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China: Afghan Taliban must reform before full diplomatic ties

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Country needs 'competent' govt: Ahsan

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Djokovic claims 8th year-end ATP No. 1 spot

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Briefs

Fazl deems PTI 'balloon without air'

STAFF REPORT

MULTAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Tuesday fired a fresh salvo at PTI, saying the party is "balloon without air." Expressing his thoughts in Islamabad, Rehman said, "The JUI-F is ready to go for the elections. There is a dire need to have such an environment, which is necessary to hold elections in a prominent way." Underscoring the importance of the masses, Rehman stated, "The premier will be elected at the masses' will. The people will take the decision of the country's fate." Rehman said that his party had never promoted sectarianism in the country. Speaking to the media in Multan, Rehman said, "We have staged politics and ensured to maintain socio-religious values. We have to ensure that we speak in a gentle way if there are any differences of opinion. We do not have to use any foul language." Underscoring the importance of uplifting social values across the country, Rehman said, "There is a dire need to develop social connection with the masses."

Rabbani wants action against Discos

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: PPP Senator Mian Raza Rabbani condemns alleged malpractices including overcharging by power distribution companies (Discos) and calls it a criminal activity. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) investigation revealed widespread overcharging by the companies. Rabbani demanded that law-enforcement agencies initiate legal action against Discos. He also demanded adjustment of overcharged amounts on user bills and inclusion of Nepra report in the Senate. He said the CEOs of the Discos should be placed on the ECL. The report exposed discrepancies in metre readings, billing periods, and defective meters, affecting millions of consumers. K-Electric defends its practices, while Nepra recommends legal action and bill corrections within one billing cycle. According to the Nepra report, the malpractice shifted 840,000 users from the protected category, with over 52,800 consumers now classified as non-lifeline.

CM Naqvi condemns Peshawar blast

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has vehemently denounced the explosion near a school on Warsik Road in Peshawar. He extended heartfelt prayers for the swift recovery of all individuals, especially the children, who were injured in blast.

'Humanity's darkest hour' Battles rage as Israel widens Gaza onslaught

Israel strikes Gaza with more than 100,000 artillery shells since Oct. 27

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 61 on Tuesday, massive aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound and level whole blocks and homes and massacre more civilians, mostly children and women. The situation in the Gaza Strip is getting worse all the time and approaching humanity's "darkest hour", the World Health Organization said Tuesday. Israel declared war on Hamas after the militant group's October 7 attacks that killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and which saw around 240 hostages taken back to Gaza, according to Israeli authorities.

Related News on Back Page

Israel vowed to eradicate Hamas and secure the release of all the hostages. The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says the war has killed nearly 15,900 people in the territory. Here are some of the key concerns being raised by the WHO and other United Nations agencies: Richard Peepkorn, the WHO's representative in the occupied Palestinian territories, told reporters in Geneva Tuesday, via video link from Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, that the number of people on the move from central and southern Gaza was "vastly increasing". Israeli forces battled Hamas militants in southern Gaza on Tuesday,

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Israeli prisons 'Cemeteries for the living'

FOREIGN DESK

RAMALLAH: The Commission for Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners' Affairs today accused the Israeli occupation authorities of turning the prisons where Palestinian freedom fighters are held into "cemeteries for the living." It said Israel has escalated its attacks on the prisoners since October 7 amid a blackout by the prison services in order not to expose the crimes committed against prisoners. The Commission said the prison guards raid the various sections almost daily during which they assault the prisoners, severely beat them with batons and guns, spray them with toxic gas, and fire rubber-coated metal bullets at them. It said that based on what its lawyer has said following a visit to Megiddo prison, the Israeli forces in the prisons deliberately beat the

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Feb 8 Elections Govt releases over Rs17 billion to ECP

Solangi reaffirmed that govt stands firmly behind ECP in holding free and fair polls

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: A day after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) raised concerns over the non-provision of funds, the Finance Division released Rs17.4 billion to the electoral body for poll arrangements. In a statement on Tuesday, the Finance Division said it has released Rs17.4 billion to the ECP in addition to Rs10.1 billion released in July 2023. "This brings the total released amount to Rs27.4 billion for holding general elections. Finance Division remains committed to the provision of funds as and when required by the Election Commission of Pakistan," it added. On Monday, Finance Secretary Imdad Ullah Bosal assured the electoral watchdog that funds for upcoming general elections will be released in a day or two. Bosal was summoned by the commission after the

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PML-Q eyes 'seat adjustment' with PML-N

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) is eyeing 'seat adjustment' with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the general election 2024. Sources said the PML-Q is considering seat adjustment with the PML-N on more than two National Assembly and Punjab Assembly seats in Gujrat. It emerged that Chaudhry Shafay Hussain wants to contest the election on both MPA seats from Gujrat. PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat

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Afghan Taliban arrest TTP terrorists: Report

The move comes as Pak intensifies its pressure

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: In a significant development, the Afghanistan interim government has apprehended three commanders and 16 foot soldiers associated with the Malakand Division chapter of banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The arrests, which occurred just a day ago, took place in the bordering area of Kunar, reported a Pakistan newspaper, citing a reliable source on Tuesday. The move comes as Pakistan intensifies its pressure on the Afghan Taliban to take decisive action against the TTP, a group implicated in a spate of recent terrorist activities in Pakistan. Last month, Islamabad conveyed a list of demands to Kabul, including the extradition of Hafiz Gul Bahadur, whose faction claimed responsibility for the November 26 suicide attack in Bannu. Authorities revealed that the Bannu attack was carried out by an Afghan national, marking the latest in a series of attacks in Pakistan since the return of the Afghan Taliban to power in August 2021.

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Seven injured in blast Soldier martyred in Waziristan

SAID ALAM KHAN

PESHAWAR: Seven people, including three school children, sustained injuries, in an explosion on Warsik Road here on Tuesday morning. According to police, the explosive was planted alongside the road near a private bank and a school. Glasses of nearby buildings shattered by the explosion. Rescue teams and security personnel reached the spot within minutes and removed the injured to Lady Reading Hospital. The hospital sources said the condition of a nine-year-old child is serious. The injured children are between seven and 10 years of age, they added.

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ISLAMABAD: The spiritual leader of Dawoodi Bohra Community, Dr Sayedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, along with a delegation called on Caretaker PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. - DNA

PTI 'manipulated' intra-party polls challenged in ECP

"We want to save [electoral] symbol of bat," Akbar S Babar says

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) recent-held intra-party polls were Tuesday challenged at the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). PTI founding member Akbar S Babar, in his plea, requested the country's top electoral authority to order the Imran Khan-led party to conduct fresh polls. Following the polls held in Peshawar to elect the party's new officeholders including a replacement for former chairman Imran, the party members voted in favour of Barrister Gohar Khan, the ex-PTI chief's lawyer whom he nominated himself for the key post. In the wake of the elections, held on December 2, Babar refused to accept the polls and move the electoral authority against the irregularities. The senior politician added that he and other founding leaders are part of

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PTI demands neutrality in electoral process

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson called upon the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities and give shut-up call to the tout and fraudster not to speak on the matter pending before the commission, demanding to instantly allot the electoral symbol "bat" to the party after holding intra-party elections. Reacting to the press conference of the tout pertaining to the PTI's intra-party

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Nepra approves hike in electricity price

The latest hike comes on the heels of startling Nepra findings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) Tuesday approved a Rs3.07 per unit increase in electricity prices, applicable to all power distribution companies. In a notification, the regulator said: "The [...] adjustment shall be shown separately in the consumers' bills on the basis of units billed to the consumers in the month of October 2023 in the billing

month of December 2023." Nepra has notified the increase on account of variations in fuel charges, the notification mentioned, in a move that will impact millions of the electricity distribution companies' (Discos) inflation-weary consumers. The increase will not be applicable to Karachi-Electric (KE) consumers. Moreover, electric vehicle charging stations (EVCs) and lifeline consumers will also not be impacted by the increase, the notification mentioned. The power prices are persistently on the rise in Pakistan as the cash-strapped nation tries to curb its circular debt and meet the conditions of International Monetary Fund (IMF).

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The PML-N-Establishment 'collaboration'; will it work?

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI

BY selecting Barrister Gohar as the interim Chairman of the PTI, Imran Khan has strategically outmaneuvered his opponents, catching them off guard with a shrewd and astute move. The decision reflects Khan's political acumen and ability to make calculated choices that go beyond expectations. The appointment of Barrister Gohar benefits Imran Khan on two accounts: first Gohar would immediately step down whenever asked to do so and Secondly, Imran Khan has strategically chosen to distance himself from the pitfalls of family politics, a move that seeks to set a precedent and foster a culture of meritocracy within the PTI. By eschewing the appointment of any close relatives, Khan sends a clear message about his commitment to transparency, fairness, and the avoidance of nepotism in political affairs. This step not only bolsters the image of the PTI as a party that prioritizes competence over familial connections but also safeguards against potential criticism from those wary of dynastic tendencies in politics. In essence, Imran Khan's choice of Barrister Gohar as the caretaker Chairman showcases a thoughtful and strategic approach. So far, the decision appears to be a well-calibrated move that strengthens PTI's image and sets a positive precedent for political leadership in the party. Nevertheless, lingering uncertainties surround the integrity of intra-party elections, underscoring a critical flaw in the political landscape of Pakistan.



The inherent issue lies in the absence of genuine democracy within the political parties themselves. Regrettably, these internal elections often amount to mere theatrical displays, lacking true democratic essence. The process tends to be more of a selective endeavor, raising a pertinent query: If democracy remains elusive within the very foundations of political entities, how can they be entrusted with fostering democratic principles at a national level? Regarding the scheduled elections on February 8, the Finance Ministry has allocated more than Rs 27 billion in response to the Election Commission's request, significantly enhancing the outlook for the upcoming elections. This robust financial support indicates a positive shift, diminishing concerns related to funding as a potential obstacle. In previous instances, such as when the apex court directed the Election Commission to conduct elections in the Punjab and KP assemblies, insufficient funds were a prominent reason cited by the ECP for the delay. It is noteworthy that at that time, financial constraints were not the sole contributing factor; other issues also played a role in the postponement of elections. The current scenario presents a surprising turn of events, with the Establishment seemingly placing its bets on the PML N, a move that can only be described as a miraculous development given the historical dynamics between the two. Despite a fraught past, both parties are fully cognizant of this reality. The challenge arises from the strategic necessity for PML N and PPP support in the overarching plan to dislodge the PTI government. Consequently, the Establishment found itself compelled to approach the PML N. In parallel, the PML N, led by Nawaz Sharif and his associates, found themselves in a position where Establishment support was not only imperative for the resolution of legal issues but also pivotal for an

active re-entry into the political arena, perhaps even eyeing a fourth term as the prime minister. However, this tactical alliance has placed the image and future well-being of both the PML N and the Establishment in precarious territory. The risks associated with this collaboration loom large, as it calls into question the credibility and standing of these entities in the eyes of the public and the broader political landscape. The delicate balance between strategic necessity and potential reputational jeopardy underscores the complexity of the political chessboard at play. Nawaz Sharif's decision to maintain a low profile since his return to Pakistan seems to stem from his perceived association with the Establishment. His political narrative, at least in recent times, has largely centered around an anti-Establishment stance. This creates a delicate situation for him during public appearances, as the absence of any mention of his established narrative might lead to a political setback. It appears that he is currently treading cautiously, recognizing the potential risks involved. This strategic silence may be a temporary measure, a calculated move to navigate the complex political landscape. By avoiding explicit references to his anti-Establishment stance, Nawaz Sharif may be attempting to avoid direct confrontation or escalation, possibly in an effort to find a more conducive environment for political engagement. However, it's crucial to note that sustaining such a position for an extended period could be challenging. Nawaz Sharif finds himself caught between opposing forces, akin to being "between the devil and the deep sea." Striking a delicate balance between maintaining political relevance and avoiding unnecessary conflicts is a formidable challenge. The coming days will likely reveal whether this low-profile strategy is a short-term tactical maneuver or a more enduring aspect of his political approach.

The evolving dynamics of his relationship with the Establishment will play a pivotal role in shaping the future trajectory of his political career. On the contrary, the enduring popularity of the PTI remains a source of concern for those in positions of authority. Despite various challenges, the party's appeal shows no signs of waning, posing a potential obstacle to the established powers. The prospect of a genuinely transparent and equitable election raises the likelihood of the PTI reclaiming power. In a bid to curtail the PTI's chances, there is speculation that the party might face the removal of its distinctive election symbol - the 'bat.' This strategic move aims to disrupt the party's connection with voters, particularly in rural areas where illiteracy prevails. The risk lies in the potential confusion among voters, accustomed to identifying the PTI by the 'bat' symbol. Altering this familiar emblem could create a hurdle for the party as voters may struggle to navigate the ballot. In summary, the persistent reality in Pakistani politics is the undeniable influence of the Establishment, which often intervenes in political affairs due to the consistent underperformance of civilian governments. It is imperative for the political leadership to recognize that such interference will persist unless they address internal issues. The recurrent removal of political administrations is typically justified by allegations of corruption. Corruption stands out as a formidable challenge afflicting the nation, and unless it is decisively addressed, Pakistan's progress will remain stagnant. It is crucial to tackle this menace head-on to pave the way for genuine political stability and socio-economic development.

- The writer is the Editor Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline magazine and DNA News Agency.

PRCS celebrates international volunteer day

PRCS organized a memorable ceremony at its National Headquarters on Tuesday to mark the International Volunteer Day

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) organized a memorable ceremony at its National Headquarters on Tuesday to mark the International Volunteer Day. The event resonated with the theme of "Hope" from the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, recognizing and honoring volunteers worldwide who selflessly dedicate their time and efforts to voluntary service, contributing significantly to humanity. The distinguished presence of Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, added prestige to the occasion. The ceremony brought together a gathering of passionate staff and volunteers, who celebrated the International Volunteer Day with enthu-

siasm and fervor. The National Headquarters lawn witnessed a ceremonial cake cutting, symbolizing the shared commitment to humanitarian causes. Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari personally engaged with the volunteers, expressing his appreciation for their firm commitment to humanitarian efforts. In his address, Chairman Laghari emphasized that the International Volunteer Day is a celebration of individuals who embody selflessness, compassion, and unwavering dedication to making a positive impact on society. He remarked, "Our volunteers, the heartbeat of our organization, stand as beacons of hope, tirelessly extending their hands to anyone in need, anywhere in the world." In the face of numerous challenges, from natural disasters to health emergencies, conflicts to climate crises,

the volunteers of Pakistan Red Crescent Society exemplify the true essence of humanity. Reflecting on the past year, Chairman Laghari highlighted the resilience of the organization in responding to a devastating flood. Through collaboration with esteemed Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners, the organization swiftly mobilized to provide crucial assistance. The "Recovery Initiative" continues, with volunteers still on the frontlines, offering support to families affected by the flood. Chairman Laghari concluded, "On this International Volunteer Day, let us salute the unsung heroes who, with humility and determination, make a profound difference in the lives of countless individuals. Together, as a united force, we will continue to spread hope, one act of kindness at a time."



Fog, smog to engulf plain areas :PMD

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Tuesday forecast that smog and fog would engulf plain areas of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and upper Sindh at morning and night time during the next 24 hours. Mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. According to the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country. A shallow westerly wave was present over northwest Balochistan. During the last 24 hours, cold and dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country. The lowest minimum temperatures recorded during the period were Leh -09 C, Skardu -07, Gilgit, Astore, Kalat -04, Kalam, Pulwama, Baramulla -03, Gupis and Anantnag -02 C. - APP

Governor inaugurates swimming pool

BAHAWALPUR : Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman on Tuesday inaugurated the newly constructed swimming pool of Bahawalpur Gymkhana. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the swimming pool was a good addition for the club members. The governor said that a committee had been formed to affiliate Lahore Gymkhana with Bahawal Gymkhana. He appreciated the efforts of office bearers of Bahawal Gymkhana in making the club more beautiful. The governor said that Bahawal Gymkhana was a useful recreational facility for the people of the area. Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur, Zaheer Anwar Jappa briefing the governor told that the funds of the gymkhana had been used transparently and all office bearers had performed their duties with dedication. Commissioner Bahawalpur, Dr Ehtesham Anwar, General Secretary Ejaz Nazim and others were also present on the occasion. Armenia's defence ministry said Azerbaijan forces shot dead an Armenian serviceman near the two countries' border on Monday, but Baku said the report was "a complete lie". The incident, if true, would mark the first such border fatality since Azerbaijan retook the region of Nagorno-Karabakh in September in a lightning military offensive that prompted the exodus of almost all the territory's 120,000 ethnic Armenians. - APP

BISP for expanding digitalization process to ensure transparency

ISLAMABAD :The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) on Tuesday discussed expansion of the digitalization process to ensure transparency in service delivery with the delegation from Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in a meeting held at BISP office, the visiting team from ADB and SDPI explored the digital transformation in the social safety sector. Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmed welcomed the delegation and gave an introduction on the digital transformation of the programme to facilitate those who need financial assistance. He highlighted modes of cash disbursement, and NSER data comprising over 35 million households. It was also discussed how the distribution system has transcended and transformed from money orders to branchless banking networks. The delegation led by Nasruminallah Senior Programme Officer alongwith Dr. Jordanka Tomkova Senior Consultant, Khayyam Sohail Abbasi and Mr. Muhammad Saeed from ADB whereas Dr. Vaqar Ahmed Joint Executive Director, Ahad Nazir, Abdullah Khalid and Zainab Babar from SDPI were present in the meeting. The members of the delegation shared their valuable experiences. The both sides agreed to benefit from each other's experiences. The meeting also discussed expansion of digitization for transparent and improved service delivery. - DNA

Measures against dengue reviewed

BAHAWALPUR :A meeting of the District Emergency Response Committee for anti-dengue was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa here in his office on Tuesday. The measures taken for dengue control were reviewed in the meeting. The Deputy Commissioner said that all measures should be taken to control dengue. He directed that

the water should not be accumulated in one place so that the growth of dengue larvae be restricted. Public awareness should also be raised in this regard. He directed that Android user activities should be increased and complete coverage of hotspots should also be ensured. He said that the members of the indoor and outdoor teams should work actively throughout the district and the complaints received through the dengue vigilance report system should be resolved properly. No negligence will be tolerated in this regard. The meeting was informed that 10192 suspected cases of dengue were reported this year, of which only 46 were confirmed. Dengue larva was found at 190 places during scanning. As many as 1750 dengue hotspots have been completely covered and 412 indoor and 108 outdoor teams are active for the dengue prevention campaign. - APP

Awareness walk held to mark Voters Day

SUKKUR : The District Election Commission Sukkur organized a walk here on Tuesday from Minara Road to Sukkur Press Club on the occasion of Voters Day to create awareness among the masses to register their votes and to play their vital role in electing the rulers during elections. District Election Commissioner Azizullah Abbasi, Government officials, scouts, members of civil society a large number of political and social workers, and elected representatives participated in the walk. District Election Commissioner Abbasi said that the Election Commission of Pakistan has taken an initiative to enhance the turnout of vot-

ers in upcoming general elections by introducing the District Voters Education Committee in every district of the country. The committee comprises different stakeholders of the district who are working as a volunteer to educate the citizens about the voter registration process and the importance of the vote. The purpose of introducing the District Voters Education Committee was to create awareness among citizens for using their right to vote and to facilitate them to register their vote in the District Election Commission office before the announcement of the next elections. He said that every individual should play his

Police accelerates crackdown

Lahore : On the instructions of Inspector General Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, the crackdown has been accelerated against the fugitive and proclaimed offenders criminals residing abroad, in continuation of which, another fugitive has been arrested from Saudi Arabia and has reached back home. Abdul Ghaffar, wanted by Bahawalnagar police, fled to Saudi Arabia after the crime incident. Punjab Police has issued a red notice of the accused from Interpol, and continued the pursuit. Fugitive Abdul Ghaffar was arrested by Interpol in Saudi Arabia and returned home under legal procedures. Bahawalnagar police arrested the Abdul Ghaffar at the airport. Spokesman Punjab Police said that the total number of criminals arrested from foreign countries this year has reached 144. -APP



ISLAMABAD: A man is buying electric heaters from vendor at weekly Tuesday Market of H-9 in Federal Capital.— ONLINE

CM Nqvi chairs cabinet meeting, approves reforms

Cabinet approved revision of shooting licenses and fees under Punjab Wildlife Rules 1974 and gave green light to establishing a Pothohar campus of University of Punjab in Gujjar Khan

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The 33rd provincial cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, convened at the Civil Secretariat to address crucial matters. The cabinet approved an increase in driving license fees effective from January 1. Until this date, driving licenses will continue to be issued at the existing rates. Starting January 1, the learner fee will surge from Rs 60 to Rs 1000, alongside an increase in LTV, HTV, and PSV license fees. Residents of the US, Canada, and other countries can obtain a license online by paying \$100. During the meeting, the cabinet endorsed a transparent lottery system for allocating government land to landless farmers in Cholistan. A substantial 3,44,000 acres of land will be allocated to landless farmers at subsidized rates. Additionally, the cabinet approved the transfer policy for MBBS and BDS students in government medical and dental colleges, allowing transfers only from high-grade merit to low-grade

institutions. The management of prison hospitals will be entrusted to health department and a healthcare system for prisoners received approval. Funds were greenlit to double the number of nursing students, and a management committee for the Institute of Public Health Lahore was established. The cabinet renewed the agreement between the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department and the Recep Tayyip Erdogan Health Trust for the operation of Regional Blood Centers in Multan and Bahawalpur. Decisions were made to elevate Children's Hospital Faisalabad to the status of a medical institute under the Punjab Medical and Health Institutions Act 2003. The establishment of PKLI-2 for South Punjab in Multan Institute of Kidney Diseases, was also confirmed. Furthermore, the cabinet endorsed policy frameworks for the selection of vice-chancellors at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Lahore and Bahawalpur, along with the appointment of prosecutors from the Pub-

lic Prosecutor Department to the FIA on a deputation basis. Under the Punjab Special Premises (Preservation) Ordinance 1985, Jinnah Garden was granted special status, and its administrative affairs were entrusted to the Walled City Authority. The historic Umar Mahal of Chiniot was also placed under the management of the Walled City Authority. The cabinet approved the revision of shooting licenses and fees under Punjab Wildlife Rules 1974 and gave the green light to establishing a Pothohar campus of the University of Punjab in Gujjar Khan. Additionally, an agreement with the National Highways and Motorway Police for the exchange of motor vehicle registration information was endorsed. The decisions of the 10th and 11th meetings of the Cabinet Standing Committee on Legal Affairs and Privatization were confirmed. The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, advisors, the chief secretary, inspector general of police, advocate general of Punjab, senior officials, and concerned secretaries.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

DECEMBER

Dec 01/Romania National Day

Dec 02/United Arab Emirates National Day

Dec 02/Laos Republic National Day

Dec 05/Thailand National Day

Dec 06/Finland Independence Day

Dec 07/India Armed Forces Flag Day

Dec 09/Tanzania National Day

Dec 11/Oman Armed Forces Day

Dec 12/Kenya Independence Day

Dec 12/Turkmenistan Neutrality Day

Dec 16/Bahrain National Day

Dec 16/Kazakhstan Independence Day

Dec 18/Qatar National Day

Dec 18/Niger National Day

Dec 23/Philippines Armed Forces Day

Dec 23/Japan National Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



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MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-29
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

Pak greatly values relations with Jordan: Sadiq Sanjrani

Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan, H.E Maen Khreisat calls on Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: H.E Maen Khreisat, the Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan called on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani today at the Parliament House. The discussion primarily focused on strengthening bilateral ties and addressing pressing humanitarian issues. The Ambassador and Chairman Senate delved into the current situation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, condemning the Israeli actions and emphasizing the broader implications for the Middle East region. Chairman Senate appreciated the efforts of King Abdullah bin Hussein of Jordan in seeking an end to the ongoing crisis. Recognizing Jordan's pivotal role as the custodian of Masjid Al Aqsa Compound and underscoring its historical significance in maintaining peace in Alquds Jerusalem. Ambassador Khreisat highlighted Jordan's continuous support for the Palestinian people, including the establishment and replenishment of a hospital in Gaza to provide crucial



medical services. Given Jordan's historical commitment to Palestinian refugees, the Ambassador stressed their ongoing efforts to assist in times of need. The Chairman Senate called for efforts to achieve heightened international awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the West Bank.

He urged collective efforts to end the suffering of innocent Palestinians and emphasized the necessity of a resolution in accordance with international law. Genocidal actions and war crimes of Zionist Israeli regime in Palestinian territories were condemned. Acknowledging the enduring fra-

ternal ties between Jordan and Pakistan, rooted in shared religious and cultural values, Jordanian Ambassador expressed a commitment to further strengthening these bonds. Chairman Senate proposed an increase in bilateral trade and economic relations, reflecting the mutual desire for

enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and Jordan. The meeting concluded with a shared determination to foster collaboration not only in addressing immediate challenges but also in building a stronger foundation for sustained partnership between the two nations.

President confers Nishan-i-Pakistan award on Bohra community head

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday conferred the civil award of Nishan-i-Pakistan on Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, the Head of the Dawoodi Bohra Community, in recognition of his services for Pakistan in the field of spiritual guidance and social services. The award was conferred at a special investiture ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sard and attended by the federal cabinet members as well as the representa-

tives of the Bohra community. According to the citation read out before the conferment of the award, Dr. Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin is the 53rd Dai-e-Mutlaq whose followers are spread across all continents with a large number of them being Pakistani citizens. The Bohra community head has a special regard for Pakistan and is an advocate of peace, harmony and goodwill. Recounting his services in the education sector, it

was told that he had contributed to the building of the School of Law at the University of Karachi and launched a university project. Multiple healthcare institutions are operating in the name of the Bohra community head providing affordable healthcare to people. Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin has repeatedly emphasized the importance of conserving and protecting the environment. In the past few years alone, over 100,000 trees have been planted by his followers in

different parts of Pakistan. He also launched a global initiative named 'Project Rise' encompassing a range of areas, including healthcare, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, environmental responsibility and conservation, and education. He urged his followers to contribute actively to Pakistan's socioeconomic progress and explore business opportunities in the country besides developing an extensive network of schemes offering interest-free loans.—APP

Action against illegal commercial use of residential buildings in G-13, G-14 soon

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) is soon going to start action against unauthorized commercial use of residential buildings in Sectors G-13 and G-14 of the federal capital. "In this regard, the authority has already issued notices to the owners of illegal and unauthorized use of residential properties for commercial purposes in the sectors," sources in the FGEHA told APP. As per the Islamabad Capital Territory Building Control Regulation 2020, they said that the FGEHA has decided to take legal action against property owners involved in unlawful or unauthorized commercial use of residential buildings in the sectors. The sources said that the authority has issued formal show-cause notices and warnings to them to immediately cease non-conforming use of residential buildings. Moreover, they said the authority has cautioned the property owners that failure to comply the orders would result in a fine of Rs. 500,000 in addition to sealing such properties. They informed that as many as 80 residential buildings in these sectors have been identified as in unauthorized and illegal commercial use, including various offices, schools, guest houses, beauty parlors, hostels, property offices, furniture showrooms, and others. "The authority had initially issued notices in March 2023 regarding illegal commercial use of residential buildings. However, another warning has now been issued, emphasizing the immediate halt of commercial use in residential areas," they added. The sources said that the authority is set to initiate definitive actions against violators to ensure compliance with regulations.—APP

Harassment-free workspace vital: President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday termed financially-empowered women an important contributor to socio-economic development said their emancipation necessitated a harassment-free environment at workplaces. "The State and the society need to provide every woman a safe and secure space in public and domestic domains where they could thrive amid equal opportunities," he said in his address here at an event organized by the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAPH). President Alvi said it was the responsibility of both the State and society to bring a change in attitudes that promoted gender-based harassment. He said the empowerment of women had several facets including the right to ample representation in financial, political, and leadership spheres. The president

said denial of property and inheritance rights to women was against the injunctions of Islam and the country's law and needed to be reported at legal forums such as FOSPAPH. He said Islam enunciated equal rights to women some 1,400 years ago and supported their participation in all fields of life. The president quoted the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as saying "No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you." He termed 'honour killings' of women a criminal act that required a change of behaviours against several social taboos. Dr Alvi emphasized the role of media in promoting awareness about gender harassment through talk shows, television dramas and cultural programmes. He proposed that the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority could be taken on board for relaying short messaging services to cellular phone consumers on awareness about gender

harassment. State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) Deputy Governor Saleem Ullah said women could prove themselves as a productive workforce in achieving the goals of a stable economy. He mentioned that SBP in three years provided training to women on digital finance at their doorsteps and was endeavouring to open accounts for 9.3 million women in collaboration with Benazir Income Support Programme. Chairperson FOSPAPH said the organization was redressing the grievances about harassment at workplace and the women's property rights within 90 days and without any fee. She said since its establishment, FOSPAPH dealt with 8,000 cases of women's harassment and provided speedy justice to aggrieved persons. A documentary was screened on the occasion depicting the problems faced by women at workplaces and the FOSPAPH's activities as a platform for their redressal.

SMEDA to organize training

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) will organize a one-day workshop on "Import Export Documentation Procedures and Pakistan Single Window (PSW)" for profitable business growth on 11 December. The workshop will be held at the Jhelum Chamber of Commerce Industry (JCCI), according to sources in the authority informed on Tuesday. The training program will provide information about international trade, its importance, benefits, risk and barriers, stakeholders of import/export business in Pakistan, company registration and types of companies, stages of exports from Pakistan, and International trade terms-Incoterms 2020. The workshop will also provide information about trade payments terms, cargo insurance, importance and benefits, import-export documentation complete flow, and registration and handling of Pakistan Single Window (PSW).

Govt, ILO to forge collaborative path to enhance social justice

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Jawad Sohrab Malik held a meeting with Assistant Director-General & Regional Director, International Labour Organization (ILO) Ms. Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa here at the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis on Tuesday. Jawad Sohrab Malik reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of Pakistan to the Global Coalition for Social Justice and Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection along with its dedication to the shared goal of ensuring Decent Work for all, said a press release. He emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to achieve this objective, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach. He commended the ILO's initiatives, particularly its efforts towards the national skills passport, said a press release. SAPM reiterated his commitment to supporting the scaling of this initiative and emphasized the significance of human capital development and skills training for women to address gender disparities faced by them during work. During the meeting, Ms. Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa expressed interest in assisting the Government of Pakistan in developing a national roadmap for safe, fair, and inclusive labour migration. Recognizing the pivotal role of labour migration in today's globalized world, both parties underscored their commitment to creating an environment that protects the rights and well-being of workers. She praised the Government of Pakistan's dedication and stressed the importance of building robust partnerships to effectively address challenges and capitalize on opportunities in the realm of labour migration.—APP

COMSTECH announces special teacher's training program

COMSTECH will provide return economy class tickets to successful international applicants and will cover their visa fee

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH-the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC in collaboration with Ida Rieu Schools for the Blind and Deaf has launched a 'Special Teacher's Training Program'. According to an official of COMSTECH, this program is one of its kind by offering dedicated three months training to Special Teachers by experts of the field. Special Education Teachers from all OIC member states (57 countries) can benefit from this program. This program was jointly discussed

and agreed by Ms. Nadira Panjwani (H.I & S.I.) and Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, (Mustafa (PBUH) Prize Laureate, H. I., S. I., T. I.) Coordinator General COMSTECH. About the eligibility, the official informed that this program is open for the nationals of OIC member and observer states with age limit of 28-40 years. The applicants holding teaching experience of at least one year or relevant educational background will be given preference. The training is for a period of three months. COMSTECH will provide return economy class tickets to successful international applicants and will cover their visa fee. All the research/learning/practice

activities will be conducted in English. About the application procedure, the official informed that the applicant is required to submit the application through email id: khazima@comstech.org till the closing date of December 20. The details of training will be shared with selected candidates through email. COMSTECH is the only OIC institution hosted by Government of Pakistan, presided by the President of Pakistan as Chairman of COMSTECH. COMSTECH was established in 1981 with the core mandate to strengthen cooperation among OIC Member States in science and technology (S&T). The

ultimate aim is to build and nourish a scientific culture in addition to using S&T as a major contributor to socio-economic development and rapid industrialization. Ida Rieu Schools for the Blind & Deaf are schools and colleges run by the Ida Rieu welfare Association. 'IDA RIEU Poor Welfare Association' came into existence on November 25, 1921 in Karachi with a view of imparting education and training to the blind, deaf and mute children to make them useful citizens of community. Their mission is to nurture the intellectual and social skills of the special children and enable them to cope with all challenges through education and training.

2 injured as gas cylinder explodes

ISLAMABAD: At least two people sustained burn injuries after a gas cylinder explosion in the Rawalpindi area of Babu Lal Hussain Road at a Tandoor shop on Tuesday. According to details, a rescue official has confirmed the incident as he said that the cylinder blast took place in a tandoor restaurant, as a result, two people were critically injured. Rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital.—APP

AIUO Sukkur Campus hosts friendly cricket match

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In commemoration of its Golden Jubilee, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIUO) Sukkur Campus organized a Friendly Cricket Match at the Cricket Ground Saleh Pat. The event, hosted by Regional Campus Sukkur, brought together cricket enthusiasts and community leaders for a day of spirited competition and camaraderie. The ceremony commenced with a joint inauguration by Chairman, Town Committee Saleh Pat, Syed Qalandar Bux Shah Rizvi and Regional Director AIUO, Sukkur Syed Atta Hussain Musavi here on Tuesday. The dignitaries shared a handshake with the participating players, symbolizing the unity and sportsmanship at the heart of the event. The enthusiastic audience witnessed an exciting match, expressing their admiration for AIUO's initiative in organizing such a positive and healthy event in Saleh Pat. Mr. Atta Hussain Musavi, in his address to the audience and players, underscored the importance of education for the enrichment of life and the well-being of our beloved families, alongside the joy of sports. As a token of appreciation, Musavi distributed certificates of participation to all players and presented trophies and Suvaiver Mugs to the respective team captains. The awards ceremony added an extra layer of festivity, acknowledging the outstanding efforts of the participants. The Golden Jubilee Celebrations at Allama Iqbal Open University continue to resonate with meaningful events, promoting the values of education, sportsmanship, and community engagement. AIUO looks forward to further contributions to the academic and social fabric of the region in the years to come.

Excise deptt to hold vehicle registration, token tax Camp at Katchnar Park

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Dec 05 (APP): In a move to facilitate the citizens of Islamabad, Excise Department will be holding a vehicle registration and token tax camp at the parking lot of Katchnar Park today from 3 to 5 pm. The camp will be held on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said on Tuesday. In addition to the vehicle registration and token tax services, the Islamabad Facilitation Center Doorstep ICT Vehicle will also be present at the camp. The Doorstep ICT Vehicle provides a variety of services, including Domicile Certificate, Birth Certificate, Power of Attorney, International Driving Permit, Fuel Permit (Domestic/Commercial), and Motor Vehicle Registration. This is a great opportunity for Islamabad residents to get their vehicles registered and pay their token taxes without having to go to the Excise Department office. The camp is also a convenient way for citizens to obtain other essential services from the Islamabad Facilitation Center.

Briefs

Pakistan's sesamum seed exports reach all-time high of USD 113 million

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has witnessed an unprecedented surge in its Sesamum seed exports, reaching an all-time high of USD 113.66 million just in October 2023. The surge not only underscores the nation's prowess in the agricultural sector but also highlights its ability to capitalize on global market demands, said Ghulam Qadir Commercial Counsellor Pakistan Embassy, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. Ghulam Qadir said that the Sesamum seed industry continues to thrive, experts attribute this remarkable achievement to a combination of favorable climatic conditions, strategic agricultural policies, and adept market positioning. This surge in exports not only reflects positively on Pakistan's economy but also positions the country as a key player in the international Sesamum seed market. "In the first ten months of 2023, Pakistan's sesame seed exports to China increased 100% amounting to USD 170.06 million, whereas last year in the same period (January-October) it was USD 84.67 million worth of sesame seed Pakistan exported to China. In October Pakistan exported 64,711.149 tons of sesame seed to China worth USD 113.66 million while in last year's same month, it was 16,727.774 tons worth USD 25.57 million, he stated.

CIUK holds seminar to celebrate CPEC 10th Anniversary

ISLAMABAD: Confucius Institute at University of Karachi (CIUK) held a seminar to celebrate 10th-anniversary of China, Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "I hope that CIUK can train more talents who are familiar with the culture of China and Pakistan and actively participate in the high-quality development of CPEC and the cooperation between the two countries in various fields," highlighted Yang Yundong, Chinese Consul General in Karachi. The Consul General affirmed the active Chinese teaching and cultural activities carried out by CIUK, which have made significant contributions to the promotion of Chinese culture and the friendship between China and Pakistan. On the occasion, Vice Chancellor University of Karachi Prof Dr Khalid Mehmood Iraq lauded the brilliant achievements of the CIUK during the past decade. "The 2+2 program for Chinese majors is a model of Sino-Pak educational cooperation, which has injected vitality into Sino-Pak cultural and people-to-people exchanges. —DNA

Ethiopian envoy discusses collaboration with CDA chief

He said the Islamabad administration was making all-out efforts to ensure clean and green environment in the well-planned city of Pakistan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: DECEMBER 05, 2023: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Tuesday discussed the prospects of initiating a city-to-city collaboration between the two countries in order to promote sustainable governance in the global south through climate resilient urban planning. The collaboration came under discussion during a meeting between H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDRE to Pakistan and H.E. Captain (ret) Anwarul Haq, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest including knowledge exchange between the administrations of both the countries' capital cities—Addis Ababa and Islamabad. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula briefed the CDA chairman about the overwhelming response received by the Green Legacy Initiative of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of FDR Ethiopia, from around the world. He said Ethiopia had planted more than 32 billion seedlings of different trees, fruits and animal feed during the last four years. "Our government's target is to plant over 50 billion plants by the end of 2025," he added. The ambas-



sador also appreciated the services rendered by the CDA in beautifying Capital city Islamabad. "The clean and green environment ensured by the CDA in Islamabad is very

impressive and we look forward to have a strong collaboration between the administrations of Islamabad and Addis Ababa." CDA Chairman Captain (ret) Anwarul

Haq agreed to the proposal and said exchange of knowledge and skill between the two countries would eventually promote sustainable governance and develop-

ment in the global south. He said the Islamabad administration was making all-out efforts to ensure clean and green environment in the well-planned city of Pakistan.

China-speed, State-of-the-art facility in DGK, boasted production capacity to 6,500 tons

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In an impressive feat, SINOMA HCRDI accomplished the swift construction of Fauji Cement Company Limited's (FCCL) Greenfield Cement Manufacturing Plant within a record 13-month time-frame, marking a pivotal milestone for FCCL as they successfully commissioned the state-of-the-art facility in Dera Ghazi Khan, boasting a production capacity of 6,500 tons per day of clinker. The Embassy of China, in a post on its X account, characterized the rapid completion as "an amazing China-Speed, with the joint efforts of both countries' engineers".

The plant, located in the Shadan Lund area of District Dera Ghazi Khan, was commissioned last Thursday. According to FCCL's statement, the commencement of the operation of the new line, the total cement production capacity of the Company has been increased to 10.6 million tons per annum and it established FCCL's position as the 3rd largest Cement producer in the country.

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Senate committee on rules holds important meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Meeting of Senate Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges was held at Parliament House on Tuesday with Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizinjo in Chair. The Senate Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges, on Tuesday, directed the CAA to restore the remaining 82 pilots within the next 15 days and furnish a report. The committee extensively discussed the breach of privilege case of the sub-committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Aviation. This breach involved the DG CAA giving false assurances to the sub-committee, ob-

structing members in the discharge of their duties, and not implementing decisions of the house in violation of rule 196. This amounts to disobedience of orders of the house and its committees. Senator Saleem Mandiwala informed the committee that the sub-committee was overseeing the resolution of issues related to the revocation of pilots' licenses. Despite assurances given in meetings and the acquittal of pilots from criminal cases, the DG CAA is hesitant to implement not only the committee's recommendations but also overruled the court's decision on September 5, 2023. The special judge (central)-II, Karachi, rendered a deci-

sion and acquitted all pilots with FIRs registered against them. Currently, no criminal or legal case is pending against any of these pilots. The Committee deferred the matter for two weeks. Furthermore, the Senate Committee was briefed on the Privilege Motion, moved by Senators Naseeb Ullah Bazi and Senator Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen, against the President of NBP for not attending the meeting scheduled to be held in the NBP building in Karachi, despite being present in the same building. The President of NBP tendered a written apology before the committee for his misconduct. The Committee accepted the apology and deferred the

deliberation on the matter until the next meeting. In attendance were Senator Professor Sajid Mir, Senator Irfan ul Haque Siddiqui, Senator Saifullah Abro, Senator Naseeb Ullah Khan Bazi, Senator Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen, Senator Saleem Mandiwala, Senator Faisal Saleem Rehman, Caretaker Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, DG Civil Aviation Authority Khaqan Murtaza, President NBP Rehmat Ali Hasnie, Additional Secretary for Parliamentary Affairs Asif Saeed Khan, Additional Secretary Finance and Revenue Amjad Mahmood and other senior officials of relevant departments were also in attendance.

State-of-the-art facility in DGK, boasted production capacity

DNA

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they successfully commissioned the state-of-the-art facility in Dera Ghazi Khan, boasting a production capacity of 6,500 tons per day of clinker. The Embassy of China, in a post on its X account, characterized the rapid completion as "an amazing China-Speed, with the joint efforts of both countries' engineers". The plant, located

in the Shadan Lund area of District Dera Ghazi Khan, was commissioned last Thursday. According to FCCL's statement, the commencement of the operation of the new line, the total cement production capacity of the Company has been increased to 10.6 million tons per annum and it established FCCL's position as the 3rd largest Cement producer

in the country. This project includes state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment and also includes emissions control features and a Waste Heat Recovery Power Plant. "The addition of this Greenfield Cement Plant at an extremely impoverished area of Shadan Lund in Southern Punjab will not only provide livelihood to the locals but also help in major uplift of the area," reads FCCL's statement, according to Gwadar Pro. It is apt to mention that SINOMA HCRDI has also established the 3rd line of cement manufacturing, with a capacity of 6,500 tons per day of clinker, at FCCL's existing site in Nizampur, KP in October 2022.

ICCI signs MoU with TDC to address healthcare issues

He emphasized the role of private-public partnerships in driving positive health outcomes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has signed an MoU with The Diabetes Centre (TDC), Islamabad to evolve a strategic partnership between the two organizations in order to address the healthcare issues of the business community. The MoU was signed by Meesaq Arif, CEO of The Diabetes Centre, and Abdul Rahman Siddiqui, Convener ICCI Healthcare Committee during a ceremony held at ICCI. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Aftab Ahmed Medical Superintendent, Dr. Babar Hameed Awan Deputy Medical Superintendent and Ms. Naveen Keerio, Marketing Team Leader of TDC and others were present in the MoU signing ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce termed the signing of MoU with TDC a landmark development to foster healthcare collaborations in order to address diabetic issues

of the business community and promote a healthy society. He emphasized the role of private-public partnerships in driving positive health outcomes. He said that the partnership between ICCI and TDC would facilitate joint initiatives, including health awareness campaigns, medical camps, and educational programs to empower individuals and members of the

business community with knowledge about diabetes prevention and management. Meesaq Arif, CEO, The Diabetes Centre, Islamabad expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership and said that the collaboration between TDC and ICCI marks a significant step towards creating a healthier.

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People are not being given the profits they deserve

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr Shahid Rasheed Butt, on Tuesday, said banks are making profits indiscriminately but have become indifferent to the protection and other problems of the account holders. He said those who have put their money in banks are often victims of fraud, but the banks seem unconcerned as they are fully focused on profits. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that banks are expanding their business, but they are not bothered to upgrade their security system, and the masses are paying the price. The victims of fraud are not being treated properly, but they are being ignored, he said, adding that many banks do not even complain about fraud to the relevant authorities. The business leader said that the State Bank should take notice of this situation and improve matters. Otherwise, public confidence will be affected. He said that many commercial banks are profiting but are not upgrading their security systems, so account holders are at the mercy of hackers and often get hacked. Due to sky-high interest rates, bank deposits have reached Rs 25.6 trillion in FY 2023, but the people need to get the profits they deserve. Moreover, in a rising interest rate environment, some commercial banks have silently converted some customers' deposits from 'savings' to 'current' to increase their profits, which is illegal and unethical. He said there is a huge cost difference between the two types of accounts. There is zero return on the current deposits. At the same time, on non-Islamic saving accounts, banks are regulated to pay 1.5 per cent lower than the interest rates, which is 18.5 per cent at the prevailing policy rate. Shahid Rasheed Butt noted that after stabilization in the foreign exchange market and government actions, obtaining dollars is difficult, easier and more profitable than in the past.—DNA

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

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Gaza's devastation: don't look away

WE cannot and must not look away from what is happening in Gaza. Half its population was forced from the north by merciless bombardment; now the Israel Defense Forces' attacks upon the south have intensified and dozens of tanks have entered. Adults and children alike anticipate their deaths. More than 15,900 people in Gaza have been killed already, the vast majority of them women and children, according to Palestinian officials. Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has directed the military to act with "increasing force" in its pursuit of Hamas, this time facing an even larger, denser population in even more desperate circumstances. The IDF says its concern for civilians is evinced by its evacuation orders. Given the lack of power and connectivity, even the most assiduous would struggle to keep up with complex and fast-changing instructions – and this is a hungry, exhausted, grieving and traumatised population, many of whom have already moved multiple times. In any case, there is nowhere to go: "Safe places have no water, no sanitation, are often not safe anyway... They are not safe in hospitals, they are not safe in shelters," James Elder, a UNICEF spokesperson, said on Monday. The US, which pays around a fifth of Israel's defence budget, is increasingly blunt in public as well as private, reflecting growing discontent among Democrats. The vice-president, Kamala Harris, warned that "too many innocent Palestinians have been killed". The US defence secretary, Lloyd Austin, couched it in terms of Israel's own interests: "If you drive [the civilian population] into the arms of the enemy, you replace a tactical victory with a strategic defeat." But though Joe Biden has described conditionality as "a worthwhile thought", administration officials swiftly shut down further discussion. The US could perhaps slow-roll its replenishment of shells. But Mr Netanyahu appears confident that the administration will not actually use its leverage. Israel reportedly plans a "very long war" stretching into 2024, and still has no plan for what comes next. Yet while Gaza's suffering appears to have no end, we must also look to the broader picture. The UN human rights office last month warned of an "alarming and urgent" picture in the West Bank. A sharp increase in raids by Israeli forces and attacks by settlers since the Hamas attacks of 7 October have killed a growing number of Palestinians, including children, and forced more from their homes. Violence was already at a higher level than it has been for more than 15 years. Last Thursday, Hamas claimed responsibility for shooting dead three Israelis at a bus stop in West Jerusalem. In the Red Sea at the weekend, the US reported that one of its destroyers shot down two drones as it came to the aid of three commercial vessels under attack by Yemen's Houthis militia, though it is not clear if the warship itself was targeted. This appeared to be the most significant of attacks by the Iran-backed Houthis in the area since 7 October, mostly on Israeli targets. The US has regarded its principal achievement in embracing Israel (and dispatching two aircraft carriers to the region) as averting an uncontrollable escalation between Israel and Hezbollah and ultimately the latter's patron, Iran.

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United Kingdom rejects austerity

ADAM Smith, the father of economics, condemned as unproductive the labours of "churchmen, lawyers, physicians, men of letters of all kinds; players, buffoons, musicians, opera-singers, opera-dancers". How wrong he turned out to be, says the Resolution Foundation thinktank. It points out that the creative industries accounted for 6% of the UK economy last year, and have grown faster than the UK economy overall since 2011. The report, *Ending Stagnation*, says the last 15 years of low growth and high inequality have seen a living standards gap worth £8,300 open up between typical households in Britain and those in France, Germany and the Netherlands. It suggests fixing this by growing the UK economy through its service sector – and the work of Smith's "grave" lawyers and "frivolous" musicians – to pay for higher investment and higher benefits. Britain is a services superpower. It has a triple historical advantage: time zone, language and the rule of law. But the gap with rivals is shrinking. If Britain, say the report's authors, had halved the pace of its decline in global service exports, the country would have seen an extra 585,000 highly paid jobs and boosted its GDP by 1.5%. London already accounts for far too much of services trade. If, say, finance-related activities were to be expanded, other regions must be enabled to benefit, and tough regulation enacted to prevent another economic crash. Nearly 11 million people work in the "non-tradeable" services sector. Low-wage workers have suffered the most since 2008, and policies are needed that help them. That means improved conditions in the likes of hospitality, leisure and retail, to be paid for by higher prices for richer households. Productivity growth is not necessary for wage increases. Only the bald can avoid getting a haircut. Hairdressers' real pay has risen since 1991 to stop workers leaving for other industries. Britain is no stranger to such change. In the late 19th century, the sector employing the largest number of women was domestic service. The foundation says it largely disappeared because new employment opportunities opened up. Where the report is less convincing is its insistence on a budget surplus. The UK's current account deficit averaged 4% of GDP over the last decade. Service exports would need to increase by a net £90bn, roughly, to reduce this to zero. If Britain imports more than it exports then the country lacks the private spending capacity to buy all the domestic goods and services produced. To fully employ available resources, the government should run a budget deficit. Otherwise it risks higher unemployment and avoidable private debt. Both Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer prefer the fairy tale that they will be able to cut government spending to get Britain growing. Restructuring the economy will be painful, especially as Britain wrestles with Brexit, an ageing society and the net zero transition. A fairer Britain needs more state involvement. The economy will have to be recast – through public spending and taxes – so that extra spending isn't inflationary. Margaret Thatcher changed Britain, but at a brutal cost, especially to the poor. In contrast to the narrative of "saving the country", Thatcherism failed to deliver, even on its own terms.

Gaza war creates 'to be or not to be' moment for Palestinians

Baria Alamuddin

Israel is gripped by existential fear, in a manner the country has not experienced for decades. It is not just vast regions to the north and south, but Tel Aviv also lies within easy reach of both Hamas and Hezbollah's rockets. While the Oct. 7 attacks unleashed an overwhelming hunger for vengeance, wiser heads recognize that they must find an amicable modus vivendi with neighbors if Israelis are ever to enjoy safety and peace. The crisis has fueled debates hardly heard in decades, with progressive voices blaming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the extreme right for marching Israel into catastrophe; while also floating proposals for how the peace process could...

THE all-too-brief ceasefire is already a dim and distant memory and the systematic killing of civilians in Gaza has resumed. Hence, this is the moment to question: Where does this all end and what are the long-term implications for Palestinians and Israelis? Israel has already signaled that the carnage is destined to move south, where it previously dispatched Gaza's entire population. "If (Palestinian civilians) stay in Khan Younis or Rafah, a similar fate awaits to what happened in Gaza City," one Israel Defense Forces spokesman grudgingly stated. The baffling checkerboard maps of Gaza's tiny 363 sq. km territory that Israel has distributed assume that 2 million people will endlessly scamper from one square to another, while warplanes bomb everything around them. QR code warnings would be a terrible idea even if everybody had not long since lost electricity and internet access. About 80 percent of the population has already been displaced, and we are just getting started. Israeli politicians make no secret of their desire to see Palestinians permanently excluded from Gaza. The stated objective of bottling the entire population in a tiny quartile adjacent to the Egypt border resembles a textbook example of population transfer – for those not killed in the bombing first. If not, why have Israel's Western allies not extracted public assurances that this is not the case? US Secretary of State Antony Blinken insincerely urged Israel "to take every possible measure to avoid civilian harm" and, in a stunning rebuke, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned that Israel's failure to protect civilians would "drive (Palestinians) into the arms of the enemy" and "replace a tactical victory with a strategic defeat." Yet, despite the war on Gaza rapidly outstripping the number of child fatalities from all other global wars combined, President Joe Biden refuses to exert actual pressure on Israel – even as his support craters among crucial young and multiethnic demographics ahead of next year's elections. One of the reasons for Israel's occasional hesi-

tations is its complete absence of a strategy for the day after the conflict ends. We have seen how such strategic failures played out in Iraq. Indeed, many commentators compare Israel's acts of vengeance with the irrational manner in which the US lashed out after 9/11. Israel is gripped by existential fear, in a manner the country has not experienced for decades. It is not just vast regions to the north and south, but Tel Aviv also lies within easy reach of both Hamas and Hezbollah's rockets. While the Oct. 7 attacks unleashed an overwhelming hunger for vengeance, wiser heads recognize that they must find an amicable modus vivendi with neighbors if Israelis are ever to enjoy safety and peace. The crisis has fueled debates hardly heard in decades, with progressive voices blaming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the extreme right for marching Israel into catastrophe; while also floating proposals for how the peace process could be revived from the dead, including mooted the idea of a Canada-style federal system. More enlightened Israelis are highly disconcerted at how Israel's global standing has plunged due to the Gaza atrocities. And not just among the world's Muslim communities – young people throughout the Western world have been particularly galvanized by this human tragedy, along with demographics that normally pay scant attention to foreign affairs. In this transformed political climate, for how much longer can Israel take unqualified Western support for granted? Since 1948, it has been de facto Israeli policy to render life in Gaza unlivable through all possible means, toward the goal of depopulating the Strip. The complete destruction of more than 60 percent of buildings in northern Gaza so far and the blocking of food and essential supplies into the region serve the same ethnic cleansing agenda. In a belated US recognition of this scenario, Vice President Kamala Harris, after meeting Arab leaders, last week warned that "under no circumstances will the United States permit the forced relocation of Palestinians" or "the redraw-

ing of the borders of Gaza." We will believe this when we see it. If Israel were to get away with wholesale population transfer in Gaza, it would confer momentum upon Zionist extremists who for years have been calling for the elimination of the West Bank's Palestinian population, including Jerusalem. Arab states – including those that made peace with Israel – should explore every means at their disposal to render such moves diplomatically inconceivable. Many commentators argue that the hatred aroused by the post-Oct. 7 events make a return to negotiations and a two-state solution impossible. They have a point. But I would conversely argue that these events render reanimated peace efforts an absolute necessity. Failing to pursue peace is the coward's way out, because it surrenders the agenda to militants and extremists on both sides for pursuing their unilateral and exterminatory visions. Real strength is manifested through displaying moral leadership and showing mercy. Violence stems from weakness, ignorance and fear. The Palestinian nation consequently stands at an existential moment, or "to be or not to be." Either it successfully struggles for its continued existence as a nation upon its historic lands – or it vanishes from the pages of history. Israel can continue killing tens of thousands of Gaza civilians with relative impunity. Yet such actions merely perpetuate the conflict, while making it impossible for Israel to coexist with its neighbors, leaving it in a precarious position both internally and externally. Real strength is manifested through displaying moral leadership and showing mercy. Violence stems from weakness, ignorance and fear. Instead of demonstrating moral strength in this crisis, a wounded and befuddled Israel lashed out, murdering women, children and babies. Shocked world publics are watching and judging; with long-term political fallout for Israel's resilience and global standing next time it searches for allies in a time of crisis.

– Sourced by Arab News

EU's attempts to adopt a bloc-wide policy on Beijing are not proving easy

Andrew Hammond

In the aftermath of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Brussels has therefore sought to bring the bloc more closely together around a stronger policy on China. Von der Leyen and Borrell have led the way on this, even though the former does not have a formal foreign policy role. Most recently, both of them have made hard-hitting speeches. Von der Leyen said last month that "we must recognize that there is an explicit element of rivalry in our relationship

WHO do I call if I want to call Europe?" is a question said to have been asked in the 1970s by Henry Kissinger, the former US secretary of state who died on Wednesday at the age of 100. This famous query has often been repeated over the years to highlight the lack of a unified foreign policy across a European bloc that currently comprises 27 countries with differing interests. The question implies that there could be significant potential benefits for other foreign powers if there was a single interlocutor within the EU that they could speak to. However, an increasingly common criticism of China within Europe is that Beijing wants the opposite; in other words, it favors a splintered EU so that it can attempt to "divide and rule" across the continent. This is one reason why the latest annual EU-China summit, part of process that has been taking place for about a quarter of century, will be more important than most. There has been an undeniable chill in relations, as a result of which the two sides might fail even to issue a joint statement at the conclusion of the summit on Thursday and Friday. The backdrop to this is the attempts by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and other top EU officials, including High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, to enforce a common bloc-wide stance on China. But despite their attempts to enhance unity on the issue of Beijing, Brussels is struggling to find common ground across the 27 member states. Worse still, top EU officials have become increasingly concerned in recent years about whether the nature of China's external interventions in Europe represent a "divide and rule" strategy designed to undermine the continent's collective interests. The context for this is the fact that Europe is becoming an increasingly important foreign policy focal point for China and, until the pandemic, Beijing's influence had generally grown across much of the continent. This can be seen in Eastern and Central Europe, where

China regularly holds "16+1" summits with the aim of enhancing and expanding cooperation in the fields of investment, transport, finance, science, education and culture. There are also examples in key Western European states, such as Italy, which was the first, and so far only, G7 country to endorse Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. The direction in which the EU's policy on China is currently heading is clearly more hawkish. Underlying this, it is becoming increasingly clear that China is tailoring its approach around the bespoke needs of individual states or subgroups of countries, such as the 16+1 grouping in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the overtures to Europe come with a clear quid pro quo, as highlighted by Italy's decision to sign up to the BRI in return for Chinese investment. In the aftermath of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Brussels has therefore sought to bring the bloc more closely together around a stronger policy on China. Von der Leyen and Borrell have led the way on this, even though the former does not have a formal foreign policy role. Most recently, both of them have made hard-hitting speeches. Von der Leyen said last month that "we must recognize that there is an explicit element of rivalry in our relationship. We must also recognize that China's views on the global security architecture are not by default aligned with ours." The direction in which the EU's policy on China is currently heading is clearly more hawkish. Even on issues in which breakthroughs have been made in recent years, such as the bilateral Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, the "long grass" of Brussels has prevented ratification of the deal by the European Parliament as a result of concerns about Beijing's behavior. A central challenge facing von der Leyen and Borrell is therefore the splits within the 27-member bloc on the issue of Beijing. It is overly simplistic to say there is an East-West dichotomy on the continent, in part because Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban favors strong ties with China.

Nonetheless, clear differences are evident between the more hawkish Eastern European nations, such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, and Western counterparts such as France, Spain and Germany, which do much more business with China. Perceptions of a divided Europe have also been publicly highlighted by several Chinese officials. Fu Cong, the ambassador to the EU, cast doubts, for example, on whether all member states support the agenda of Borrell and von der Leyen, saying that "Europe has not formulated a coherent policy toward China" and that it looks like "people quarrelling with each other." The positions taken by Western European nations such as Germany and France are particularly problematic for Brussels, given that both countries want to continue with extensive economic engagements with China. The longstanding, deep business ties between Berlin and Beijing are well-documented, so it is no surprise that German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is more equivocal on the matter than von der Leyen and Borrell. What has surprised many people, however, is the relatively soft stance taken by French President Emmanuel Macron, which was evident during a joint visit to Beijing with von der Leyen this year. Remarkably, he took a business delegation that was estimated to include about 50 people. This was about four times larger than a similar delegation that accompanied Scholz on a visit to China last year. Perhaps most surprising of all was the fact that Macron moved significantly away from the prior French position on Taiwan. So while von der Leyen was asserting during the trip that "stability in the Taiwan Strait is of paramount importance" and the "threat of use of force to change the status quo is unacceptable," Macron described Taiwan as a "crisis that is not ours" and suggested that Europeans should stay out of the issue and not be "America's followers."

– Sourced by Arab News

Briefs

Battles rage as Israel...

FROM PAGE 01
with fighting pushing civilians into a steadily shrinking area of the besieged Palestinian enclave. After initially focusing on northern Gaza, the Israeli army has now sent ground forces into the south and urged civilians to evacuate. "The situation is getting worse by the hour. There is intensified bombing going on all around, including here in the southern areas," said Peeperkorn. "A lot of people are desperate and almost in a permanent state of shock." "We are close by humanity's darkest hour," Peeperkorn said. "These bombings and the senseless loss of life must stop now, and we need a sustained ceasefire." The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has reiterated warnings that nowhere is safe in the Gaza Strip as Israel ordered Palestinians to evacuate parts of southern Gaza. The IRC says the resumption of hostilities has not only caused the loss of hundreds of lives but has made it "increasingly difficult" for humanitarian organisations "to stay safe, let alone provide the level of support people require".

Israeli prisons...

FROM PAGE 01
detainees and then neglect their injuries, leaving them without treatment. It said the prisoners are subjected to many types of punishments, most notably not having glass on the windows, which means they have to cope with extreme cold, and a lack of blankets and food, adding that a large number of them sleep on the floor and are not allowed to go out to the break, while all their electrical appliances, personal belongings and clothes were taken from them. Israel is currently holding about 7,800 Palestinians in its prisons, including 166 children, 33 female prisoners, and 2,873 administrative detainees, while before October 7, the number of prisoners was 5250, including 180 children, 37 women, and 1319 administrative detainees.

Govt releases...

FROM PAGE 01
Finance Ministry was irresponsive regarding the provision of funds, allocated for the polls, in the budget. Addressing the ECP's concerns, caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi had said there is no crisis in meeting the financial needs of the election commission. In a post on social media platform X, he said the cabinet has approved Rs42 billion for the budgetary needs of the ECP and notably, Rs10 billion have already been disbursed. The minister said whatever budgeted amount is needed by the ECP, it would be released as per its needs accordingly.

PML-Q eyes 'seat...'

FROM PAGE 01
Hussain is expected to meet former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif to discuss the 'seat adjustment'. It is to be noted that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Parliamentary Board has already opposed seat adjustment with the PML-Q. The general elections will be held on February 8, 2024. The date was mutually agreed upon during a meeting between the chief election commissioner and the president of Pakistan on the directions of the Supreme Court. On Monday evening, sources claimed that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) have agreed on a seat-to-seat adjustment formula after talks between Nawaz Sharif and Maulana Fazlur Rehman. The agreement was reportedly reached during a crucial meeting between Nawaz Sharif and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at the PML-N Secretariat in Lahore's Model Town. The meeting was attended by prominent leaders from both parties.

Pakistan women make history, clinch T20I series against NZ

Pakistan women's team achieved yet another milestone on Tuesday, defeating New Zealand women by 10 runs in second T20I to win series

SPORT DESK

DUNEDIN: Pakistan women's team achieved yet another milestone on Tuesday, defeating New Zealand women by 10 runs in the second T20I to win the series at the University of Otago Oval in Dunedin. With this win, Pakistan Women take an unsailable lead in the three-match T20I series, having defeated New Zealand women, also known as White Ferns, in the first T20I at the same venue on Sunday by seven wickets. This marks only the second win for the Pakistan women's team over third-ranked New Zealand. Also, they became the first Asian side to beat New Zealand in a T20I series. After being asked to bat, Pakistan scored 137 for six in their allotted 20 overs, the highest score against New Zealand in this format. Muneeba Ali top-scored for the side with 35 off 28 balls, hit-



ting six fours. Player of the match, Aliya Riaz, smashed three fours and a six in her unbeaten knock

of 32 off 22 balls to help her side post a respectable total. For the White Ferns, Molly Pen-

fold and Fran Jonas bagged two wickets each. In turn, Pakistan bowlers kept it tight from the

beginning, restricting the White Ferns from scoring runs. Nashra Sundhu, playing her 50th T20I match today, bowled economically in the middle overs, conceding only 22 runs from four overs. Pakistan captain Nida Dar became the joint-leading wicket-taker in Women's T20Is alongside Australia's Megan Schutt when she dismissed Maddy Green for 18 off 23 balls, increasing her tally of scalps to 130 in the format. The star in the bowling unit was once again Fatima Sana, who gave away 22 runs and bagged three wickets, including the prized scalps of captain Sophie Devine (5, 5b, 1x4) and Suzie Bates (18, 18b, 2x4s). Left-arm spinner Sadia Iqbal grabbed two wickets for 29 runs in four overs. Pakistan women's team will depart for Queenstown tomorrow morning, where they will take on the White Ferns in the third and final T20I of the series on Saturday, 9 December.

Australian PM hosts Pakistan cricket team at parliament

DNA

CANBERRA: The Pakistan men's cricket team was invited to Canberra on Tuesday for a ceremony hosted by Australian Prime Minister (PM) Anthony Albanese at the Parliament House in Canberra. It is noteworthy that a four-day match between Pakistan and PM's XI will take place in Canberra starting Wednesday, Decem-

ber 6, 2023, followed by the Test series against Australia from December 14, at the Perth Stadium. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese welcomed both teams and expressed hope that the match between PM's XI and the Pakistan side would be enjoyable. He also expressed optimism about the upcoming Test series, acknowledging Pakistan as a quality team. Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan

Test captain Shan Masood highlighted the historical significance of the match being played since 1951. He expressed great joy in playing this match against Prime Minister XI, emphasizing that the team is a tough competitor. The captain affirmed that Pakistan is not only prepared and enthusiastic for this match but is also ready for the challenges of the upcoming Test series against Australia.



Record number of foreign players join PSL 9 draft

LAHORE: A record-breaking 254 foreign players have registered for the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) season nine, according to media reporters. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is gearing up for the ninth edition of the PSL and a significant number of foreign players have actively expressed their availability for the tournament. According to an official, the list includes players from various cricketing nations with a notable absence of prominent Australian names in the registration for PSL 9. Among the registered players, 20 fall under the platinum category, with a significant representation from England. The PSL draft will take place at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore on Wednesday, December 13, 2023. PSL 9 is tentatively scheduled from 8 February to 24 March 2024. The process of local player category renewals for the upcoming ninth edition of the tournament was completed on November 10 with categories upgraded for nine players. The registration window for foreign players was opened on October 25 with several top players across the globe showing interest. The trade and retention window is currently open. Earlier, it was reported that two countries are in the running to host some matches of the PSL 9. According to sources, UAE and South Africa could host the initial matches of PSL due to elections in Pakistan. However, sources added that the majority of the franchises are insisting that the entire event should take place in Pakistan. - DNA

RDA declares four more housing schemes in Rwp and Taxila illegal

ABBAS HASHMI

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has served notices to four unauthorized housing societies in the garrison city. According to a spokesperson for the RDA, Hafiz Irfan, the four



illegal housing societies include High Life City, project of SSJ Marketing and Property Adviser at Mouza Niko, Wah Hills at Mouza GhariAfghana in Taxila and Amman Scheme at MouzaRajar on Chakri Road. Furthermore, sponsors

have been strictly warned against the marketing of all unauthorized housing schemes in Rawalpindi. Notices to the aforementioned housing societies were issued on the directions of Rawalpindi Development Authority Director General Saif Anwar Jappa. The relevant department of Rawalpindi Development Authority has been instructed to file the first information report (FIR) against the owners of the illegal housing schemes. They have been directed to refrain from marketing their unapproved housing societies and approach RDA to get a No Objection Certificate (NOC) or face legal action. The spokesman also advised the public against investing in housing societies that don't have approval from the authority. Moreover, the Planning Wing of Rawalpindi Development Authority has requested the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to take action against misleading advertisements by illegal housing societies. According to Hafiz Irfan, the offenses committed by the illegal housing projects' owners are actionable under Rule 37 of the Punjab Development Authorities Private Housing Schemes Rules 2021.

EPL announces record domestic TV deal

LONDON: The Premier League announced on Monday it had agreed a record £6.7 billion (\$8.45 billion) domestic television rights deal for a four-year period starting from the 2025/26 season. The current deal is reported to be worth around £5 billion over a three-year cycle and covers 200 matches per season. The English top flight hailed the agreements shared between different broadcasters as the "largest sports media rights deals ever concluded in the UK". Sky Sports and TNT Sports have retained their rights to show live matches, with Amazon, currently showing 20 matches per season, not part of the next cycle. Sky will screen a minimum of 215 live matches per season while TNT will broadcast 52. BBC Sport will continue to broadcast highlights via its Match of the Day programme. - Agencies

Mitchell reveals reason behind criticizing Warner

SYDNEY: Retired Australian pacer Mitchell Johnson has stated that his criticism of David Warner in his column this week was prompted by a personal message from the opener after a previous article he wrote earlier this year. During his podcast, The Mitchell Johnson Cricket Show, Johnson discussed the motivation behind his article in the West Australian where he questioned Warner's ongoing inclusion in Australia's Test side. This piece stirred considerable debate within Australia, with opinions split regarding the nature of Johnson's outspoken views. "People have touched on that there seems to be a personal side to it which there is as well," Johnson said. "But when I've written my articles I've always tried to do it in a way that I can back things up. "From the message I got in April, I think it was around the time that Candace [Warner] had said her bit on the back page about there not being openers good enough to take the position. I responded to that and then I got a message from Dave which was quite personal. I tried to ring him to try and talk to him about it - when I finished playing I said if I'm in the media and writing things and saying things that you don't like just come and speak to me. It was never a personal thing then until probably this point... Some of the stuff that was said, I won't say it because I think that's up to Dave if he wants to talk about it, but there was some stuff in there that was extremely disappointing and pretty bad to be honest." Johnson also explained why he chose to also criticise George Bailey, the chairman of selectors for Australia men, in his article. "That was a bit of a driver and a bit with George as well," said Johnson. - Agencies

Novak Djokovic claims 8th year-end ATP No. 1 spot

This raised his career total to a men's-record 24, and he was the runner-up at Wimbledon. He went 56-7 this season, leading the tour with seven titles, including the ATP Finals last month. The 36-year-old from Serbia regained the top ranking from Carlos Alcaraz

SPORTS DESK

PARIS: Living legend Novak Djokovic clinched the year-end No. 1 spot in the ATP rankings for the eighth time, reinforcing his existing record. Djokovic won three Grand Slam tournaments: The Australian Open in January, the French Open in June and the U.S. Open in September. This raised his career total to a men's-record 24, and he was the runner-up at Wimbledon. He went 56-7 this season, leading the tour with seven titles, including the ATP Finals last month. The 36-year-old from Serbia regained the top ranking from Carlos Alcaraz, who edged him in a five-set final at the All-England Club in July. Alcaraz finished 2023 at No. 2 after the two men swapped No. 1 back and forth repeatedly this year. IgaSwiatek claimed the WTA's year-end No. 1 ranking for the second consecutive year by winning the WTA Finals last month. Swiatek, who won her fourth career major championship at the French Open,

overtook ArynaSabalenka, the Australian Open champion and runner-up to Coco Gauff at the U.S. Open.

Gauff finished at No. 3, followed by Elena Rybakina at No. 4 and Jessica Pegula at No. 5. Djokovic eclipsed his own mark for the



oldest player to top the ATP at the end of a season; he was 34 in 2021. His eight year-end No. 1s put him two ahead of the previous record-holder, Pete Sampras, who did it six times. Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal each finished at No. 1 five times, as did Jimmy Connors. Daniil Medvedev closed 2023 at No. 3, followed by Jannik Sinner at a career-best No. 4, Andrey Rublev at No. 5. StefanosTsitsipas was No. 6, Alexander Zverev at No. 7, Holger Rune at No. 8, Hubert Hurkacz No. 9 and Taylor Fritz No. 10. Alcaraz and Rune are both 20, marking the first time two men that young ended a season in the top 10 since 2000, when Marat Safin, 20, was No. 2 and Lleyton Hewitt, 19, was No. 7. There are three 19-year-olds in the top 100: No. 36 Arthur Fils, No. 71 Luca Van Assche, and No. 97 Alex Michelson, an American who jumped up 504 spots after ending last year at No. 601. The U.S has the most men in the top 20, with four: Fritz, No. 13, Tommy Paul, No. 16 Frances Tiafoe and Ben Shelton at No. 17.

PTI 'manipulated' intra-party...

FROM PAGE 01

the party following the high court's decision. Babar, along with other party members and former office-holders, filed their petition against "rigged/fraudulent PTI intra-party elections" at the ECP headquarters in Islamabad today. The politician approached the ECP seeking its intervention in the matter as a member of PTI whose membership was validated by the electoral body. "I pray that the Election Commission of Pakistan, declare the PTI Intra Party Election purportedly held on December 2, 2023, as 'Null and Void' and without any legal effect and the 'Party' be directed to hold fresh intra-party elections as soon as possible," the petition read.

PTI demands neutrality...

FORM PAGE 01

elections, PTI spokesperson underlined the need that Pakistan needed political stability and free, fair and transparent polls were the sole panacea to the current crises. He demanded that all political parties should be given equal opportunities in the electoral process because it was indispensable for the image of the country and credibility of the elections. PTI spokesperson reminded that the PTI was the largest political party and most formidable political force of the country, adding that without PTI or its leadership, neither there was any concept of fair and transparent elections nor the people would people it such polls.

Nepra approves...

FORM PAGE 01

The IMF laid forth several conditions - including a rise in power and gas tariffs - for the South Asian nation to unlock crucial funds that allowed the government to avert a possible default on its debt payments. The latest hike comes on the heels of startling Nepra findings, wherein it was discovered that KE and other power-providing companies were charging millions of consumers excessively. "Legal proceedings against all Distribution Companies including KEL under NEPRA Fine Regulations, 2021 for violation of the provisions of NEPRA Act, CSM and tariff terms & conditions etc," a statement issued by the power regulator said.

Afghan Taliban...

FROM PAGE 01

Addressing concerns, Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) stated on Friday that the Afghan Taliban government had given "certain assurances" to neutralise the threat posed by the TTP. According to a source familiar with the matter, among the apprehended individuals is Commander Ilyas, also known as Ustad Ji, from the Malakand Division. Two other commanders, members of the Malakand shura, were also taken into custody. The entire group, referred to as a Tashkili, was promptly transferred to Kunar Jail following their arrest.

Seven injured...

FROM PAGE 01

The injured have been identified as Ahmed Zia, Ehsanullah, Javed Khan, Zahirullah, Saad Ahmed, Shakirullah and Yusuf Khan. The bank staff remained safe in the blast. Wardak SP Arshad Khan told media that the blast took place at 9:10 am. Four kilogram explosives were used, he continued. Meanwhile, a fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists in general area Sararogha, South Waziristan District. Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location. However, during intense fire exchange, Sepoy Ahmed Ali (age: 26 years, resident of District Charsadda), having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat. Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area as security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Briefs

Indonesia volcano death toll rises to 22

AGAM : The number of hikers found dead after a volcano eruption in Indonesia has risen to 22 after nine more bodies were found, a local search and rescue agency official said Tuesday. "9 of 10 missing victims were found dead this afternoon and at the moment, they are being evacuated. There is one remaining victim currently in search," Abdul Malik, head of Padang Search and Rescue Agency said. Thirteen dead hikers were found Monday near the crater of Mount Marapi on the island of Sumatra, with rescue officials announcing 11 deaths the same day and two more on Tuesday. Others were found alive and carried down the mountain in arduous rescue efforts hampered by further eruptions and bad weather. The volcano spewed an ash tower 3,000 meters — taller than the volcano itself — into the sky on Sunday. "The total number of people who have died is currently 13 people. The 10 missing hikers are still being searched," Abdul Malik, head of Padang Search and Rescue Agency said, adding the bodies of the two additional dead hikers were found late Monday. Five of the dead had been brought down the mountain for identification while eight bodies had been found and were being brought down in bodybags, he said. Images shared by national search and rescue agency Basarnas showed a rescue team of six in orange jackets and hard hats carrying a body down the side of the volcano. The volcano was still erupting on Tuesday morning, according to officials, hampering the rescue efforts of more than 200 personnel.—APP

Nigerian military 'inadvertently' bombs civilians at religious gathering

ABUJA : At least 85 people have been confirmed dead after a "mistaken" army drone attack on a religious gathering in northwest Nigeria, authorities said. The president on Tuesday ordered a probe into the latest in a series of mistakes in Nigeria's conflict zones. "Eighty-five dead bodies have so far been buried while (a) search is still ongoing," Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said in a statement that listed children, women and the elderly among the victims. At least 66 people were injured, the agency added. Since 2017, some 400 civilians have been killed by airstrikes the military said were targeting armed groups in the deadly security crisis in the country's north, according to the Lagos-based SBM Intelligence security firm. The victims in the latest incident were observing the Muslim holiday celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, Mawlid al-Nabi. They were killed Sunday night by drones "targeting terrorists and bandits" in Kaduna state's Tudun Biri village, according to government and security officials. "The incidence of miscalculated airstrikes is assuming a worrisome dimension in the country," said Atiku Abubakar, Nigeria's former vice-president and the main opposition presidential candidate in this year's election.

Philippines missing aircraft found

ISTANBUL : The whereabouts and condition of two passengers remain unknown after five days of search for a missing aircraft in the Philippines. Officials in eastern Isabela province said the Philippine Air Force located the Piper PA-32-300 plane at Casala, San Mariano, but they had no information about the pilot and one passenger, Rappler.com news website reported. The plane had departed Cauayan Airport on the morning of Nov. 30 and was supposed to arrive at Palanan Airport in the province an hour later. It did not. Authorities had launched aerial search operations but had been hampered by thick clouds since Dec. 1.—APP

Zelensky, top US officials to make case for Ukraine funding

President Zelensky and top aides to US President Joe Biden will make their case to US senators on Tuesday about why a fresh infusion of military assistance is needed to help Ukraine repel Russian invaders

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky and top aides to US President Joe Biden will make their case to US senators on Tuesday about why a fresh infusion of military assistance is needed to help Ukraine repel Russian invaders. US officials say the United States will spend all it has available for Ukraine by the end of the year, a dire prediction that comes as Kyiv has struggled to make major advances in its 2023 counteroffensive against Russia. Biden's administration in October asked Congress for nearly \$106 billion to pay for ambitious



plans for Ukraine, Israel and US border security, but Republicans who control the House with a slim majority rejected the package. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a close Biden ally, an-

nounced on Monday night that the administration has invited Zelensky to address senators via secure video as part of a classified briefing on Tuesday "so we can hear directly from him precisely what's at stake in this vote." In addition, a variety of top Biden officials, including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, are expected to brief the senators on Tuesday. Schumer also started the process of advancing a Ukraine-Israel emergency aid bill on the Senate floor. "America's national security is on the line around the world" with the fate of Ukraine aid hanging in the balance, Schumer said in a Senate speech. "Autocrats,

dictators waging war against democracy, against our values, against our way of life. That's why passing this supplemental is so important. It could determine the trajectory of democracy for years to come." Zelensky said in a November interview that despite the slow going, Ukraine would try to deliver battlefield results by the end of the year and that he remained sure Kyiv would eventually have success in the war despite difficulties at the front. But the stalled drive to get US assistance has alarmed the Biden White House, which fears a failure to help Ukraine further would increase the likelihood of Russian victories.

Azerbaijan rejects Armenia's claims about killing of soldier

The Azerbaijani army initiated an anti-terrorism operation in Karabakh this September to establish constitutional order, after which illegal separatist forces in the region surrendered

NEWS DESK

BAKU : Azerbaijan rejected Yerevan's claims that it fired on its military positions which allegedly killed an Armenian soldier. "We vehemently reject the statement issued by Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 4, 2023, in which it was claimed that an Armenian soldier was killed as a result of fire purportedly opened by Azerbaijan," said a statement by the country's Foreign Ministry late Monday. The statement said that Yerevan's assertion is aimed to "conceal the disorder and chaos in its armed forces," adding that Armenia is trying to jeopardize the possibilities for normalization between the two countries through such statements. "With such statements, Armenia also intends to generate fake tension in border areas and attract the attention of third-party states," the statement said. It added Azerbaijan will continue its efforts for peace and reconstruction in the post-conflict period and that it will oppose any attempts to undermine this process. Earlier, the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry on Facebook defined the Armenian Defense Ministry's statement about Azerbaijani forces

allegedly opening fire on Armenian positions as "completely false." "We categorically deny this provocative information spread by the opposing side," it said. Relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia have been tense since 1991, when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions. Azerbaijan liberated most of the region during the war in the fall of 2020, which ended with a Russian-brokered peace agreement, opening the door to normalization. The Azerbaijani army initiated an anti-terrorism operation in Karabakh this September to establish constitutional order, after which illegal separatist forces in the region surrendered. Meanwhile, "The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan refuted the misinformation and bogus allegations, stating that the information released by Armenia was false. The Armenian side's bogus assertion is aimed to conceal the disorder and chaos in its armed forces. Armenia, which delayed the peace agreement proposals for more than 70 days, is now jeopardizing the possibilities for normalization with such disruptive statements. With such statements,

Armenia also intends to generate fake tension in border areas and attract the attention of third-party states. Azerbaijan, for its part, will continue its peace and reconstruction efforts in the post-conflict period and will steadfastly oppose any attempts to undermine this process," the ministry added. Earlier, Armenia's defence ministry said Azerbaijani forces shot dead an Armenian serviceman near the two countries' border on Monday, but Baku said the report was "a complete lie". The incident, if true, would mark the first such border fatality since Azerbaijan retook the region of Nagorno-Karabakh in September in a lightning military offensive that prompted the exodus of almost all the territory's 120,000 ethnic Armenians. Armenia's defence ministry said in a statement that Azerbaijani forces had opened fire on Monday afternoon on an Armenian position in Bardzruni, near its border with the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhchivan. An investigation is under way into the incident, it said, without providing further details. Asked about the report, a spokesman for Azerbaijan's defence ministry told Reuters "We categorically deny provocative information from the other side," he said. Border skirmishes, often fatal, are not uncommon between the two South Caucasus neighbours.

Emine Erdogan backs Palestinian cause at Qatar summit

ANKARA : First lady Emine Erdogan on Tuesday reiterated her commitment to the Palestinian cause as she met with Sheikh Moza bint Nasser Al Missned, the head of the Qatar Foundation and mother of the Qatari emir, during her visit to Qatar. "As part of the 'One Heart for Palestine' movement, we have agreed to stand side by side until Israeli oppression ends and permanent peace is achieved in the region," Erdogan wrote on X following their meeting and thanked Sheikh Moza for her hospitality. The pair discussed "the outcomes of the One Heart for Palestine Leaders' Spouses Summit during which we called for peace, from Istanbul to the rest of the globe," Erdogan said. She assured the spouses of world leaders would come together at future meetings where they will "unite our voices on behalf of innocent Palestinians." "We will determinedly stand together to rebuild Gaza, which has been bombed into ruin because we as humanity owe Palestinian children a future," the first lady said. Tuesday's summit follows a similar international gathering Erdogan hosted in Istanbul last month, "United for Peace in Palestine," with spouses of world leaders as part of Ankara's efforts to end the ongoing Israeli war on Gaza and deliver a powerful message for the civilians caught in the blockaded enclave. Erdogan had called on all first ladies to be "a voice of Gaza" and stop Israeli attacks that killed thousands of Palestinians. Speaking at that summit, Sheikh Moza highlighted the "crimes" unfolding in Gaza, the violation of humanitarian law and the forced displacement of Palestinians from their homes. She lamented the international community's inability to stop Israel's actions and expressed commitment to resolving issues through dialogue while calling for an immediate ceasefire. The summit echoed another initiative organized by the Turkish first lady in 2009 titled "Women for Peace in Palestine," which convened first ladies amid heightened conflict in Gaza. In response to the recent escalation in the Palestine-Israel conflict, Turkey has come together at the national and presidential levels to put an end to the violence against Palestinian civilians through diplomatic efforts.—APP

Canada's public broadcaster to cut 10% of workforce

Montreal : Canada's public broadcaster announced it would cut 600 jobs, or 10 percent of its workforce, as it confronts financial challenges sparked by a drop in television ad revenues and competition from digital news outlets. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) said the first job cuts would come shortly but that most would take effect over the next 12 months. "CBC/Radio-Canada is not immune to the upheaval facing the Canadian media industry," president and CEO Catherine Tait said in a statement. "We've successfully managed serious structural declines in our business for many years, but we no longer have the flexibility to do so without reductions." A total of 250 jobs will be slashed at CBC, the group's English-language network, and another 250 at French-language Radio-Canada, with technicians and other support staff making up the final 100 jobs to be eliminated. An additional 200 vacant positions will be eliminated, it said in a statement. The public broadcaster "will also be reducing its English and French programming budgets for the next fiscal year," it said.—Agencies

4% rise in crimes against women in India

NEWDELHI: The latest comprehensive data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2022 has brought to light a surge in various crime categories across the country, particularly in crimes against women, children, Schedule Caste and Tribes (SC/ST), and cybercrimes. In the realm of cybercrimes, the statistics are alarming, with a total of 65,893 cases reported in 2022, reflecting a significant 24.4 percent increase from the previous year's 52,974 cases, KMS reported. Fraud emerged as the primary motivator in 64.8 percent of these cases, amounting to 42,710 instances. Extortion followed at 5.5 percent (3,648 cases), and sexual exploitation constituted 5.2 percent (3,434 cases). This stark rise underscores the critical need for heightened cyber security measures and increased public awareness. Simultaneously, crimes against women witnessed an uptick in 2022, with a total of 4,45,256 cases registered, marking a 4.0 percent increase from the previous year's 4,28,278 cases. Notably, the majority of these cases fell under 'Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives' (31.4pc), followed by 'Kidnapping & Abduction of Women' (19.2pc), 'Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty' (18.7pc), and 'Rape' (7.1pc). The crime rate per lakh women population increased from 64.5 in 2021 to 66.4 in 2022, emphasizing the urgency of addressing gender-based violence.—APP

Tokyo stocks end lower

TOKYO : Tokyo stocks closed lower on Monday as the yen strengthened against the U.S. dollar in the forex market, leading to a sell-off in exporter-related stocks, especially in the automotive sector. Japan's benchmark Nikkei stock index, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average, ended down 200.24 points, or 0.60 percent, from Friday to close the day at 33,231.27. The broader Topix index, meanwhile, finished 19.87 points, or 0.83 percent, lower at 2,362.65. Amid speculation about the U.S. Federal Reserve's potential halt to interest rate hikes and a narrowing Japan-U.S. interest rate differential, the yen strengthened to its highest level in approximately three months in the early hours of the Tokyo forex market. Meanwhile, market watchers here noted that excessive optimism about the future earnings of export-related stocks waned, resulting in significant sell-offs in companies such as Toyota, Denso, and Honda. On the top-tier Prime Market, decliners were led by transportation equipment, mining and bank issues.—APP

Cleverly travels to Rwanda to resurrect asylum plan

LONDON : UK Home Secretary James Cleverly arrived in Rwanda today to sign a new treaty in an attempt to overcome a court decision to block the government's controversial policy of sending asylum seekers to the East African country. The Rwanda plan is at the centre of the government's strategy to cut immigration and is being watched closely by other countries considering similar policies. The UK's Supreme Court ruled last month that such a move would violate international human rights laws enshrined in domestic legislation. Since that ruling, Britain has been seeking to renegotiate its agreement with Rwanda to include a binding treaty that it would not expel asylum seekers sent there by the UK government, one of the court's major concerns. Many lawyers and charities said it was unlikely that deportation flights could start before next year's General Election in Britain. The opposition Labour Party, which has a double-digit lead in the polls, plans to ditch the Rwanda policy if it wins. Yvette Cooper, Labour's home affairs spokeswoman, dismissed the government's latest plans as another "gimmick". Cleverly, who arrived in Rwanda's capital Kigali on Tuesday morning, is due to meet with the country's foreign minister, Vincent Biruta, to sign the agreement. "Rwanda cares deeply about the rights of refugees, and I look forward to meeting with counterparts to sign this agreement and discuss further how we work together to tackle the global challenge of illegal migration," said Cleverly. Under the plan agreed last year, Britain intends to send thousands of asylum seekers who arrive in the country without permission to Rwanda, in an effort to deter migrants crossing the Channel from Europe in small boats.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Of Iraq to Pakistan, Hamid Abbas, called on chairman senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament house.—DNA

Nigeria's president orders investigation after drone attack

Tinubu, who is attending the Cop28 Climate Summit in Dubai, called Sunday night's incident in the village of Tudun Biri a "bombing mishap," which was "very unfortunate, disturbing, and painful," his spokesman Ajuri Ngelale said in a statement

ABUJA : President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Tuesday ordered an investigation after the army accidentally struck Tudun Biri village as residents were celebrating a Muslim festival. The army did not give any casualty figures, but local residents had said 85 people, many of them women and children, had been killed. "The Northwest Zonal Office has received details from the local authorities that 85 dead bodies have so far been buried while search is still ongoing," National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said in a statement. NEMA said another 66 people were being treated at hospital, but emergency officials were still negotiating with community leaders to calm tensions to be able reach the village. Nigeria's armed forces often rely

on air strikes in their battle against so-called bandit militias in the northwest and northeast of the country, where jihadists have been fighting for more than a decade. "President Tinubu describes the incident as very unfortunate, disturbing, and painful, expressing indignation and grief over the tragic loss of Nigerian lives," the presidency said in a statement. The army had said its drone was a routine mission that "inadvertently affected members of the community". Many of the victims were women, children and elderly who had been celebrating the Muslim festival of Maulud. "I was inside the house when the first bomb was dropped... We rushed to the scene to help those affected and then a second bomb was dropped," local resident Idris Dahiru told AFP.

"My aunt, my brother's wife and her six children, wives of my four brothers were among the dead. My elder brother's family are all dead, except his infant child who survived." Militia gangs have long terrorised parts of northwest Nigeria, operating from bases deep in forests and raiding villages to loot and kidnap residents for ransom. In the northeast, jihadists



have been pushed back from the territory they held at the height of the conflict, though they continue to fight on in rural areas. More than 40,000 people have been killed and two million displaced since 2009 in that conflict. At least 20 fishermen were killed and several injured in a September 2021 attack in Kwara Daban Masara on Lake Chad in the northeast, when the military mistook them for militants. In January 2017, at least 112 people were killed when a fighter jet struck a camp housing 40,000 people displaced by jihadist violence in the town of Rann near the border with Cameroon. Witnesses said villagers were gathered for the annual Maulud Muslim celebrations when they heard a loud blast after 9:00 pm (2000 GMT), forcing people to scatter to safety. When the villag-

ers realised it was a bomb explosion, they started helping those who were injured and moving the dead. But another blast was heard some 30 minutes later, killing more people, the witnesses said. Musa Shehu said he had lost two wives while his youngest daughter was injured and in hospital. "Body parts, mostly children, were littered on building roofs and tree branches. We packed them in empty grain bags and deposited them alongside bodies of the dead that were not seriously mutilated," Shehu said by phone. Shehu Bala, another survivor, said the villagers, who came from four villages, were still in shock seeking for answers. "We counted 97 bodies, many of them are women and children. Some infants who survived were taken away from their dead nursing mothers. It's a terrible experience," Bala said.

Briefs

Only transparent polls can change destiny

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf said on Tuesday that there is a dire need to hold transparent polls to change the destiny of the country. Speaking to media in Pattoki, Ashraf said: "It seems as if the general elections will be held in the country. The PPP is the most popular party and is having a narrative of Vote say izzat lo. Other party [PML-N] is having a narrative of Vote Kolzzat Do." Former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari will be become the country's premier by clinching majority in the general elections," Ashraf said. The PPP asked on Saturday the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to take notice of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) intra-party elections. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, PPP leader Faisal Karim Kundi said: "Once again, there has been selection in the PTI. The PTI has been supported by an old PPP leader, Barrister Gohar Ali, who contested the 2018 elections on the ticket of the PPP." "The PPP has full confidence in the electoral watchdog. Nobody can even imagine the delay in the elections during the presence of Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa," the PPP leader said. Kundi took a swipe at the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P).

Khattak slams 'corrupt' rulers

DNA

NEWSHERA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Parliamentarians Chairman Pervez Khattak said on Tuesday that the "corrupt" rulers are responsible for ballooning inflation. Addressing the workers' convention in Nowshera, the former KP chief minister took a swipe at the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), saying, "The PDM had harmed the country during its short period of ruling." "The PDM had nothing to do with the masses, as its rulers were busy getting rid of cases against them." He bemoaned that the country is bearing the brunt of loans. "None of the rulers delivered for the country. They [rulers] were remained busy to witness a surge in their assets." Khattak believes in the need for "honest" leaders, saying, "The country's fate will not be changed unless there is an honest leader in power." "Nowshera is the only district of the country where the masses have been provided with the facilities of Sui gas and education," he added. Pervez Khattak fired a fresh broadside at the deposed premier. Expressing his thoughts in Lower Dir, Khattak asserted, "The PTI used to treat the elected representatives like Pharaohs."

'No Palestinian rule in Gaza after war'

JERUSALEM: Contrary to stated US wishes, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will exclude the Palestinian Authority from administering the Gaza Strip in the post-war period, Israeli media reported on Tuesday. According to the Israeli public broadcaster KAN, Netanyahu recently told the US that "there won't be a Palestinian authority in Gaza after the war." Netanyahu has already ruled out any rule by Palestinian group Hamas, which had administered Gaza since 2007. During that time, the Palestinian West Bank has been under Palestinian Authority control. KAN said Netanyahu declared at a closed meeting of his Likud Party that he opposes Palestinian Authority control of the Gaza Strip after the war, and had informed Washington. "There will be no Palestinian authority in Gaza at all," Netanyahu was quoted as saying. - Agencies

GCC leaders, Erdogan accuse Israel of violations of int'l law

Erdogan also said that Türkiye's priority is to "ensure that a permanent cease-fire is implemented in Gaza and humanitarian aid is delivered without any interruption."



NEWS DESK

RIYADH: Members of the GCC have condemned Israel for committing "clear violations" of international law and reiterated their demand for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. In a statement issued at the end of the 44th session of the Gulf Cooperation Council on Tuesday, the leaders of the six nations condemned Israel's ongoing military actions in Gaza, "which have led to the forced displacement of the civilian population, and the destruction of civilian facilities and infrastructure, including residential buildings, schools, health facilities, and places of worship." The statement of declaration went on to say such actions were "in clear violation of international law and international humanitarian law," and they expressed their dissatisfaction with the "blatant Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people", the summit, which was attended by Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman as the lead member of the Saudi delegation, was in Qatar. The representatives of the six Gulf nations were joined by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who said there had been \$23bn worth of trade between Türkiye and the GCC countries. He went on to condemn Israel's continued bombardment of the Gaza Strip, adding: "Israel's war crimes and its crimes against humanity in Gaza should not be left unanswered," he said. Erdogan also said that Türkiye's priority is to "ensure that a permanent cease-fire is implemented in Gaza and humanitarian aid is delivered without any interruption." He also criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "Netanyahu jeopardizes the region's future and safety to extend his political life," he said. The Turkish leader further praised Qatar and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) for their actions for Gaza. "Talks during the Organization of Islamic Conference on Gaza were significant for a joint action to follow up further on the issue," he said, as he hailed "Qatar's efforts

to realize a humanitarian pause in Gaza." The declaration went on to call for the immediate resumption of a humanitarian truce in the Gaza Strip in order to achieve a sustainable ceasefire and the assurance of that all humanitarian aid would reach its intended destinations. The declaration went on to call for the immediate resumption of a humanitarian truce in the Gaza Strip in order to achieve a sustainable ceasefire and the assurance of that all humanitarian aid would reach its intended destinations. The summit pledged its ongoing support for the Palestinian people and its continued support to alleviate the suffering of the residents of the Gaza Strip. The GCC statement also agreed to help rebuild "what the Israeli war machine destroyed in its attacks on the Strip during the past years." The GCC leaders warned that if the war continued there was a danger of the conflict expanding to other regions in the Middle East, something it warned would lead to "dire consequences for the peoples of the region and for international peace and

security." And they called on the international community to intervene to establish a ceasefire and protect civilians. The council reiterated its demand for an end to the occupation of Palestine, and its support for the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over all the occupied territories. It praised Saudi Arabia's continued efforts and its initiative in partnership with the Arab League, the European Union, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to revive the peace process, in accordance with international law, United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002. In attendance as a guest, Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, told members: "Netanyahu is pushing the entire region into danger for the sake of his political future." And pledging his country's support for Palestinians, he added: "Netanyahu is committing war crimes against humanity in Gaza." Earlier in his opening remarks, Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani called on the UN Security Council to force Israel to return to the negotiating table over the war in Gaza. "It is shameful for the international community to allow this heinous crime to continue for nearly two months, during which the systematic and deliberate killing of innocent civilians continues, including women and children," he said at the summit. The Qatari ruler said his country was "constantly working to renew" the truce, which he added was "not an alternative to a permanent ceasefire". He called for "an international investigation into the massacres committed by Israel" and condemned the targeting of civilians of all nationalities and religions. The GCC council released a declaration at the end of the summit, with Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani saying that their primary goal now is to stop the war in Gaza, adding that mediation talks on Gaza are still ongoing. The minister reiterated how it is unacceptable to prevent humanitarian aid from reaching the besieged strip.

PIA's stranded planes set to return soon

DNA

KARACHI: After a protracted two-year standoff at Jakarta airport, arising from a dispute between Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and the leasing company, one of the two idle airplanes is expected to return to Pakistan within the next two to three days. PIA sources confirm that a payment of \$13 million has been made to secure the release of one Airbus A320, with a similar payment for the second aircraft paving the way for its imminent return to the PIA fleet. Upon their arrival, the PIA fleet will see an expansion to a total of sixteen planes. In October, a high-level delegation, led by Aviation Secretary Saif Anjum, visited Indonesia to facilitate the repatriation of the grounded aircraft at Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. The delegation included PIA CEO Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) Muhammad Amir Hayat, Chief Engineer Amir Ali, and East Management Deputy Engineer. PIA had returned two leased Airbus A320 aircraft in September 2021, originally leased in 2012, resulting in substantial financial losses due to ongoing parking expenses. Maintenance costs for these aircraft amount to approximately \$600,000 each month. The airline had proposed covering additional expenses, including maintenance check-ups, to the leasing company, AirAsia, which had previously declined to sell the planes with registration numbers AP-BLY (msn 2926) and AP-BLZ (msn 2944).

Fowzia Siddiqui sees sister Aafia in US prison hospital

Ailing Aafia Siddiqui subjected to 'sexual assault' in US prison

TEXAS: Human rights lawyer, Clive Stafford Smith, Tuesday said Dr Aafia Siddiqui — a Pakistani neuroscientist jailed in the United States for over a decade — has been sexually assaulted at least twice during her incarceration, in addition to the ill-treatment she was meted out at Bagram jail in Afghanistan. Speaking with a Pakistan news channel, Smith, who represents Dr Aafia, said his client has been abused and tortured more often and that she informed him about the sexual assaults in a meeting. The counsel also mentioned that the Pakistani government is also aware of the two instances of sexual assault. Smith's comment pointed towards a report prepared by Aisha Farooqui, Pakistan's former consul general in Houston, in 2018, citing the physical and sexual abuse that Dr Aafia was subjected to during her detention. The report also recommended diplomatic authorities take her case to the highest level and find a way to repatriate Dr Aafia. Smith revealed that a sexual assault complaint was, therefore, filed on her behalf. "Dr Aafia was also sexually assaulted in Bagram jail," he added. He further shared details about the reason behind the assaults endured by his client at the United States-run prison in Afghanistan when the American military was based in the country and operating its bases on Afghan soil. "Dr Aafia was sexually assaulted at Bagram as an interrogation tactic," he said. Dr Fowzia Siddiqui, who is currently in the US to meet her imprisoned sister at the Federal Medical Center, Carswell in Texas, confirmed that she was allowed to meet her sister for four hours "from a distance" and added that her sister's health did not seem good. Dr Fowzia quoted her imprisoned sister as saying that the prison staff would give her better treatment two days ahead of the scheduled meeting with her sister. However, she was not allowed to meet her according to the jail manual, Dr Fowzia added. She added that another meeting might be arranged with her sister if Pakistani consul general persuades the authorities. - Agencies

Ahsan Iqbal calls for 'competent' govt

LAHORE: PML-N senior leader Ahsan Iqbal said on Tuesday that there is a need for a "competent" government in a bid to steer the country out of the economic quagmire. Speaking to media in Lahore, Iqbal took a swipe at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying, "The PTI had left the country backward. The PTI did not bother about the supremacy of the parliament." The former planning minister recalled the events that transpired on May 9. "The PTI went on to indulge in vandalism on May 9." "The PTI wants to stage the politics of unrest," Iqbal said. Few days back, PML-N leader Marriyum Aurangzeb deemed the PTI intra-party polls as "selection." Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, the former federal information minister said, "The practice of the biggest rigging prevails in the PTI intra-polls. This is not the election but a spectacle." Marriyum urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to take notice of the PTI intra-party polls. She said, "When the notice is taken against the PTI, then its leader will hurl foul language at the ECP Chief Election Commissioner. How can the PTI dare to talk about the transparent polls?" "The PTI took no time in releasing the press release following the intra-party polls," Aurangzeb said. - DNA

Raeisi: Genocide of Palestinians will spell end of Israeli regime

TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi says the Israeli regime's killing of innocent Palestinian women and children will spell the end of the occupying entity. Raeisi made the remarks at the Iranian parliament on Tuesday, as the brutal Israeli war on the Gaza Strip has killed almost 16,000 Palestinians, 70 percent of them women and children, over the past two months. "The cruelty against the oppressed and powerful people of Palestine is a source of regret for all of us and humanity," he said. "We believe that the martyrdom of Palestinian women and children will end the fake Zionist regime and that we will witness the victory of Palestinians as well as the elimination of Israelis." The Iranian chief executive also expressed dismay at the support provided by the self-proclaimed human rights advocates, the US and the Western countries, for the Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people. "It is more unfortunate that the international organizations and institutions, which are responsible for defending the oppressed, have lost their efficiency in the face of the global arrogance and the US power," he added. - DNA

UNGA adopts 4 Pakistani resolutions set to promote International security

DNA

NEW YORK: The United Nations General Assembly stamped its approval on four annual Pakistani disarmament-related resolutions that are aimed at advancing the goals of regional as well as international peace and security. The resolutions, which reflect Pakistan's commitment to achieve those goals, were recommended on Monday by the 193-member Assembly's First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) where the texts were adopted by overwhelming support of its membership. Of these, three resolutions deal with regional disarmament, conventional arms control at regional and sub-regional levels as well as Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in the regional and sub-regional context. The fourth Pakistani resolution sought international security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states. The resolutions, entitled "Regional Disarmament and Confidence Building Measures" in the regional and sub-regional context, won the unanimous approval of the Assembly — adopted without a vote. But the resolution on "Conventional arms control at regional and sub-regional levels" was supported by an overwhelming majority of 186 votes, with India casting the only "no vote." The resolution titled, Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons,

was also approved by a large majority. It garnered 123 votes in favour to none against, with 62 abstentions. By its terms, the Assembly reaffirmed the urgent need to reach an early agreement on effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It appealed to all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to work actively towards an early agreement on a common approach, particularly on a common formula that could be included in a legally binding international instrument. It recommended that the Conference on Disarmament actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement and concluding effective international agreements in that regard. Diplomats said that all four resolutions recognize the significance of and complementarity between regional and global approaches to arms control, disarmament and confidence building to promote international peace, security and stability. The resolutions also draw attention to the excessive conventional military danger in the regional context — implicitly in South Asia —, propose measure to address the associated risks and encourages efforts aimed at promoting confidence building Measures (CBMs) at the regional and sub-regional levels to ease regional tensions; and further disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation measures. They said the resolution on conventional arms control at regional and sub-regional levels acknowledges that the preservation of a balance in states' defence capabilities strengthens peace and stability.

Afghan Taliban must reform before full diplomatic ties: China

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China said on Tuesday Afghanistan's Taliban government will need to introduce political reforms, improve security and mend relations with its neighbours before receiving full diplomatic recognition. Beijing does not formally recognise Afghanistan's Taliban rulers, although both countries host each others' ambassadors and have maintained diplomatic engagement. "China has always believed that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community," foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Tuesday when asked if China would now recognise the Taliban government. "We hope that Afghanistan will further respond to the expectations of the inter-

national community, build an open and inclusive political structure (and) implement moderate and stable domestic and foreign policies," he said. Wang also said China urged Kabul to "resolutely combat all types of terrorist forces, live in harmony with all countries around the world, especially neighbouring countries, and integrate with the international community at an early date." "As the concerns of all parties receive stronger responses, diplomatic recognition of the Afghan government will naturally follow," he said. The Taliban government has not been officially recognised by any country since seizing power after the chaotic withdrawal of US troops in August 2021. However, Kabul and Beijing have maintained some ties. Afghanistan's new rulers have promised the country would not be used as a base for militants and, in exchange, China has offered economic support and investment for reconstruction. China's foreign ministry said in a position paper on Afghanistan released this year that it "respects the independent choices made by the Afghan people, and respects the religious beliefs and national customs".

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