, Agence Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique et de l'Innovation (ANRSI), Mauritania, International Islamic University Islamabad, International Center for Chemical and Biological Science, University of Karachi, Lahore University of Management Sciences, University of Lahore, Ibadat International University, Quaid-i-Azam University, Health Services Academy, Islamabad, University of Sialkot, Superior University, Kohsar University Murree, National University of Science and Technology, Khawaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Government College University Lahore, Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam and the University of Sarogodha participated in the meeting.

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The view on Rishi and the Parthenon marbles

Petulance is not a good look in a prime minister. Maybe Rishi Sunak's refusal to meet his Greek counterpart this week was more calculated than capricious – a tactical flash of temper to convey firmness regarding the fate of the Parthenon marbles. Even so, it came across as childish. Mr Sunak might have been genuinely affronted by Kyriakos Mitsotakis's comments likening the British Museum's possession of the ancient Greek sculptures to cutting the Mona Lisa in half. That intervention might have reneged on a commitment not to campaign for restitution of the marbles while visiting Britain. More likely, it crossed a line that Downing Street projected on to conversations that are interpreted differently by the Greek side. Either way, calling off a meeting was a wild overreaction. It is doubtful that a domestic audience, whatever views people have of the marbles question, will have been impressed. Overseas, it looks like a return of the prickliness and insecurity that Britain's neighbours associate with Brexit at its most belligerent. That impression will be compounded by the prime minister's response to subsequent criticism of his poor diplomacy. In the Commons on Wednesday he attempted to parry Keir Starmer's questions with a charge that the Labour leader is subservient to the European Union. If Mr Sunak thinks that is his strongest card or, worse, has engineered a row with the express purpose of playing it, he is delusional. The pity of it is that he has, so far, been more constructive in European diplomacy than either Liz Truss or Boris Johnson. Normalisation of continental relations, facilitated by the Windsor framework, is one of Mr Sunak's few achievements in office. Mr Mitsotakis represents a government of the centre-right in a Nato country. He and the Tory leader could have found plenty of common ground while agreeing to disagree on the obvious point of contention. A more adept politician than Mr Sunak could have found a way to articulate displeasure without wrecking the visit. The inability to calibrate a diplomatic rebuke expresses political weakness and a temperamental flaw. The prime minister's peevish streak is rarely far from the surface. It shows in interviews when he doesn't like the tenor or persistence of questions. Charisma can be overrated and is not reliably correlated to capability, but charmlessness is a definite deficiency in a leader. Mr Sunak's readiness to sacrifice relations with an EU member state is also symptomatic of intuitive Eurosceptic prejudice. The prime minister has risen through the ranks of a Conservative party steeped in contempt for the European project and ideologically convinced that Britain should pursue economic and strategic interests elsewhere. The reality of Brexit should have refuted that worldview, but it is too deeply ingrained. It is revealing, for example, that Mr Sunak has not visited Berlin since becoming prime minister. A rational appraisal of Britain's diplomatic interests post-Brexit would have prioritised bilateral dialogue with Germany. Perhaps the prime minister is simply not interested, or maybe he limits continental contact for fear of upsetting hardline Brexiters. Either way, he has been guilty of neglecting a necessary component of his job.



Covid inquiry: A loss of dignity

Few public figures have emerged from the Covid-19 inquiry's autumn hearings with more damage to their reputations than Matt Hancock. Admittedly, Mr Hancock's public standing was not high at the outset. But he has been one of the prime targets in the Whitehall blame game that has played out in the inquiry since October. Only Boris Johnson, who will give evidence himself next week, has taken worse hits to his public standing, as politicians, advisers and civil servants jockey to explain how Britain proved so unprepared for a pandemic that has killed more than 230,000 UK residents since the start of 2020. Thursday was Mr Hancock's chance to strike back. He certainly made a go of it. His "nuclear levels" of self-confidence, to which the Cabinet Office civil servant Helen MacNamara had drawn attention in her testimony, and which reached their zenith in his reported wish to decide which NHS patients should live and which should die, were prominent in all his answers. No question seemed to puncture his belief, which was aggressively argued in exchanges with the inquiry counsel Hugo Keith, that his own actions were consistently timely, wise and tough, and that any fault lay wholly elsewhere, and mainly in 10 Downing Street. There are two fatal problems with this approach. The first is that Mr Hancock's self-belief makes him overclaim. He puts a uniformly positive gloss on everything, leaving himself no room to retreat or compromise with dignity. He deserved credit for supporting lockdown and opposing herd immunity strategies. He was a critic of "Eat out to help out". But his infamous claim to be putting a ring around care homes will haunt his reputation forever. His arbitrary promise of 100,000 tests a day left him with a target only achievable by creative counting. His claim, repeated on Thursday, that Britain was better prepared for Covid than other comparable countries is manifestly untrue. His insistence, again repeated, that Britain had a pre-pandemic plan is misleading, since it was not the right one to deal with Covid. The second problem is that Mr Hancock's accounts are directly contradicted by too many others. The former Downing Street chief adviser Dominic Cummings, with whom Mr Hancock has a reciprocal loathing, tweeted that the former health secretary was lying to the inquiry when he claimed to have advised the prime minister to impose an immediate lockdown two weeks before it happened. With his contempt towards all elected politicians from the prime minister down, Mr Cummings is certainly no paragon. Mr Hancock's accusation that he encouraged a "culture of fear" in Downing Street is hard to dispute. But Mr Cummings's charges that Mr Hancock made claims without evidence, and that they subsequently proved to be false, have often been backed up by other civil servants and politicians. In one important respect, however, what Mr Hancock told the inquiry was correct. In the end, the principal purpose of the inquiry is not to decide which minister or adviser was individually most to blame for the UK's failings in the face of Covid. Yes, that matters. And, yes, Britain was peculiarly hindered by the fact that Covid struck when a dithering Mr Johnson and his second-rate team were in government. Nevertheless, the more important task ultimately is to learn lessons.

Dr. Shamshad's many ifs and buts..

Qamar Bashir



She adeptly covered various facets of the country's financial challenges, aiming to conclude each aspect on a positive and optimistic note. However, her emphasis on numerous conditions for improving the country's financial outlook might lead one to believe that success could only be achieved with divine intervention. She said that we are facing a formidable challenge of debt repayment which has become almost unmanageable but at the same time said that since most of our loans are multilateral, bilateral

If we enhance the fiscal account, ensure sustainability of external accounts, achieve growth, rebase our GDP, initiate domestic debt profiling, gain favorable decisions in reducing debt burdens from the IMF-led roundtable conference of debt and creditors, receive support from developing countries and multinational institutions for aiding debt-stressed nations, witness bilateral creditors rolling over their deposits, and successfully transform loss-making SFOs into profit-making entities, we will gradually meet our debt repayment obligations. During a recent prime time TV interview, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar skillfully addressed Pakistan's challenging financial and economic circumstances with a composed and professional demeanor. She adeptly covered various facets of the country's financial challenges, aiming to conclude each aspect on a positive and optimistic note. However, her emphasis on numerous conditions for improving the country's financial outlook might lead one to believe that success could only be achieved with divine intervention. She said that we are facing a formidable challenge of debt repayment which has become almost unmanageable but at the same time said that since most of our loans are multilateral, bilateral and domestic, given that we practice prudent, creative and fulfilling financial and economic management, we will end up fulfilling all our commitments. While discussing multilateral loans, she highlighted that 45% of our debt is owed to multinationals. She mentioned the possibility of these loans being written off, suspended, or rescheduled by the G-20, offering much-needed relief. However, she noted that currently, multilateral entities are not inclined to provide further debt relief, suspension, or waivers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, G-20 nations suspended the debts of approximately 60 debt-stressed countries, and Pakistan was the primary beneficiary. She expressed regret that the funds allocated for debt repayment were utilized for non-development expenditures. She highlighted bilateral sources as the second debt category, noting its relatively smaller volume. Pakistan is currently engaged in negotiations with bilateral donors and creditors to renegotiate deposits and loans based on the nation's commendable track record of adhering to terms and conditions. Addressing criticism of China for creating debt traps, she defended China's assistance to Pakistan. She emphasized that Chinese loans, compared to those from other nations, are minimal. Additionally, China extended the maturity period of its \$2.4 billion loans and adjusted payment schedules to more favorable terms agreed upon later. Regarding the maturation of the euro bond in April 2024, preparations are underway to secure financing and offset this debt. As a consequence, she highlighted the alarming situation where our debt repayment has become unmanageable, leading to a breach of the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Management Act. Expressing concern, she revealed that our debt, in terms of government revenue, has surpassed 700%. This alarming ratio indicates that three-quarters of the government's total income is allocated solely to debt repayment, leaving only one-third of the income to cover the country's operational expenses. Despite this grim scenario, she asserted that the government is collab-

orating with creditors to extend the maturity of debts, lower borrowing costs, and most importantly, intends to introduce debt trading on the stock exchange. This move aims to widen and deepen the market for debts, ultimately alleviating the burden on the government caused by the debt. On another note, she mentioned that due to the government's concentrated efforts, the exchange rate is showing a downward trend, indicating the potential for economic growth in the upcoming years. This optimistic outlook suggests a potential reduction in the debt burden, an expansion in our financial reserves, and an increased capability to honor our debts. Concurrently, reforms within the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) are anticipated to enhance tax collection, providing us with increased flexibility to address local liquidity needs and bolster our capacity to repay loans. She emphasized Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as a crucial avenue for rapidly enhancing liquidity within the country and while acknowledging the efforts of the SIFC in attracting FDI, she cautioned that significant domestic efforts were necessary to complement these endeavors pointing that hindrances such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, outdated policies, regulatory complexities, legal gaps, a prevalent culture of corruption, and obsolete work practices were the primary obstacles to attracting FDI. She stressed the urgent need to revamp policies, streamline processes, and cultivate a business environment that actively courts investors. Without these reforms, the aspiration of drawing and retaining investors would remain unattainable. She acknowledged Pakistan's low saving-to-GDP ratio and highlighted the issue of regressive taxation on savings as an unfair practice and attributed this taxation to the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) inability to effectively collect direct taxes, leading to a shortfall. While taxing savings might seem necessary to cover the deficit, it unfairly burdens those investing in National Saving Centres but asserts that this practice will persist until substantial enhancements are made to the FBR's capacity. This was indeed an honest admission but at the same very painful and aggressive for the investors in the saving schemes who are mostly pensioners, aged persons, widows or dependents. This taxation is also in contrast to various incentives offered by many other countries to motivate the people to invest in national saving. Contrary to the practice in Pakistan the depositors in other countries are offered incentives, and tax breaks. Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF) offers various savings schemes with incentives, sheds light on alternative approaches. Singapore's CPF provides attractive interest rates, tax relief benefits, and even government-matched contributions, encouraging a culture of savings. Incentives like these can promote savings and address issues related to regressive taxation by making savings more appealing while providing relief for contributors, thereby fostering a healthy savings culture. Taxing savings to address revenue shortfalls might hinder long-term economic growth. A more balanced approach involves policy reforms, improved tax administration, and enhanced compliance measures, reducing overreliance on taxing savings. By expanding direct tax collection mechanisms and reforming policies, gov-

ernments can avoid burdening savers while ensuring fair and sustainable revenue collection, as witnessed in countries with successful saving schemes. She said that the caretaker government has prioritized protecting depositors' interests, identifying a disparity between banks' profits and the benefits provided to depositors. Despite banks' significant earnings from increased interest rates, depositors weren't receiving proportionate benefits. After persistent efforts, scheduled banks, excluding Islamic Banks, began offering better returns to depositors. However, Islamic Banks lag behind in providing equitable profits to their depositors. Consequently, the government, in collaboration with the State Bank, is engaging with Islamic Banks to ensure fairness in returns to depositors, emphasizing a commitment to equitable treatment across the banking sector. She highlighted the implications of the 18th amendment, noting that the federal government now solely collects taxes but transfers the revenue to provinces, which are not obligated to collect taxes themselves. She emphasized the necessity for collaborative efforts to devise a mechanism enabling provinces to take on a role in tax collection, advocating for a shared responsibility framework to address taxation more effectively. In discussing the privatization of loss-making government-owned enterprises, she highlighted the establishment of the Sovereign Wealth Fund through a parliamentary act during the previous session. This fund operates under a council led by the Prime Minister and is intended to accommodate several State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Presently, the fund is engaged in auditing these enterprises and is dedicated to enhancing their financial, economic, and managerial viability. A critical element for this fund is the appointment of competent and qualified apolitical advisors to form an advisory council. This council, in turn, will appoint a Board of Directors (BOD), responsible for appointing a CEO. The CEO, under the guidance of the BOD, will assess the financial, economic, and managerial status of each entity within the fund's purview. The comprehensive review of Pakistan's financial landscape underscores the intricate challenges the country faces in managing its debt, reforming tax policies, and attracting investments. The analysis reveals a multi-faceted approach required for financial stability, including debt restructuring, enhanced tax collection, and fostering an investor-friendly environment. While acknowledging the efforts made, there's a resounding call for systematic reforms to alleviate the burden on various fronts, such as debt repayment, regressive taxation on savings, and revitalizing loss-making state-owned enterprises. The pivotal role of collaborative efforts, policy enhancements, and transparent governance emerges as crucial pillars for achieving sustainable economic growth and navigating the intricate web of financial intricacies in Pakistan's journey ahead.

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

Counterintuitive Palestinian politics: Is Hamas treading a path paved by the PLO?

James Dorsey

The DFLP attacked Maalot to reestablish its credibility among Palestinians after being heavily criticised for its outreach to Israelis. The Maalot attack overshadowed the significance of the PLO's first formal steps towards accepting a two-state solution a month after the incident. The PLO's parliament, the Palestine National Council, meeting in Cairo, adopted a 10-point program that called for "the establishment of the people's independent combatant national authority over every part of

Spanish philosopher George Santayana didn't have Palestine in mind when he coined the phrase, 'history repeats itself.' Yet, Mr. Santayana's maxim may apply to Hamas when comparing the group's political evolution to the 16-year-torturous road traversed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from classification by Israel and its Western allies as a terrorist organization to establishing the Palestine Authority on Israeli-occupied Palestinian land. To be sure, there is no guarantee that Hamas, despite its brutal October 7 attack on Israel and wanton slaughter of 1,200, mostly civilian Israelis, will emulate the PLO in eventually recognising Israel and abandoning the armed struggle. Moreover, Hamas' current notion of realpolitik falls far short of anything that would qualify it as an acceptable and credible party to the negotiation of a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Even so, the parallels between the PLO and Hamas' political evolution are noteworthy. The PLO embarked on its road to recognition of Israel and abandonment of the armed struggle in 1974 with a first ever direct appeal to Israelis published as an advertisement in Yediot Ahranot, a leading Israeli newspaper, by Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) leader Nayef Hawatmeh. The PLO refused to address Israelis directly prior to publication because that would acknowledge the Jewish state. The DFLP's pioneering advocacy of Palestinian engagement with Israel and recognition of the Jewish state as part of the PLO's endorsement of a two-state resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict did not stop the group's primarily Gaza-based paramilitary wing, the National Resistance Brigades, from participating in Hamas' October 7 attack. The Brigades said it had lost three fighters in combat with the Israeli military. It said it had engaged Israeli forces in the towns of Kfar Aza, Be'eri, and Kissufim. The October 7 attack claimed the lives of at least 130 Israeli civilians or ten per cent Be'eri's residents, including women, children, and infants. The publication of Mr. Hawatmeh's appeal was negotiated by American activist and journalist Paul Jacobs as part of an initiative that would have included talks hosted by Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba between the PLO and two prominent Israeli politicians, Arie Eliav, a member of parliament and former secretary general of the

then governing Labour Party, and Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, the head of Histadrut, Israel's national trade union, that was closely aligned with Labour. The plan was scuttled months after the advertisement when DFLP operatives attacked a girls' school in Maalot. They took 115 people hostage and killed 31, including 25 schoolgirls. The DFLP attacked Maalot to reestablish its credibility among Palestinians after being heavily criticised for its outreach to Israelis. The Maalot attack overshadowed the significance of the PLO's first formal steps towards accepting a two-state solution a month after the incident. The PLO's parliament, the Palestine National Council, meeting in Cairo, adopted a 10-point program that called for "the establishment of the people's independent combatant national authority over every part of Palestinian territory that is liberated." The Council endorsed three years later the Palestinians' right to "establish their own independent national state over their national soil." For the first time, the PLO stressed "the importance of connecting and coordinating with the Jewish progressive and democratic forces inside and outside the occupied homeland." It took the PLO another decade to unambiguously recognise Israel and declare an end to its armed struggle. Similarly, Hamas adopted an updated charter in 2017 that differed significantly from its 1988 fundamental document but was as ambiguous and ambivalent as the PLO pronouncements in the 1970s. Hamas' original 1988 charter called for the killing of Jews based on a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. Hamas dropped the call to kill Jews in its new charter. The 1988 charter also insisted on a Palestinian state in all of historic Palestine that would replace the State of Israel. Significantly, Hamas adopted its first charter months before PLO leader Yasser Arafat recognised Israel. Hamas' revised charter still calls for Israel to be replaced by a Palestinian state in all of historic Palestine but allows for the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel as an interim step provided it does not involve recognition of the Jewish state. Instead, the charter advocates a long-term ceasefire that would de facto acknowledge Israel's existence. Complicating Hamas' potential to follow the PLO's path is the group's rejection of an Israeli and US negotiating framework that demands recognition of Israel and abandonment of the armed struggle

as a prerequisite rather than an outcome of negotiations that was adopted by Mr. Arafat. Hamas concluded from the failure of the PLO's approach and the 1993 Oslo accords to produce an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel that Palestinian concessions upfront were counterproductive. The brutality of Hamas' October 7 attack ensures that any role for Hamas or a potential successor in future negotiations will have to adopt the Israeli-US framework. This reduces the likelihood that Hamas or its successor may follow in the PLO's footsteps. Even so, the jury is out on whether Hamas, or a possible successor, will retain spoiler capability. Irrespective of whether Hamas adopts the PLO model, Palestinian moderation has proven to be a torturous process. It often adheres to the principle of two steps forward, one step backwards. To be sure, Hamas' decision to randomly kill or kidnap anyone, Jewish or non-Jewish, during the October 7 attack rather than only target Israeli military personnel and facilities is a huge step backwards that has reeked unimaginable Palestinian suffering, which is not to absolve Israel of responsibility for its conduct of the Gaza war. The jury is out on who Palestinians will hold responsible for the Gaza carnage, Israel and/or Hamas. Even so, it's becoming increasingly clear that Israel is unlikely to wipe Hamas off the face of the earth. Even if Hamas is destroyed, its hardline philosophy will survive, probably embodied in a successor. More than 30 years after Mr. Arafat recognised Israel and abandoned the armed struggle and three decades after the conclusion of the Oslo accords it is evident that Palestinian moderation is a fragile process that needs nurturing. Israel's emphasis on the stick rather than the carrot coupled with the Palestine Authority and Hamas' failure to provide good governance and effective leadership created the environment for a nascent armed resistance on the West Bank, the October 7 Hamas attack, and the DFLP's participation in the assault. To be clear, nothing justifies the random killing of innocent civilians. Even so, more killings and greater repression of Palestinians is not a solution. A pathway towards a solution lies in fewer Israeli sticks and more Israeli carrots. It lies in empowering Palestinians rather than undermining them. It resides in encouraging Palestinian moderation rather than stymying it.

Briefs

Israel massacres over 109 Gazans

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dismantled in Gaza." In an interview on Thursday, Sanchez said he doubted Israel respected international humanitarian law due to the high death toll. Israel slammed the comments, summoned Spain's ambassador, and recalled its envoy from Madrid for consultations. Tonight is going to be crucial. Negotiators have to come up with something positive. You cannot afford to have a second day of fighting because there might be a tipping point where suddenly you won't have any control of this whole situation. This is something the Qataris understand. There's been a momentum they've been building, and they were hoping to capitalise on that momentum to convince the Americans, in particular, to put more pressure on Israel for this ceasefire to hold. If it continues, and if the escalation continues for another day, it's going to be extremely difficult to return to square one.

£190 million NCA: NAB files...

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The ministry had already issued a notification on the trial of the PTI chairman in the £190 million National Crime Agency (NCA), UK, and Toshakhana case in prison. According to the notification issued by the ministry on Nov 28, the accountability court concerned would sit and conduct the trial of accused in the Central Prison, Adiala. "The federal government is pleased to accord approval that the accountability court concerned shall sit and conduct the trial of the accused (PTI chairman and former PM) and others in Central Prison, Adiala, with reference to the case regarding misuse of authority/illegal sale of gifted state assets, etc. under Section 16(b) of NAB Ordinance, 1999," the notification said.

Bilawal Bhutto takes dig...

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the province. He further stated that 18th Amendment and NFC award announcement also were victories for the Baloch people. Bilawal said the PPP and people of Balochistan would collectively make a new history. He said the PPP could change destiny of the people. "Being the youngest foreign minister I know how much potential the people have here. We can introduce Pakistan to the world community as a modern state," the party chairman said. He asked the people not to hand over the destiny of the state to two persons only. "The politicians who made blood of people cheaper, should not be given another chance. Let the people decide their country's fate. Give them a surprise on Feb 8," he added.

PM represents Pakistan...

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In the meeting held on the sidelines of COP 28, they appreciated the celebrations held in Islamabad and The Hague to mark 75 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year. This was the second meeting of both leaders after the one held in New York, United States on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session. The two leaders discussed bilateral relations, and exchanged views on international and regional issues of mutual interest, including situation in Afghanistan. They also discussed the evolving human rights and humanitarian situation in Gaza. Prime Minister Kakar underscored that Pakistan and the Netherlands should work together bilaterally as well as through the European Union on matters of mutual interest. Both the leaders expressed satisfaction on the upward trajectory in bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands.

PCB appoints consultants to chief selector Wahab

PCB on Friday confirmed the appointment of former cricketers Kamran Akmal, Rao Iftikhar Anjum and Salman Butt as consultant members to the chief selector

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday confirmed the appointment of former cricketers Kamran Akmal, Rao Iftikhar Anjum and Salman Butt as consultant members to the newly-appointed chief selector Wahab Riaz. The PCB in a press release confirmed that the three members will take charge of their roles with immediate effect and their first task would be the five-match T20I series against New Zealand. "The PCB has confirmed the appointment of former Pakistan cricketers Kamran Akmal, Rao Iftikhar Anjum and Salman Butt as consultant members to chief selector Wahab Riaz," the cricket board said in a brief statement. "The three have assumed their responsibilities in the selection panel with immediate effect. Their first assignment as consultant members to the chief selector includes the upcoming five-match T20I series against New Zealand, set to commence on January 12, 2024, following the conclusion of the Test tour to Australia. "When not engaged in selection duties,



the consultant members may be assigned additional tasks such as conducting skills camps." Kamran Akmal was part of the Pakistan squad which clinched the 2009 T20 World Cup at Lord's. The wicketkeeper bat-

ter represented the Green Shirts in 268 international matches where he amassed 6,871 runs across formats with 11 tons and 27 half-centuries to his name. Salman Butt wore Pakistan's jersey in

135 international matches as the former left-handed opener scored 5,209 runs across formats with 11 centuries and 27 50s. Rao Iftikhar's career with Pakistan was short as the right-handed medium pacer only featured in 65 international matches for his country where he managed to bag 78 wickets across formats. It must be noted that the PCB had been heavily active since November as many big changes were made including the change in management as well as the team. It all started on November 15, when Babar Azam stepped down as the captain from all formats following his meeting with PCB Chairman Zaka Ashraf after he was only offered to keep the Test captaincy. Soon after his resignation, the PCB named new captains for Test and T20I cricket with Shan Masood and Shaheen Afridi taking the realm of respective formats. The PCB then appointed former cricketer Mohammad Hafeez as the director of the team while Wahab Riaz assumed the role of chief selector. Another former pacer Sohail Tanveer was named the head of the junior selection committee while legendary batter Mohammad Yousof was given the responsibility of coaching Pakistan's U19 team.

Imad Wasim speaks up after retirement, KK departure

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan cricketer Imad Wasim has revealed his decision to retire from cricket, citing personal reasons and mental health concerns as the driving factors behind this significant step. While talking to a local sports YouTube channel, Imad expressed the importance of mental well-being and emphasized the gravity of his mental health in making such a life-altering choice. "I was not in the right mental state, and if I were in that condition, I would never have made this decision," Imad said. Moreover, the 34-year old also reflected on the unpredictability of life ahead. "This is life, and everything is possible. I have made this decision without any intention of turning back. It's a significant step, and I am uncertain about what life has in store, but it is what it is," he further added. Amidst his international retirement an-



ouncement, Imad also bid farewell to his long-standing association with the Karachi Kings franchise, where he spent eight years. Expressing gratitude and fondness for the team and acknowledged the support he received from the team's owner, Salman Iqbal, while expressing his

best wishes for the franchise's future endeavors. "Karachi Kings gave me immense love. I have played eight years for Karachi Kings, and it's not easy to leave a franchise. If Salman Iqbal owns it then we own it to since we gave eight years of our life to the franchise. I wish them good luck."

Imad said. Furthermore, Imad acknowledged the transient nature of player contracts and the decisions ultimately lying in the hands of the franchisees. "Leaving old franchises, joining new ones, or returning to previous ones is all part of the franchise trade. This is a new beginning, leaving old franchise and joining new ones or coming back to old franchise, this all is a part of franchise trade. Last decision is of franchise, we only have the leisure to say yes or no upon being asked. Everyone wanted a trade and this is how it happens," he concluded. It is worth noting that Imad joined Islamabad United in the Platinum category, while Hasan Ali (Diamond category) was transferred to Karachi Kings. Karachi Kings gain Islamabad United's first round silver pick in exchange for their second round silver pick as part of this player trade.

Lyon heaps praise on 'No. 1 superstar' Babar

SYDNEY: Australian Test spinner, Nathan Lyon, has expressed his admiration for Pakistan's batting sensation, Babar Azam, labeling him as one of the best batters in the world. In a recent interview with ESPN-cricinfo, Lyon, who has faced off against Babar on multiple occasions, commended the former skipper for being a pleasure to play against and acknowledging the massive challenge he poses to bowlers. "Babar, firstly, has been a pleasure to play against but he's also been a massive challenge," Lyon said. "He's one of the best batters in the world in my eyes, especially against spin. He's a class player. But think he's a class player against all types of bowling," he added. The 36-year-old emphasized the upcoming challenge for the Australian team as they prepare to face the Men in Green. "They've got some superstars in the side, and if I'm talking superstars he's the No. 1 in the Pakistan side in my eyes. He played reasonably well out here last time so it's going to be a big challenge for us for sure," he said. Reflecting on his own excitement for the upcoming Test matches, Lyon emphasized his eagerness to play at Optus Stadium in Perth. "The hunger level for playing Test matches is probably higher than ever if I'm being honest," he said. "I'm proper excited about it. Love playing in Perth at Optus Stadium. It's going to be a challenge against Pakistan, so it's going to be an exciting battle," he concluded. - DNA



ECP to issue polls schedule...

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The timely announcement of the election schedule, the appointment of returning officers (ROs), and district returning Officers (DROs) will be ensured at an appropriate time, he added. Political circles were casting doubts on timely elections as they were pressing on the election commission to issue the polling schedule, with others citing different reasons for their expectations of a delay in the already delayed polls. However, the ECP notified the final list of delimitation of constituencies of the national and four provincial assemblies and had also rejected the reports of a possible delay in elections. Per the notification issued by the election commission, according to Article 51(3) of the Constitution, the National Assembly consists of 266 general seats, with 60 seats reserved for women and 10 for non-Muslims.

Al-Azizia: Nawaz Sharif...

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the Avenfield and Al-Azizia corruption references last month. Sharif was convicted in the Avenfield case in July 2018 and the Al-Azizia case in December of the same year. He later filed appeals against his convictions in the IHC. However, on June 24, 2021, an IHC bench led by Justice Farooq rejected the appeals due to Sharif's failure to appear in court for several hearings. Sharif, who was serving a seven-year jail term after his conviction in the Al-Azizia case, was granted rare permission to seek medical treatment abroad in October 2019. The PML-N supreme leader chose not to return to the country despite repeated court summonses, leading to both the IHC and an accountability court declaring him a proclaimed offender.

Pak asks Kabul to...

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internationally that humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan must continue. Responding to a question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan is strongly committed to protection of workers and projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). She said we will defeat designs of any terrorist entity against CPEC or any other investment project in Pakistan. Expressing concerns over the situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson urged India to repeal its draconian laws and stop using the bogey of terrorism to suppress dissent in the occupied territory.

Pakistan bound...

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nationwide campaign to deport illegal foreign nationals, the majority of whom are Afghans. While the decision had prompted criticism from Afghanistan and several other quarters, the caretakers refused to budge, insisting the move was not aimed at any particular ethnic group. Of more than four million Afghans living in Pakistan, the government estimates 1.7m are undocumented. So far, thousands of Afghans have returned home from the Torkham and Chaman border crossings. Last month, politicians and rights activists had approached the top court to declare the decision of mass deportation of Afghans as illegal, unconstitutional and against fundamental rights.

Qatar urges rapid int'l...

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was "committed, along with its mediation partners, to continuing the efforts that led to the humanitarian pause, and will not hesitate to do everything necessary to return to calm." During the truce 80 Israeli hostages were freed in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners. Negotiations between Hamas and other nations under a separate framework led to the release of more than 20 other foreign nationals, mostly Thais.

Marsh expresses excitement of participating in West Test

PERTH: Australia all-rounder Mitchell Marsh expressed his excitement to participate in the West Test against Pakistan at Perth, commencing on December 14. During a media talk in Perth, Australia, Marsh shared his eagerness to play at the fast and bouncy pitch of Perth Stadium, where he has never played a Test match. "This is the best wicket in the world. I haven't played any Test match in Perth, but if I got selected, I would be super excited to feature in the West Test," said Marsh. "This pitch is fast and bouncy, this is what you want as a player which brings batter and bowler both an equal chance to contest," he further added. Mitchell Marsh also shared his joy for being part of the Australian team across all formats, stressing his consistent batting method over the past couple of years. "I love being part of the Australian team, whatever the format it is. It's an absolute pleasure to play for this team from the last few years. I think I have found my most consistent method of batting from the last couple of years," he said. Mitchell Marsh has recently played a crucial in Australia's sixth World Cup title victory in India. The 32-year-old allrounder amassed 441 runs in the tournament, including two centuries in ten outings at an average of 49. Furthermore, after the West Test, the second Test match will be played in Melbourne, from 26 to 30 December, while Sydney will host the last game of the tour from 3 to 7 January 2024. - Agencies

Nadal confirms Brisbane return ahead of Australian Open

"Hello everyone, after a year away from competition, it's time to come back. It will be in Brisbane the first week of January. I'll see you there," the 22-time Grand Slam winner said in a post on social media. Former world number one Nadal has not played since his defeat in the second round of the Australian Open last January, a tournament he won in 2009 and 2022. "I think I don't deserve to end like this," said Nadal, referring to his Melbourne exit last year. The 37-year-old has undergone surgery twice since and having slumped to 663rd in the world after a year without playing declared in September that the 2024 season was going to be his last. Nadal will try to return to the highest level in Australia with the aim of competing at the French Open which he has won a record 14 times. He has been overtaken in the number of Grand Slam tournaments won by Serbian world number one Novak Djokovic, who now has 24 major titles. The Spaniard had already experienced a 2021 season undermined by a foot injury, and was eliminated by Djokovic in the semi-final of the French Open. Dating to the end of 2022, the 37-year-old Spanish left-hander has lost seven of his past nine matches, including going 1-3 this season. Nadal's 22 Grand Slam singles titles rank second to Djokovic's 24 for the most among men. - Agencies



there," the 22-time Grand Slam winner said in a post on social media. Former world number one Nadal has not played since his defeat in the second round of the Australian Open last January, a tournament he won in 2009 and 2022. "I think I don't deserve to end like this," said Nadal, referring to his Melbourne exit last year. The 37-year-old has undergone surgery twice since and having slumped to 663rd in the world after a year without playing declared in September that the 2024 season was going to be his last. Nadal will try to return to the highest level in Australia with the aim of competing at the French Open which he has won a record 14 times. He has been overtaken in the number of Grand Slam tournaments won by Serbian world number one Novak Djokovic, who now has 24 major titles. The Spaniard had already experienced a 2021 season undermined by a foot injury, and was eliminated by Djokovic in the semi-final of the French Open. Dating to the end of 2022, the 37-year-old Spanish left-hander has lost seven of his past nine matches, including going 1-3 this season. Nadal's 22 Grand Slam singles titles rank second to Djokovic's 24 for the most among men. - Agencies

Gakpo fires Liverpool into last 16 in Europa League

Forward's brace helps Reds seal top spot in Group E with 4-0 rout of Austria's LASK

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

LONDON: Cody Gakpo's double fired Liverpool into the Europa League last 16 as they routed LASK 4-0, while Brighton advanced to the knockout round with a 1-0 win at AEK Athens. Jurgen Klopp's side sealed top spot in Group E thanks to Gakpo's brace and goals from Luis Diaz and Mohamed Salah at Anfield. Second-placed Toulouse's 0-0 draw against Union Saint-Gilloise in the other group game means Klopp can rest players for his team's last remaining pool stage fixture. Europa League group winners go through to the last 16 automatically, while the runners-up play in a two-legged knockout round play-off in February against a team who finish third in a Champions League group. Klopp made nine changes from the side which drew with Premier League champions Manchester City last Saturday, with Salah and Kostas Tsimikas the only players to keep their places. Rising to meet Joe Gomez's cross, Diaz netted his first goal at Anfield since August as his header raced past LASK keeper Tobias Lawal in the 12th minute. Having opened the scoring, Diaz helped set up Liverpool's second three minutes later when he picked out Salah, who teed-up Gakpo to net from close-range.

Salah killed off the out-classed Austrians in the 51st minute, stroking home a penalty for his 13th goal this season after Gakpo was fouled by Lawal. Dutch forward Gakpo capped the demolition with a fierce strike in stoppage-time. Unlike Liverpool's rich history in continental competition, Brighton are competing in Europe for the first time and the Seagulls' adventure will continue into the New Year thanks to Joao Pedro's winner in Greece. Damian Szymanski fouled Joao Pedro in the 55th minute

and the Brazilian striker picked himself up to slot home the penalty. AEK's fate was sealed when they were reduced to 10 men in the 85th minute when Mijat Gacinovic earned a second booking for a foul on Joel Veltman. Roberto De Zerbi's side are second in Group B, one point behind Marseille following the French side's dramatic 4-3 win over 10-man Ajax. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored a hat-trick for Marseille, including the winner with a penalty three minutes into stoppage-time.

In the midst of a wretched season, Ajax had Steven Berghuis sent off in the 63rd minute and were consigned to elimination by their late defeat. "Who knows how far we can go?" Brighton captain Lewis Dunk said. "We want to win it and you've got to dream big to achieve it. "We're going to set our sights on reaching the final and winning it." West Ham moved into the knockout round after a late Tomas Soucek goal saw off Backa Topola 1-0 in Serbia. Soucek's 89th-minute volley from Maxwel Cornet's cross sealed the victory that put his team top of Group A. Second-placed Freiburg thrashed Olympiakos 5-0 to join West Ham in the knockout round. There is a three-way battle for qualification from Group C after third-placed Sparta Prague beat leaders Real Betis 1-0, while second-placed Rangers drew 1-1 with Aris Limassol. Atalanta wrapped up top spot in Group D after a 1-1 draw against second-placed Sporting Lisbon, who are also through to the knockout round. Rennes' 3-0 win against Maccabi Haifa took the French team to the top of Group F and into the knockout round, with Villarreal joining them after their 3-2 victory over Panathinaikos. Slavia Prague's 3-2 win at Sheriff sealed their knockout round place from Group G and Roma also advanced with a 1-1 draw at Servette.



Briefs

Kosovo extends deadline for Serbia's vehicles

PRISTINA : The Kosovo government announced that it has extended the deadline for local Serbs to replace their vehicle license plates issued by Serbia with Republic of Kosovo (RKS) plates. "This change has come about as a result of the great demand and high interest in registering vehicles with RKS plates," the statement said on Thursday. The initial deadline of Dec. 1 has been extended until Dec. 15. Any license plates that have not been changed as of Dec. 15 will be considered illegal and the vehicle owners will not be allowed to drive in the region. In early November, Serbs living in Kosovo began replacing their vehicle license plates issued by Serbian institutions and symbolising Kosovo cities with RKS license plates, ending a longstanding dispute. They began forming a queue at a vehicle inspection station located in the north of Mitrovica, where mostly ethnic Kosovo Serbs live. The deputy director of the Kosovo Police for the northern region, Veton Elish Ani, told Anadolu that around 1,500 people had received RKS vehicle license plates at the beginning of November.—APP

Philippines builds new coast guard station

MANILA : The Philippines has built a new coast guard station on the contested island of Thitu in the South China Sea, boosting its ability to monitor movements of Chinese vessels and aircraft in the busy disputed waterway. As tension mounts over territorial claims in the area, the Philippine coast guard had early this year spotted a Chinese navy ship and dozens of militia vessels around the island, one of nine features Manila occupies in the Spratly archipelago. Inaugurated on Friday, the new three-storey facility is equipped with state-of-the-art technology such as radar, automatic identification, satellite communication, and coastal cameras, the Philippine coast guard said in a statement. "The behaviour of the Chinese coast guard, People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy and Chinese militias are sometimes unpredictable," Eduardo Ano, the Philippine national security adviser, said during a visit to the island. "They do not adhere to the international order, to the rule of law," he told reporters on Friday. "What they're describing as gray-zone tactics... are pure bullying and it's purely illegal. It's not acceptable in the international order."—Agencies

South Korea, Japan seal \$10b swap

SEOUL : South Korea and Japan clinched a US\$10 billion currency swap deal Friday, eight years after the former deal ended, amid signs of a thaw in their relations. The Bank of Korea and the Bank of Japan signed the three-year deal based on the U.S. dollar, according to the central bank and the finance ministry. In 2015, the two neighbors terminated the currency swap amid strained bilateral ties. Their currency swap began in 2001 with an initial volume of \$2 billion, which grew to \$70 billion in 2011 in response to the global financial crisis. However, due to the strained relationship, the amount has gradually declined, ultimately reaching \$10 billion in 2015. A currency swap is a tool meant to defend against financial turmoil by allowing a country beset by a liquidity crunch to borrow money from others with its own currency. Currently, South Korea has currency swap arrangements with eight countries, including Canada, China and Australia. Together with a multilateral arrangement involving the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, they are worth at least \$138.2 billion, according to the ministry.—APP

President Xi Jinping urges ceasefire in Gaza war

President Xi Jinping stated China's principled position on the current Palestinian-Israeli situation on a number of occasions

DNA

BEIJING: The current Palestinian-Israeli conflict has caused heavy civilian casualties and a serious humanitarian disaster. It is a grave concern of the international community. President Xi Jinping stated China's principled position on the current Palestinian-Israeli situation on a number of occasions. He stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire and ending the fighting, ensuring that the humanitarian corridors are safe and unimpeded, and preventing the expansion of the conflict. He pointed out that the fundamental way out of this lies in the two-state solution, building international consensus for peace, and working toward a comprehensive, just and

lasting settlement of the Palestinian question at an early date. Pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council shoulders primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and should thus play an active and constructive role on the question of Palestine. In this connection, China offers the following proposals:

1. Implementing a comprehensive ceasefire and ending the fighting. Parties to the conflict should truly implement the relevant UNGA and UNSC resolutions and immediately realize a durable and sustained humanitarian truce. Building on UNSC Resolution 2712, the Security Council, in response to the calls of the international community, should explicitly demand a com-

prehensive ceasefire and end of the fighting, work for deescalation of the conflict, and cool down the situation as soon as possible.

2. Protecting civilians effectively. The UNSC resolution demands in explicit terms that all parties comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians. It is imperative to stop any violent attacks against civilians and violations of international humanitarian law, and avoid attacks on civilian facilities. The Security Council should further send a clear message on opposing forced transfer of the Palestinian civilian population, preventing the displacement of Palestinian civilians, and calling for the release of all civilians and hostages held captive as soon

as possible. 3. Ensuring humanitarian assistance. All relevant parties must, as per requirements of the UNSC resolution, refrain from depriving the civilian population in Gaza of supplies and services indispensable to their survival, set up humanitarian corridors in Gaza to enable rapid, safe, unhindered and sustainable humanitarian access, and avoid a humanitarian disaster of even greater gravity. The Security Council should encourage the international community to ramp up humanitarian assistance, improve the humanitarian situation on the ground, and support the coordinating role of the United Nations as well as the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in humani-

tarian assistance, and prepare the international community for supporting post-conflict reconstruction in Gaza.

4. Enhancing diplomatic mediation. The Security Council should leverage its role in facilitating peace as mandated in the UN Charter to demand that parties to the conflict exercise restraint to prevent the conflict from widening and uphold peace and stability in the Middle East. The Security Council should value the role of regional countries and organizations, support the good offices of the UN Secretary General and the Secretariat, and encourage countries with influence on parties to the conflict to uphold an objective and just position so as to jointly play a constructive role in deescalating the crisis.

World AIDS Day HIV treatment sees progress, says Expert

HIV, also caused by a virus, holds promise for similar success in its treatment. Numerous promising studies and research efforts are underway in the field of HIV treatment and vaccines

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA : As the world is marking AIDS Day, a Turkish expert Friday highlighted the significant progress made in HIV treatment and prevention, emphasizing the critical role of early diagnosis in halting the progression to the AIDS stage, citing data from the World Health Organization (WHO). According to the latest WHO data in 2023, approximately 40 million individuals worldwide are living with HIV. In Türkiye, recent Ministry of Health data from the end of 2022 reported 36,000 cases. Dr. Hava Aydn, an Infectious Disease Specialist at a hospital in Istanbul, explained, "AIDS represents the advanced stage of HIV disease. HIV, a contagious disease, has been widespread globally since its identification in 1983." AIDS was initially

identified in 1981, with the virus responsible being isolated in 1984 and named HIV. Recent years have witnessed substantial progress in treatment, leading to AIDS being reclassified from a once-deadly disease to a chronic condition. Since its inception in 1988, Dec. 1 has been universally recognized as "World AIDS Day," aiming to heighten awareness about AIDS and HIV infection. "Until 5-10 years ago, treatment was primarily recommended for patients with specific clinical characteristics. However, our approach has evolved, and we now initiate treatment for all individuals diagnosed with HIV from the day of diagnosis," Aydn said. HIV transmission occurs through sexual contact, contact with infected blood products, and transmission from infected mothers to their

babies during pregnancy. A recent statement by the United Nations AIDS community revealed that approximately 45% of HIV-positive individuals are unaware of their condition, a concerning statistic. The WHO's action plan for HIV prevention involves three key steps: Diagnosing 95% of patients, treating 95% of them and achieving successful treatment in 95% of cases. "In untreated patients after HIV transmission, the transition to the AIDS stage typically occurs within an average of 8-10 years. Early diagnosis significantly delays this transition, potentially allowing our patients to lead normal lives without progressing to the AIDS stage," she added. Dr. Aydn emphasized HIV is no longer classified as a deadly disease but has become a chronic condition. "HIV has transitioned from the

category of deadly diseases to chronic diseases, much like the ones we are familiar with. People diagnosed with HIV often experience tremendous stress and fears related to the progression of the disease or death. However, we have achieved remarkable treatments for HIV disease," she explained. Significant treatments and studies are ongoing in the fields of vaccines, HIV prevention, containment and even complete cures. For instance, Chronic Hepatitis C, caused by the HCV virus, was once an untreatable disease just a few years ago. Today, it belongs to the group of diseases that can be completely cured with treatment. HIV, also caused by a virus, holds promise for similar success in its treatment. Numerous promising studies and research efforts are underway in the field of HIV treatment and vaccines.

Wilders vote win confirmed, coalition talks tricky

WEB DESK



HAGUE : Geert Wilders' stunning election win was confirmed officially Friday, but the far-right Dutch leader faces an uphill battle to forge a coalition with other parties uncomfortable with his anti-Islam views. The election committee said Wilders and his PVV Freedom Party had won 37 seats in the 150-seat

parliament, an unexpected surge for the far-right that sent shockwaves through Europe and beyond. All eyes are now on whether Wilders can build a governing coalition and become the country's first far-right prime minister — and the initial skirmishes suggest he has a scrap on his hands. In the highly fragmented Dutch political system, where no party is strong enough to govern alone, elections are followed by months of horse-trading to agree a coalition. Wilders wants a four-way coalition with the centre-right VVD — the current ruling party of Prime Minister Mark Rutte — the pro-reform New Social Contract, and the BBB farmers party. He needs 76 seats for a stable coalition and the State Council confirmed that the four parties combined would handily achieve that. The BBB farmers party, which sprang out of protests against plans to cut nitrogen emissions to win upper house elections in March, appears to be on board, bringing its seven seats. But Wilders cannot form a majority without the VVD and the NSC of anti-corruption champion Pieter Omtzigt, and both have for the moment declined to enter into negotiations. "Come to the table" The VVD, led by charismatic Turkey-born Dilan Yesilgoz, had a disastrous election night, winning a mere 24 seats — a drop from 34 previously. Yesilgoz stated firmly that her party would not join a Wilders-led coalition, arguing that voters had clearly indicated that the VVD should no longer be governing. mtzigt was seen as a more natural partner for Wilders, but he too delivered a crushing blow as talks began, saying he feared PVV manifesto pledges contravened the constitution. The PVV election programme calls for a ban on mosques, the Koran, and headscarves. It also urges a referendum on a "Nexit" — the idea of the Netherlands leaving the European Union. The party also wants to stop weapons deliveries to Ukraine and says the Dutch should stop "being scared" of climate change, as the low-lying country has "the best water engineers in the world".

Myanmar military loses ground to nationwide attacks

NAYPYIDAW : A major offensive against Myanmar's military-run government by an alliance of three armed groups of ethnic minorities in the northeast has been moving at lightning speed, inspiring resistance forces around the country to launch new attacks. With Myanmar's military falling back on almost every front, hope is rising among coup opponents that this could be a turning point in the struggle to oust the army leaders who toppled democratically elected Aung San Suu Kyi almost three years ago. "The current operation is a great opportunity to change the political situation in Myanmar," said Le Kyar Win, spokesperson for the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, or MNDAA, one of the three armed groups known as the Three Brotherhood Alliance that launched the offensive on October 27. Caught by surprise by the attack dubbed Operation 1027, the military has lost more than 180 outposts and strongpoints, including four major bases and four economically important border crossings with China.—APP

Turkey escalates crackdown, PKK casualties rise

ANKARA : Turkish security forces "neutralized" seven more PKK terrorists in northern Iraq and Syria, the National Defense Ministry said on Friday, as Ankara intensifies its crackdown at home and abroad. Turkish authorities use the term "neutralize" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. Five of the terrorists were taken down by armed drones in the Operation Claw-Lock zone, the ministry noted in a statement. The other two YPG/PKK terrorists were targeted in the Operation Euphrates Shield zone in northern Syria, the ministry added. PKK terrorists often hide out across the border in northern Iraq and Syria to plot terror attacks in Türkiye. Türkiye launched Operation Claw-Lock last year in April to target the PKK terror group's hideouts in the Metina, Zap and Avasin-Basyan regions of northern Iraq, located near the Turkish border. It was preceded by two operations — Claw-Tiger and Claw-Eagle — launched in 2020 to root out terrorists hiding in northern Iraq.—APP

7 still missing after US Osprey crash off Japan

TOKYO : Japan's coastguard said a major search operation failed again Friday to locate the main wreckage of an Osprey US military aircraft or the seven airmen still missing. The tilt-rotor CV-22B Osprey crashed on Wednesday off the island of Yakushima with eight crew on board, in the latest mishap involving the versatile aircraft. One man was found and later declared dead the same day, but the coastguard said as darkness fell Friday that the other seven remained unaccounted for despite a massive search. It said in a statement that a dive search was conducted after an unidentified object was detected by sonar but that "no clues were found regarding the missing people. We have no other new information on them." On Thursday, divers investigated other unidentified objects found by sonar in waters around 30 metres (100 feet) deep that turned out to be rocks. "Seven Airmen are in DUSTWUN status meaning 'duty status-whereabouts unknown'. At this time, we can confirm one set of remains has been recovered," US Air Force Special Operations Command said. Photos from the area after the incident showed what appeared to be an overturned yellow life raft and other debris including what looked like part of an aircraft rotor blade. An emergency management official in the Kagoshima region where the crash took place said police received information that the aircraft had been "spewing fire from a left engine". Broadcaster NHK quoted a local fisherwoman as saying she saw the aircraft crash into the sea, sending up a column of water as high as 100 metres. The Osprey, which can operate like a helicopter or a fixed-wing turboprop plane, has suffered a string of fatal accidents. In August, a crash in northern Australia killed three US marines while four more died in another crash in Norway last year during NATO training exercises. Three Marines died in 2017 when another Osprey crashed off Australia's north coast and in 2000 19 Marines died when their Osprey crashed during drills in Arizona. In 2016, an MV-22 Osprey crash-landed off Okinawa, prompting the United States to temporarily ground the aircraft in Japan after the accident sparked anger among locals. On Thursday, Defence Minister Minoru Kihara said he had asked the US military to suspend flights again — except for search and rescue operations — and that Japan's military had halted using its own Ospreys pending safety checks. But Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh told a press briefing in Washington on Thursday that she was not aware of any official request and that "the Ospreys are still operating in Japan", according to a transcript.—DNA

Orban urges EU-Ukraine strategic partnership

BUDAPEST : The European Union should first sign a strategic partnership agreement with Ukraine instead of starting membership talks with the country, Hungary's Viktor Orban said on Friday, flagging a way to a possible compromise ahead of a crucial EU summit. The 27 national EU leaders are due to decide in mid-December on whether to accept the European Commission's recommendation to invite Kyiv to begin membership talks as soon as it meets final conditions, even as it fights to repel Russia's invasion. Any such decision requires unanimity of the bloc's 27 members, with Hungary seen as the main potential obstacle. The Hungarian prime minister has repeatedly said Hungary would not support the Commission's proposal in its present form.—APP

Russian-Italian national accused of Ukrainian-ordered bomb attacks

Moscow said that the suspect had carried out bomb attacks on railways after being recruited by Kyiv earlier this year

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW : The FSB said that the suspect was trained by special forces of NATO member Latvia to bomb a railway and military base. Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) has arrested a man with dual Russian-Italian citizenship for conducting sabotage operations for Ukrainian military intelligence. Moscow said on Friday that the suspect had carried out bomb attacks on railways after being recruited by Kyiv earlier this year. Infrastructure and production facilities across Russia have been damaged in unclaimed attacks since

its military forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022, with investigators opening dozens of cases. The suspect is accused of planting explo-



sives to derail a 15-carriage train in the Ryazan region, southeast of the capital, in early November. The FSB also says that he bombed the Dyagilevo military airfield in July, according to state news agency TASS. "The perpetrator turned

out to be a resident of the Ryazan Region born in 1988 with Russian and Italian citizenship. The detainee gave confessional evidence during his questioning," the FSB's Investigative Committee said in a statement. The intelligence agency said that the suspect was recruited by Ukrainian military intelligence in Istanbul in February. He then received sabotage training from Latvian special services in the EU and NATO member state, it added. The statement also said that a search of the suspect's home unearthed explosives and other bomb-making equipment, and investigations are under way to establish his role in other acts of

sabotage. The highest profile Ukrainian attack on Russian infrastructure since the start of the war came in October 2022, when the Kerch Strait Bridge, linking the Crimean Peninsula with Russia, was bombed. Shortly after the blast, the FSB arrested five Russians and three others, who were citizens of Ukraine and Armenia. Sources claimed on Thursday that the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) had bombed a railway line in Siberia, illustrating its reach deep inside Russia. The attack paralysed "the only serious railroad connection between Russia and China," used by Moscow for military supplies.

CONDOLENCE



APNS expresses profound grief over the sad

demise of

Mr. Ajmal Dehlvi, and Mr. Habib-ur-Rehman,
Chief Editor Managing Director

Daily Amn, Karachi

May Allah the Almighty rest their souls in eternal peace

and grant courage to the families to bear the loss.



All Pakistan Newspapers Society

Briefs

IHC orders removal of Mazari's name from PCL

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday ordered authorities concerned to remove the name of former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shireen Mazari from the Passport Control List (PCL), which regulates the departure from and entry into the country. The ex-PTI stalwart's name was put on the PCL on the recommendation of the Islamabad police on May 26, just days after she renounced her membership of the party in condemnation of the May 9 riots. Several PTI bigwigs, including Mazari, were arrested under the Maintenance of Public Order ordinance following the violence that ensued after former prime minister Imran Khan's arrest in a graft case. The court issued the verdict on Mazari's plea filed through her counsel Advocate Barrister Ahsan Jamal Pirzada declared the placement of the former federal minister's name in PCL illegal. "[...] instant writ petition is allowed, placing of name of the petitioner on PCL is declared to be unjustified illegal, without lawful authority and of no legal effect," a short order issued by the IHC stated. While ordering the removal of Mazari's name from the PCL within a week, the court also directed the Islamabad Immigration and Passport director general to submit a compliance report before the judicial deputy registrar of the high court.

US to press for extending Gaza truce: White House

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States will continue to press for extending a truce in Gaza, the White House said Friday, as intense fighting erupted once again in the Israel-Hamas war. "We continue to work with Israel, Egypt, and Qatar on efforts to extend the humanitarian pause in Gaza," a White House National Security Council spokesperson said. Under the truce which lasted a week, Hamas militants released 80 Israeli hostages in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners. More humanitarian aid was also delivered into war-devastated Gaza. But the prospects of re-establishing a truce were being stymied because "Hamas has so far failed to produce a list of hostages that would enable a further extension of the pause," the NSC spokesperson said. President Joe Biden and his national security team "will continue to remain deeply engaged as we look to free the remaining hostages," the NSC spokesperson said.

World leaders take centerstage in high-level COP28 event

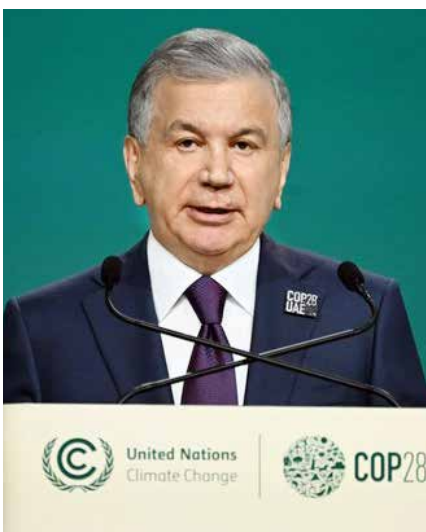
"We plan to reach the net zero emissions target by the year 2053, we have doubled our emission reduction target for the year 2030"

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: More than 130 world leaders take centerstage as they address the United Nations climate conference in Dubai over the next two days to deliver national statements. The high-level segment of COP28 would hear from heads of states and governments, including UAE President Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Jordan's King Abdullah, Qatar's ruler Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. "When it comes to combating climate change, even though our historical responsibility of global greenhouse emissions is less than 1 percent, we're taking significant steps with our own means," Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Türkiye, said in his speech. "We plan to reach the net zero emissions target by the year 2053, we have doubled our emission reduction target for the year 2030." "Within this scope, by the end of this year, we expect to have mitigated 66.6 million tons of equivalent carbon dioxide," he added. "The share of renewables in our installed power generation capacity has been increased up to 55 percent. With this rate, Türkiye currently ranks the fifth in Europe and the twelfth in the world in terms of installed renewable energy capacity." "In regard to geothermal energy capacity we are ranked the first in Europe and fourth in the world. And when it comes to hydropower, Türkiye ranks the second in Europe and ninth in the world." "Last September, at the climate action summit in New York, we called for concrete action. Now in Dubai we have to deliver," Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, told the High-Level Segment



for Heads of State and Government session at the United Nations climate summit. "The European Union has peaked already, we have reduced emissions and we are on track to overshoot our target for 2030." "This year's conference of the parties must recognize even more than ever that we cannot talk about climate change in isolation from the humanitarian tragedies unfolding around us," King Abdullah II of Jordan said in his speech. "As we speak, the Palestinian people are facing an immediate threat to their lives and wellbeing. In Gaza over 1.7 million Palestinians have been displaced from their homes. Tens of thousands have been injured or killed in a region already on the front line of the climate change." "As we meet here today to talk about inclusivity in climate response, let's be inclusive of the most vulnerable: Palestinian civilians



impacted by the war on Gaza, populations around the world affected by conflict and poverty," he added. "In a region already on the front lines of climate change, the massive destruction of war makes these environmental threats of water scarcity and food insecurity even more severe," he said, in a clear reference to fighting between Israel and Hamas militants in Gaza that resumed on Friday after a seven-day truce. Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil, home to most of the world's biggest natural carbon-capture zone on land, the Amazon rainforest, said "the planet is tired of climate agreements that were not fulfilled" and he said he has had enough of "eloquent and empty speeches." "In the north of Brazil, the Amazon region suffers one of the most tragic droughts of its history. In the South, we are facing tempests and hurricanes that lead to a lot of destruction



and death," he said. Lula, who a year earlier was treated like a rock star after his defeat of right-wing Jair Bolsonaro, called for climate justice for poorer nations that didn't cause the problem and railed against \$2 trillion spent on weapons last year when the money should be spent on fighting hunger and climate change, not wars. He said Brazil will stop Amazon deforestation by 2030. "No country will solve their problems alone. We are all obliged to act together beyond our borders. Brazil is willing to lead as a role model," he said. "The world is already convinced of the potential of renewable sources of energy. Now is the time to face the debate about the slow-motion pace of the decarbonization of the planet, and to work towards an economy that will be less reliant on fossil fuel. We have to do it, and in a way that is urgent and fair."

CJP Isa parts with two luxury vehicles

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan QaziFaez Isa on Friday ordered the auction of two luxury vehicles allocated for his use by the federal and Punjab governments, saying this is an "inappropriate splurge of scarce public resources". In a letter sent by the SC registrar to the federal government cabinet secretary and Punjab chief secretary, the bureaucrats were told that the apex court purchased a new Mercedes Benz, 2996 CC sedan for Rs61 million for the CJP in September 2020. "A brand new bullet-proof Toyota Land Cruiser, Registration No LEG-S00, was also provided by the Government of Punjab for the use of the chief justice of Pakistan, which is parked in the Supreme Court Rest House in GOR, Lahore," said the letter. The letter stated that every judge of the apex court has been provided two vehicles as per rules. "Justice Isa has not used the said Mercedes sedan nor the Toyota Land Cruiser," said the letter. It further stated that it is an "inappropriate splurge of scarce public resources to buy imported luxury vehicles for the use of constitutional and public office holders." "Therefore, these vehicles may be collected and auctioned and the money realised from the sale be spent on much needed public transport," said the letter.



DUBAI: Caretaker PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar is being received by the President of UAE, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Secretary General of UN, Antonio Guterres on his arrival at Dubai Expo City to attend the High Level Segment of United Nations' COP28. - DNA

US probe confirm Indian plot to kill Sikh leaders

WASHINGTON: In a startling development, recent revelations from the United States intelligence agency have lent credence to the allegations leveled by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau against India regarding acts of terrorism on Canadian soil. Reports confirm the involvement of Indian government agents in the targeted killings of Sikh leaders, marking a significant turn in the ongoing diplomatic tensions between the two nations. Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau, speaking on behalf of his cabinet, reiterated the gravity of the situation, highlighting their joint investigation with American counterparts into these serious accusations against India. He emphasized the imperative for the Indian government to actively engage and cooperate in addressing these pressing concerns. "Our foremost responsibility is the safety and security of Canadian citizens," affirmed Prime Minister

Trudeau, citing the evidence presented by the US intelligence agency. The revelations point to the involvement of an officer from India's Central Reserve Police Force in a conspiracy to eliminate members of the Khalistan Movement group, including Tunat Singh, in May 2023. The alleged plot, orchestrated by agents of the Modi government, has raised alarm bells internationally. US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken echoed Trudeau's sentiments, confirming an ongoing investigation into the assassination plot targeting Khalistani leader Pannu. "We are meticulously pursuing this investigation and await its findings," stated Blinken, underscoring the seriousness with which the US is approaching these allegations. John Kirby, the coordinator of strategic communications at the Security Council, emphasized the gravity of the situation, asserting the US's unwavering commitment to pursuing justice. "We are resolute in our determination to hold those responsible for these alleged crimes accountable before the law," Kirby affirmed, underscoring the importance of a thorough and transparent investigation. The unfolding events have significantly strained diplomatic relations between India, Canada, and the United States, raising concerns about the implications of these allegations on international cooperation and security measures. The global community now anticipates further developments as investigations into these serious accusations against India continue to unfold. - Agencies

New candidate for PTI chairmanship emerges

DNA

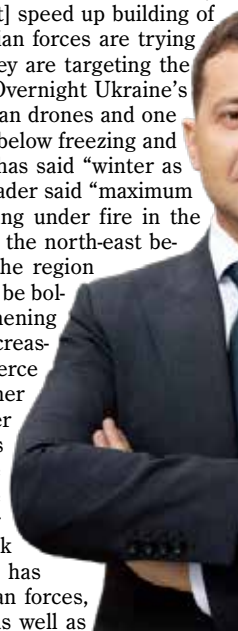
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) will hold its intra-party elections tomorrow to elect the party's new chairman, but a new candidate wishing to take the party's driving seat has emerged at the last moment. The elections will be held at the party's central secretariat in Islamabad. PTI members from across the country will be eligible to vote. The intra-party elections are being held following a directive from the ECP. The commission had earlier ordered PTI to hold the polls within 20 days to retain its election symbol. Preparations for the elections are in the final stages, and the nomination process has concluded. Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, the nominated candidate for the post of chairman, has submitted his nomination papers. The lawyer is a close confidant of former PTI Chairman Imran Khan and is considered to be the frontrunner in the race. However, Akbar S Babar, the founding leader of PTI, visited the central secretariat after 13 years. He, along with other founding leaders of the

party, went to the secretariat and the doors of the building were opened upon seeing him. Later in the media talk, Akbar S Babar said that he had come to get information about the intra-party elections. PTI founding member said that he wanted to obtain information about nomination papers, the voter list, and the election procedure. He stated that several founding members wanted to participate in the intra-party elections. Akbar S. Babar expressed his desire to take full part in tomorrow's elections. Yesterday, he also criticized Imran Khan's nomination of Barrister Gohar Ali Khan as the sole candidate for the party chairman's position. He called the process a "selection" rather than an election. In a press release, Babar, who filed the foreign funding case against the PTI, said Imran Khan's nomination raises concerns about the transparency and credibility of the entire PTI intra-party election process. He expressed disappointment that the PTI, which advocates for transparency and fairness in national elections, is not providing its members with the same level of transparency and fairness in its own leadership elections.

Fortifying front lines must be accelerated: Ukrainian President

KIEV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said defences must be quickly beefed up across the front line, after meeting commanders in some of the main pressure points in the south and east. "In all major sectors where reinforcement is needed, [we must] speed up building of structures," he said in his nightly address. Russian forces are trying to encircle the eastern town of Avdiivka. And they are targeting the southern regions of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. Overnight Ukraine's air force said it had shot down 18 out of 25 Russian drones and one of two cruise missiles. With temperatures falling below freezing and Ukraine cloaked with snow, President Zelensky has said "winter as a whole is a new phase of war". The Ukrainian leader said "maximum attention" would be paid to eastern towns coming under fire in the Donetsk region as well as a key defensive line in the north-east between Kupiansk and Lyman. He also included the region around the capital Kyiv where fortifications would be bolstered. President Zelensky's emphasis on strengthening defensive lines may lend weight to fears of an increasingly "frozen" conflict, despite some continued fierce fighting. Ukraine counter-offensive since the summer is widely viewed as having failed to quickly deliver hoped-for gains. Frontline morale on both sides will hinge to some extent on how well soldiers are equipped to cope with these colder months. The military said 20 attacks had been repelled near Avdiivka alone and villages had come under attack around Bakhmut. The industrial hub of Avdiivka has been almost encircled in recent weeks by Russian forces, who now control areas to the north and south, as well as

the east of the town. Dmytro Lazutkin, the spokesman for Ukraine's 47th Mechanised Brigade said the situation had become constantly difficult. One community to the north-west of Avdiivka, Stepove, was coming under repeated attack, and Russia was sending significant forces in a bid to seize a nearby coke plant just outside Avdiivka. "Without taking the coke plant, they can only dream of [capturing] Avdiivka... I'm not convinced they have such power to do that, although very many of them are concentrated there," he told Ukraine's public broadcaster. In the south-east as well, Russian forces have sought to regain areas lost during Ukraine's counter-offensive around Robotyne, according to Ukrainian officials, who say they are managing to maintain positions they recaptured recently on the east bank of the River Dnipro. Mr Zelensky said Ukraine was not backing down after its summer operations, although he was unhappy with the extent of casualties. "We are losing people, I'm not satisfied. We didn't get all the weapons we wanted, I can't be satisfied," he told the Associated Press. Ukraine forces regained a foothold the village of Krynyk last month after they crossed the Dnipro, and have since come under relentless Russian attack. Russia's defence ministry has meanwhile said its navy repelled a Ukrainian naval attack on occupied Crimea via the Black Sea. Part of the peninsula, seized and then annexed by Russia in 2014, was placed under a state of emergency this week after a storm left five people dead. Coastal areas were worst hit, according to Russian-appointed leader Sergei Aksyonov. - Agencies



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