



Islamabad POST

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Zelenskyy urges European leaders to release aid

Detailed News On Page-08

Russia can't recognize Israel's methods

Detailed News On Page-07



Usman vows to fight Gaza message ban

Detailed News On Page-06



Military Courts working

SC suspends its own verdict

The military court trials will be conditioned on the Supreme Court's final verdict, a six-member bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and comprising Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali, and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan heard the set of intra-court appeals

Open letters expose discord in SC

Legal community captivated as internal disagreements unfold



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing discord among Supreme Court judges has taken a new turn as Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa's response to Justice Ijazul Ahsan's recent letter has been publicly posted on the SC website. Simultaneously, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, facing misconduct charges, has penned an open letter to all SC judges, levelling allegations of bias against CJP Isa in his case. Justice Ahsan raised objections in two letters regarding the composition of two benches

Continued on Page 06

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday by a 5-1 majority suspended its October 23 order wherein it declared civilians' trials in military courts null and void in connection with the May 9 riots. The verdict was announced on intra-court appeals filed by the federal and provincial governments and the defence ministry against the top court's verdict announced by Justice Ijazul Ahsan-led bench in October this year. A six-member bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and comprising Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali, and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan heard the set of intra-court appeals. Justice Hilali differed with the majority verdict that allowed the trials of civilians in the military courts till the Supreme Court announced the final verdict on the intra-court pleas. The military court trials will be conditioned on the Supreme Court's final verdict on the intra-court pleas, the court order stated. On October 23, a five-member apex court bench headed by Justice Ahsan unanimously admitted the pleas and nullified the government's decision to try civilians in military courts in connection with the May 9 riots which erupted after the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-then chairman Imran Khan. Four judges out of the five declared that

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar enquiring about the health of those injured in the Dera Ismail Khan blast during his visit of CMH D.I.Khan. - DNA

United States, Azerbaijan 'condemn' DI Khan attack

DNA

WASHINGTON: Blinken said, "The US strongly condemns the terrorist attack at a security post in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," adding that the country stood with the people of Pakistan "in ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice". Meanwhile, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry has expressed condolences to Pakistan. It was reported that the news of the terrible terrorist attack, which killed 23 soldiers in Pakistan, deeply shocked and saddened. The tweet reads that we express our deepest condolences and solidarity to the brotherly Islamic Republic of Pakistan. We strongly condemn all forms of terrorism.

'No surrender, no retreat' PM Kakar reiterates nation's resolve to eliminate terrorism

He said those supporting the war against terrorism would stand victorious in the world

STAFF REPORT

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said on Wednesday that terrorists had already lost the war, emphasizing the nation's unwavering resilience against this scourge and preparedness to deliver a fitting response to terrorism. "I want to tell the perpetrators that you have already lost the war. Only the declaration is yet to be made and the time is yet to be finalised. They are fighting a lost war and we are fighting a war already won by us, Alhamdulillah," he said talking to the media at the Combine Military Hospital after inquiring about the health of the soldiers injured in a terrorist attack that took place here on Tuesday. He said he was amazed to witness the strong conviction of the soldiers who were resolved to fight the terrorists even while being injured. He said those supporting the war against terrorism would stand victorious in the world as

Continued on Page 06

FO urges Afghanistan to handover TTP leadership to Pak

Says, Indian SC has no jurisdiction on IIOJK

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch has urged Afghan authorities to handover to Pakistan the terrorist leadership especially that of the TTP involved in terrorist activities inside Pakistan. In an interview with a private radio station on Wednesday, she said Pakistan will take action against them according to its laws. She said we have sufficient evidence against them.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

PTI to stand triumphant on Feb 8

FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan announced that PTI would hold the country's first ever virtual public meeting on Sunday (Dec 17), which would be addressed by the party leadership. PTI Secretary General said that PTI social media team was hosting the first virtual public meeting in the history of the country at 9pm on December 17. Omar Ayub stated that he would be there to address his party workers and countrymen on the occasion. He expressed his optimism that with the grace of Allah and with the support of the countrymen, PTI Chairman-for-life Imran Khan and PTI would stand victorious on February 8, 2024 general elections.

JUI-F ready to form coalition govt

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) supremo Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on Wednesday that his political party was ready to form a coalition government with the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N). Maulana Fazlur Rehman told the journalists that JUI-F has not held talks with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) regarding seat adjustment and electoral alliance. He said that common citizens and law enforcers were being martyred in Dera Ismail Khan, Tank and South Waziristan daily. The Bajaur incident death toll has reached 80, he added. JUI-F was still demanding the timely organisation of fair and free general elections despite the deteriorated law and order situation, said Fazl.

Bilawal sees country's salvation in political unity

He alleged that deals were done with terrorist during previous governments

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Wednesday political differences must be set aside to sort out national crisis. Bilawal, during his address at the Peshawar High Court, said terrorism was prevailing time and again. It was the need of the hour to get rid of political conflicts and work together to nip terrorism in the bud, he said. He said people from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police, and the Armed Forces were among the frontline fighters against terrorism. They were paying the price due to inefficient policymaking, he added. He alleged that deals were done with terrorist outfits, and notorious terrorists were released from jails without consultation from parliament during previous governments. He condemned the terrorist attack in D.I. Khan and said Pakistan was moving backwards due to poor decisions by the previous governments. Bilwal said, "We are thankful to the chief justice of Pakistan for taking up the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto case hearing after 11 years. We have sheer trust in the

Continued on Page 06

Nawaz seeks action against 'conspirators'

I have never conspired against anyone

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday said he did not believe in revenge but those conspiring against his government must be held accountable and added that the largest "JIT" in Pakistan's history would be formed on Feb 8 - the day general elections are scheduled in the country. "I do not have a right to forgive anyone who is an enemy of Pakistan," he remarked and added that he didn't conspire against former army chief Gen (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa,

Continued on Page 06

Combat Commander Turkish Air Force visits Air Headquarters

During the meeting Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, shared the framework of PAF's comprehensive modernization strategy involving integration of emerging technologies, bolstering critical infrastructure and a comprehensive restructuring of its training set-up

DNA

ISLAMABAD: General İsmail Güneykaya, Combat Commander Turkish Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office today. The meeting underscored several key areas of mutual interest with a special focus on bilateral training, progress of current joint ventures

and exploration of further avenues of collaboration in the aviation industry. During the meeting Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, shared the framework of PAF's comprehensive modernization strategy involving integration of emerging technologies, bolstering critical infrastructure and a comprehensive restructuring of

Continued on Page 06



Pakistan unveils first National Space Policy

Murtaza Solangi, revealed that int'l companies would operate through Low-Orbit Communication satellites

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar-led caretaker government on Wednesday gave the green light to the country's inaugural National Space Policy. The policy, unveiled in Islamabad with a caretaker premier at the helm, opens the door for international companies to offer communication and coordination services to consumers within Pakistan. Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi, revealed that

Continued on Page 06

Afghan govt pledges probe into Dera Ismail Khan attack

Dismisses claim of Afghan involvement

NEWS DESK

KABUL: The interim Afghan government on Wednesday pledged to probe the terrorist attack in Dera Ismail Khan, the deadliest on security forces this year, while also stating that Kabul should not be blamed for every issue. In the early hours of Tuesday, at least 23 Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred and more than 30 troops wounded after militants belonging to the Tehreek-i-Jihad Pakistan (TJP) stormed a compound used by the military in DI

Continued on Page 06

DECEMBER 2023

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Indian High Commission hosts Diwali celebrations

Italian envoy leads cooking class

Belgian King's Day celebrations at the Belgian residence

LARGEST CIRCULATED DIPLOMATIC MAGAZINE

SCCI urges govt to take steps for promotion of furniture industry

Government urged to take serious steps for resolution of businessperson issues attached with the furniture industry

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president Fuad Ishaq urged the government to take pragmatic steps for promotion of furniture industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and issues businesspeople attached with this sector. Fuad Ishaq said that the furniture industry has played a pivotal role in economic development and enhancement of the country's export, which should be lifted up at an optimal level. He was speaking as chief guest at 83rd Edition of Pakistan Lifestyle and Furniture Expo in Peshawar, said in a press release here on Wednesday. Various Pakistani and international furniture stalls set up in the expo. The event was attended by the chamber's senior vice president Sanaulah Khan, Pakistan Lifestyle Group Chief Executive Mohsin Faisal, Director

Zahra Faisal, Secretary General of the chamber Sajjad Aziz, Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Fazal e Wahid, organisers and people attached with furniture industry. While praising the organisers for holding international furniture exhibition in Peshawar, Fuad Ishaq said such initiative is vital to boost investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially revive the country's ailing economy. The SCCI president said huge potential exists to make investment in the furniture sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He asked to create maximum opportunities for promotion of the furniture industry and investment in the sector. Fuad Ishaq said the business community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has faced various difficulties due to current economic turmoil and other issues. Therefore, he urged the government to take serious steps for resolution of businessperson issues attached with the furniture industry. Like other sectors, he said the furni-

ture industry was not only contributing to economic development but had an important role in improving the country's exports. He emphasized the furniture industry should be incentivized to boost up investment in the sector. Fuad Ishaq said the business community has always supported the national economy in difficult circumstances. So, he stressed that traders' issues should be resolved on priority grounds. Later, the SCCI president Sanaulah Khan visited various stalls set up in the furniture exhibition and praised the various arts/designs and high quality of furniture. On the occasion, Lifestyle Chief Executive Mohsin Faisal presented shields to president of the chamber Fuad Ishaq, senior vice president Sanaulah Khan and Secretary General Sajjad Aziz while the SCCI chief distributed certification among organisers and participants of the furniture exhibition.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman HEC presenting souvenir to Wasi Shah.—DNA

Chairperson BISP monitors Benazir Kafaalat

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib interacted with the women beneficiaries at a payment center in Karachi to monitor the payment process and check if any woman is facing the issue of deductions in the quarterly stipend of Benazir Kafaalat. The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (October-December) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to beneficiaries is continuing smoothly across the country. Talking to the women beneficiaries who were in queue to receive the payment and those who were leaving after receiving amount, the chairperson asked them if they have faced the issue of payment deduction. Dr. Amjad Saqib also directed the bank retailers to ensure issuance of full payment of the quarterly stipend without any deduction and warned them of strict action against those involved in such deductions. The chairperson BISP has also announced to introduce a new payment system for facilitating women beneficiaries which will ensure transparency in payments through bank accounts, cheques and ATM cards, proving towards a positive step towards women empowerment. —APP

Complaints against departments to exceed 190,000

LAHORE: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has said that the year-end tally for complaints against the government departments in 2023 is likely to exceed 190,000. Addressing a press conference at the Ombudsman regional office here on Wednesday, he said that so far 183,000 complaints had been received, whereas 178,000 decided. He said the complaints rose from 110,405 in 2021 and 164,174 in 2022 to the highest number of 183,000 and disposal also reached an all-time high of 178,000, while comparing the number of complaints in 2023. He mentioned that complaints worth Rs 4.2 billion were addressed in 2023 so far, as against Rs 3 billion of last year. He said that the phenomenal increase in the number of complaints represent the trust of people in the Ombudsman institution for redressing their problems, while appreciating the performance of the officers of the Ombudsman institution in this regard. —APP

HEC, British Council, PMYP to Jointly Work on Green Youth Movement

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD, December 13, 2023: The Higher Education Commission, British Council, and Prime Minister's Youth Programme have entered a new partnership to collaborate in their flagship programmes aimed to contribute to the economic and social development of the Pakistani youth. Special Assistant to Prime Minister Mr. Wasi Shah was chief guest of the signing ceremony, which was graced with their presence by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Executive Director HEC Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum, Country Director British Council Mr. James Thompson and other notables from the three sides. Deputy Secretary Prime Minister's Youth Programme Dr. Muhammad Ali Malik, Advisor (Global Engagement) HEC Mr. Awas Ahmed and Country Director British Council Mr.

Hampson signed the LoI. The tripartite collaboration will be focused on the outcomes of Prime Minister Youth Programme's Green Youth Movement; HEC's Green Youth Movement; and British Council's Pakistani Youth Leadership Initiative (PYLI). The primary objectives of the collaboration are to provide essential capacity-building and technical support to Green Youth Movement (GYM) clubs, develop training content, establish connections between GYM Clubs and other development partners on both national and international fronts to enhance the impact of youth initiatives. Additionally, it will cover conduct of training sessions for GYM clubs, focal persons and faculty members, empowering them with the skills necessary to effectively facilitate leadership training. The collaboration will involve the development of a digital platform and a Monitoring

and Evaluation Framework. In his remarks, Mr. Wasi Shah underlined that Pakistan's vulnerability to the disasters of climate change necessitates a sense of responsibility in the nation. He stressed the need for honing the potential of Pakistani youth, whom he termed the country's asset, to cope with the challenges of climate change. He said, "under the GYM project, we have established GYM clubs in 137 universities across Pakistan. These clubs are working in five thematic areas which are agriculture and forestry, renewable energy, liquid and solid waste management, water conservation and eco-tourism." Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said, "This collaborative effort signifies a commitment to the economic and social development of young people in Pakistan, with a focus on climate action, innovation, and leadership."

We need to promote Arabic literature in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi on Wednesday said that we need to promote Arabic literature in Pakistan. He said this while addressing the opening session of the two-day international conference on "Modern Trends of the Arabic Novel in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century", at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). The minister said, "Learning Arabic is considered essential for every Muslim. In Pakistan, there is a need to promote Arabic literature. This conference is on a unique and most important topic." "I congratulate the vice chancellor and the entire team, and I am grateful for the invitation to participate in this conference," he added. The Department of Arabic at AIOU is organizing a conference, with the participation of 13 scholars from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Thailand, Malaysia, Oman, Algeria, Nigeria and Syria in person, and 15 international scholars joining the conference online. On the occasion, the minister emphasized the importance of this unique conference, as the people are not familiar with the modern Arabic novel. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, expressed his gratitude to the Federal Minister, Madad Ali Sindhi, for attending the conference as the chief guest. He also mentioned that Islamic scholars from all over the world are participating in the conference and presenting their research papers, which will provide a real picture of Arab society. Dr. Nasir said that the presence of foreign scholars at the conference would be beneficial for the promotion of Arabic literature. He believes that Arabs have a unique history and their language is very broad, which allows the Arab society to relate to its civilization and culture. Dr. Habibur Rahman Asim, Faculty of Arabic Language, International Islamic University, Dean Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies at AIOU, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi and Chairman.—APP

Germany, UNDP join hands for flood reconstruction Programme

ISLAMABAD: The German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ) through the KfW Development Bank has announced an allocation of EUR 12 million for flood recovery and reconstruction initiatives in Pakistan. UNDP in partnership with the World Bank will provide support under a framework agreement towards effective implementation of Pakistan's Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework (4RF) for a period of three years. With Germany's financial assistance, the Flood Reconstruction and Coordination Programme will support the flood-affected population in Pakistan through an expedited and integrated implementation of 4RF, including reconstructing houses in Balochistan. KfW Country Director Sebastian Jacobi said: "This is a critical and timely programme in support of Pakistan's post-flood development framework. As an infrastructure development bank, KfW takes pride in investing in infrastructure development and climate change adaptation in Pakistan. With

BMZ's funding following the 2022 floods, KfW has so far invested EUR 50 million in flood recovery, reconstruction, and social protection in Pakistan. This programme will facilitate an overarching multilateral policy and institutional support. The programme will also assist concerned stakeholders in supporting 4RF planning and execution through enhanced capacities at various tiers of governance". UNDP Pakistan Resident Representative Dr. Samuel Rizk said on the occasion, "Our partnership with the Government of Germany is of critical importance as it combines international expertise with local knowledge to help address the challenges faced after the 2022 floods. Furthermore, I am especially pleased with our renewed partnership with the World Bank through this programme, which helps ensure that the funds pledged in January 2023 at the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan in Geneva for Climate Resilience are used transparently and efficiently." Dr. Najy Benhassine, the

World Bank Country Director for Pakistan said: "The Government of Pakistan, with support from bilateral and multilateral partners, is engaging in an ambitious reconstruction program for flood-affected areas. The inclusiveness of this effort will depend on the ability to direct limited funds to those communities and households which are most in need, and under this partnership, we are providing support which strengthens the transparency during the flood reconstruction. We reaffirm our commitment to support the flood-affected people." The 2022 floods impacted the lives and livelihoods of 33 million people, causing 1,700 deaths, displacing 8 million people, and pushing 9 million people of the most vulnerable populations into extreme poverty. The partnership between the Government of Germany through KfW, UNDP, and the World Bank shows continued commitment to addressing Pakistan's post-flood challenges and supporting the country to recover and rebuild after the devastating floods.—APP

VADM. Ovais Ahmed appointed as VCNS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed has been appointed Vice Chief of the Naval Staff with immediate effect. Ministry of Defence has appointed Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff. The admiral was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1989. He carried out his initial training from Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth (UK) and won the coveted Sword of Honour. The admiral distinguished service career includes wide range of Command and Staff appointments. His major Command appointments were Commanding Officer



of a Type-21 destroyer PNS KHAIBAR, Commander Karachi and Commander Pakistan Fleet. His Staff appointments include Fleet Operations Officer & Chief Staff Officer to Commander Pakistan Fleet, Staff Officer Operations at HQ NAVCENT Bahrain, Director Naval Developmental Plans, Director Naval Op-

erations, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operational Plans) and Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) at Naval Headquarters Islamabad. As Flag Officer, the Admiral has also performed duties as Additional Secretary-III at Ministry of Defence. Presently, Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami is serving as Chief of Staff at Naval Headquarters. He is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, National Defence University Islamabad, Naval Command & General Staff College Philippines and Royal College of Defence Studies UK. In recognition of his meritorious service career, the Admiral has been awarded Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Guy talk initiates conversations on masculinity

By fostering conversations between men and encouraging self-reflection, the initiative strives to challenge and dismantle harmful gender stereotypes. The ambition with Guy Talk is to give men chance to contribute to a more equal society

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Swedish Embassy, in collaboration with Olomopolo media, UN Women, ROZAN, and Dastak, is excited to announce the launch of Guy Talk Pakistan. This initiative aims to engage Pakistani men in conversations on topics which are rarely talked about; about societal expectations and norms of how to be a 'real man'. By fostering conversations between men and encouraging self-reflection, the initiative strives to challenge and dismantle harmful gender stereotypes. The

ambition with Guy Talk is to give men the chance to contribute to a more equal society by starting with themselves. "We believe that involving men in the quest for gender equality is crucial," said Ambassador Henrik Persson. "Through Guy Talk, we aim to create a platform for Pakistani men to explore and challenge preconceived notions of masculinity, fostering a more inclusive and equal society for all." The initiative features a website guytalkpakistan.com developed by DASTAK Foundation, with conversation guides, covering topics such as fatherhood, vul-

nerability, and avoidance. The guides are available in English and Urdu, and easily accessible to enable anyone to initiate a conversation, in their workplace, university, organization or among friends. Hira Amjad at DASTAK Foundation stated "We are grateful for this partnership to advance gender equality and engage men in the conversation at a human level, making them core stakeholders in creating a more progressive and pragmatic society, driven by on-ground research across the board. Although, global in approach, but extremely grassroots in its outreach, we are confident

that this initiative that will be ground-breaking in terms of including men." In addition, the campaign contains six short films that showcase intimate conversations among men. Developed in collaboration with Olomopolo Media, these films will be utilized to raise awareness and inspire dialogue. OLOMOPOLO Media stated that they are "proud to work on Guy Talk that highlights issues that men face, especially dealing with the vulnerability of speaking up about their feelings. Mental health conversations are often forgotten when it comes to men and boys, and it directly

impacts their emotional well-being. We must acknowledge how patriarchal demands and conventional gender norms are exacting a terrible toll on the general population." At the launch event held in Islamabad, a panel discussion was moderated by comedian Saad Haroon. The panel featured influencer Hamza Bhatti, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, IG Police Islamabad, Aamir Ahsan Khan from Ericsson Pakistan, Babar Bashir, Rozan, and actor Shehzad Ghias. The discussion highlighted various aspects of masculinity and expectations of men in Pakistani society.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Water & Sewerage R/A Zone Division

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender are hereby invited on percentage basis from the approved contractors of Civil Work and having valid Pakistan Engineer Council (PEC) License 2023 for the work:-

S.No	Name of work	NIT Cost	Earnest Money	Tender Fee Non Refundable	Date & Time of Opening of tenders
1.	Providing / Laying water supply system in sector I-11/2 Islamabad (2 nd Portion).	Rs.42,493,404/-	Rs.1,274,802/-	Rs.5,000/-	10/01/2024 12:00 Noon

CONDITIONS:
Detailed terms & Conditions can be seen from CDA Website www.cda.gov.pk and PPRRA www.ppra.org.pk

- Application for issuance of tender documents on dated 05.01.2024 upto 4:30 PM must be accompanied with valid copies of PEC License obtaining Tender Category C-5 & above for the year 2023, NTN Certificate, CNIC, Registration of Firm / Partnership Deed / Sole Proprietorship / Power of Attorney / Authority Letter from the contractor in favor of their representative. No tender will be issued without showing all required document in "ORIGINAL" (All documents will be verified from concerned department, The Firms providing unsubstantiated and or incorrect information are liable to legal action and or disqualification at any stage.
- Tender documents can be obtained from the office of Deputy Director W&S (R/A) Zone, CDA located at Old Naval Headquarter Room No.136, Sector G-6, Melody, Islamabad on cash payment as mentioned above per set (Non-Refundable) during working hours on dated 08.01.2024 up to 04:30 P.M against written request which should be on letter head pad having name, address, phone No's and signature of the contractor. No tender will be sold on the date of opening of the tender.
- The prospective bidders are required to submit Bid Security (Deposit at Call) above mentioned work in favor of Deputy Director W&S (R/A) Zone, CDA, issued from any scheduled bank against firm's account. Name of Firm should be clearly mentioned on instrument (Deposit at Call). Tender documents shall not be issued without Earnest Money.
- Certificate is required on judicial stamp paper worth of Rs.50/ their firm are not involved any litigations and non relationship.
- Tender bid will be received and opened on above date and time in the office of Director W&S (Dev), CDA located at Room No.140, First Floor (Old Naval H/Qrts) Islamabad.
- Tender rates on percentage basis should be filled in figures as well as in words.
- CDA reserves the right to accept or reject any / all tenders as per PPRRA Rules. No conditional tender will be entertained Deputy Director W&S R/A Zone, CDA

(MUKHTIAR ALI)
Deputy Director
W&S (R/A) Zone Division,
CDA, Islamabad.

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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

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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

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PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Enquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi. 5555489
CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

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

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Ethiopia keen to expand coop with Pak in counter terrorism

The minister also appreciated the role being played by Ethiopia for ensuring peace and security not only in region but also across the globe

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was called on Caretaker Interior Minister H.E. Sarfraz Bugti here at his office.

Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest including cooperation at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels in diverse areas such as security, counter-terrorism and immigration. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula briefed the minister about the striking similarities between the two countries at structural level and also highlighted the common challenges faced by both Ethiopia and Pakistan. He emphasized on knowledge and experiences exchange between the two countries to counter the scourge of terrorism, illicit trade and smuggling. Ethiopia and Pakistan should work together closely in this regard, he added. The ambassador highlighted the counter-terrorism activities being carried out by Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa to ensure peace and stability in the region saying his country looked forward to work with Pakistan in this regard. Moreover, the ambassador briefed the minister on the economic progress in Ethiopia under the leadership of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia. On the other hand, the caretaker minister for Interior acknowledged the economic prosperity achieved by Ethiopia



through reforms introduced by the current leadership. He said Pakistan attached great importance to Africa and Ethiopia

would play a critical role in connecting the country with African continent. He said Pakistan was ready to exchange its knowledge

and experiences with its brotherly country Ethiopia in different areas including counter terrorism. The minister also appreciated the

role being played by Ethiopia for ensuring peace and security not only in region but also across the globe.

Giving priority to S&T is only solution to the socio-economic development: Prof Iqbal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH said that the solution to all problems being faced by the Ummah is in giving the priority to science and technology. He was giving a press briefing to the media persons at COMSTECH on Wednesday. Prof. Choudhary informed that the difference between the developed and developing world in not the lack of resources, wealth or capital, but it is the knowledge that makes difference. Prof. Choudhary said that there are 57 OIC member states from South America, Africa, Europe, and Asia inhabiting

1.9 billion people and the 60% population is below the age of 27 years, 23 member states are LDC as per United Nations, share only 2.97% of world high technology export and acquire 1.6% of world patents, expenditure of research and development is 0.3% of GDPs, which is well below the world average, and only 17 universities of the OIC region are in top 50. Prof. Choudhary said that the challenges of OIC member states include massive poverty, unemployment, inequality, women illiteracy, conflict zones, massive displacement of human population, political instability and frequent disruption of democratic process. He said that 180 million people are food insecure. He said

that out of 10 most climate change venerable countries 5 are in OIC region, including Pakistan, Mozambique, and Maldives. He mentioned that non-functional education system, and over 180 million children of out of school worsening the situation further. Prof. Choudhary emphasized that science can only help to meet these challenges. He said green and gene revolution can feed the hungry. He said the global life expectancy can exceed to live over 100 years of productive life. He said that antibiotics and antiviral are saving the lives of millions of people today. He said that biotechnology, 3D printing of organs, gene editing, smart computer, synthetic bacteria, and nanotechnol-

ogy will redefine the world around us. Prof. Choudhary shared a comprehensive report of COMSTECH programs, past activities and future plans for the socio-economic development of the OIC states. Replying to the questions from the journalists, he said there is a need of networking and collective efforts to meet the challenges being faced by the Ummah. He said new technologies will be of great help to meet the challenges created by the climate change. He also emphasized the need of the resource mobilization for scientific and technological development of the Ummah. The briefing was attended by print, electronic and online media persons.

Kyrgyzstan-Pak strategic alignment highlighted

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis on Wednesday said the strategic alignment of Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, through China international land routes offers a gateway to manifold economic opportunities, bolstering trade, fostering cooperation, and contributing to the overall development of the region. Talking to a delegation of exporters and importers led by Faran Shahid, he said bilateral trade between landlocked Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, facilitated by China through land routes, holds immense potential for economic growth and regional connectivity. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) serves as a crucial conduit, linking these geographically distant nations. Kyrgyzstan, nestled in Central Asia, lacks direct access to seaports, making overland trade routes vital for its economic development. He said moreover, the collaboration enhances regional stability by fostering economic interdependence. He said as goods flow more seamlessly through these land routes by a fleet of NLC, (National Logistics Corporation) the potential for mutual investments and joint ventures between Kyrgyz and Pakistani businesses increases. This economic synergy after successful Pak export consignment to Kyrgyzstan by NLC containers not only benefits the two nations directly involved but also contributes to the broader economic integration of Central and South Asia. Meher Kashif Younis who is also Coordinator to the Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman and vice president of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, said the efficient transportation can significantly reduce transit times and costs, fostering a more robust economic partnership. Kyrgyzstan, with its rich reserves of minerals and agricultural products, can tap into Pakistan's market, while Pakistani industries gain access to Kyrgyz resources. He said Ulanbek Totuiaev Kyrgyzstan Ambassador to Pakistan is instrumental for promoting and strengthening bilateral cooperation between two countries.—DNA

RDA to open its Facilitation Desk in ICCI to facilitate business community

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa, Director General, Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). He briefed the business community about the construction of Rawalpindi Ring Road (RRR) and the plan of establishing industrial zones as well as fruit & vegetable market on this project to promote commercial and industrial activities. He also announced the opening of a Facilitation Desk of RDA in ICCI to facilitate the business community in matters to RDA. He said that RDA had intended to conduct a survey in collaboration with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry

to identify a suitable location for an industrial zone on Ring Road and desired that ICCI should become a stakeholder in this important project to promote industrialization. He said that to bolster the business and industrial activities, the Punjab government has set up a Business Facilitation Centre as a one-stop shop facility and the business community of Islamabad should take benefit of its services while exploring business and investment opportunities in Punjab. He invited the ICCI delegation to visit RDA to get a detailed briefing on the RRR project and the scope of business and industrial activities on it. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Islamabad

Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that ICCI has been working on a new industrial zone in the region for a long time and emphasized that the RDA should take ICCI on board about the industrial zone on Ring Road so that this project could be set up at a suitable location that should have easy access to the twin cities. He thanked RDA for announcing the opening of its Facilitation Desk in ICCI and hoped that it would provide great facilitation to ICCI members. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI urged the RDA to inform the people about the illegal housing societies in its jurisdiction to save the potential investors from any losses.—APP

Commerce minister for deepening ties with China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As part of his visit to China, Commerce Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz visited the Hengli Group headquarters, a trailblazing entity in oil refining, petrochemicals, polyesters, and textiles. The visit showcased the impressive journey of Hengli Group, from its roots as a Suzhou weaving factory in 1994 to its current status as the operator of the world's largest terephthalic acid plant—an inspiring transformation. The delegation, led by Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz, engaged in a highly productive exchange with Hengli Group representatives, delving into potential collaboration opportunities. The discussions were centered around leveraging the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to foster private sector partnerships. This visit underscores the substantial potential for Pakistan to harness Chinese expertise and cutting-edge technology through CPEC initiatives. Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz expressed the commitment to facilitating and nurturing such collaborations, emphasizing the role of these partnerships in driving economic growth.

Mushalla slams Indian SC verdict on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has expressed her deep concern over the India Supreme Court's decision to uphold the revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, stating that it is akin to death sentence for all Kashmiris. She was addressing a seminar to commemorate International Human Rights Day organized by Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights in collaboration with International Islamic University Islamabad. Mr. Shafigue Chaudhry (Executive Director, PCHR), Dr. Raheem Awan (DG Legal Aid and Justice Authority), Dr. Sameena Malik (Rector, IIUI), Dr. Noor Fatima and Syed Muhammad Anwar were among the participant of the Seminar. Mushaal asserted that the ongoing human rights violations by India underscore the shortcomings of the United Nations. She emphasized the necessity for the UN to go beyond mere resolutions and actively pursue their implementation. —DNA

DG RDA directs authorities to take strict action against illegal constructions

RAWALPINDI: Director General (DG) Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa has directed the authorities concerned to take action in accordance with the law against illegal constructions. According to RDA spokesman, the DG had instructed the RDA officials to make all-out efforts to address complaints of the citizens. The DG also directed the Director MP&TE to provide relief to the citizens about the construction of residential and commercial buildings. He also directed the officers to take strict action against illegal commercial activities without any discrimination. The DG instructed the RDA officials to accelerate process to transfer the properties of the citizens. He also directed to take action in accordance with the law against encroachers. Saif Anwar Jappa ordered the RDA Engineering Directorate to work hard to facilitate the residents, he added.—APP

ANF busts drug trafficking gang

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an operation in Kot Moman managed to bust a drug-trafficking gang and arrested nine accused including four women besides recovering 1023 kg drugs. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF while conducting an operation in Kot Momin netted nine smugglers, members of an inter-provincial gang which was allegedly involved in drug smuggling through women in different cities of Punjab. During the operation, total 1023 kg drugs were recovered from their possession. He informed that ANF team stopped three vehicles near Kot Momin and recovered total 703 kg hashish from the vehicles. During the investigation, the accused revealed the presence of drugs in a house located in Kot Momin. On pointation of the accused, the ANF team raided the house and recovered 398 kg opium while four women were also rounded up during the operation. The accused used to smuggle drugs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and store them in a rented house in Kot Momin. The drugs were supplied to different districts of Punjab.

SAPM for higher job opportunities in KSA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik held an interactive session with Pakistani professionals from the hospitality industry at the Embassy of Pakistan, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik assured the participants of the will and the resolve of the government to train the workers in accordance with the requirements of the hospitality industry in Saudi Arabia in order to get the maximum share for Pakistan in the Saudi job market, said a press release. The Participants briefed the SAPM on the trends in the hospitality sector with the focus on areas where Pakistan could benefit. The SAPM was informed that the Kingdom accorded priority to the tourism industry under its ambitious Vision 2030 and therefore the hospitality industry was growing at a rapid pace. They highlighted the specific skill-set and qualifications that were sought after in the Saudi Arabian hospitality industry, such as the working level language proficiency in Arabic and English.

easypaisa partners with USAID

ISLAMABAD: easypaisa, Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform, has partnered with Unikrew and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to empower women through groundbreaking and innovative financial solutions. This collaboration aims to integrate women-centric products within the easypaisa app, leveraging digital technology to enhance financial inclusion and independence. As part of the collaboration, easypaisa will implement a fully digital registration and account opening process. This streamlined journey ensures an instant and hassle-free experience for women looking to establish financial accounts within the easypaisa app. As part of the initiative to encourage women to embrace financial empowerment, easypaisa will provide a joining bonus of Rs. 100 as an instant incentive upon creating an account. This incentive aims to encourage women customers to start their financial journey conveniently. While commenting on this collaboration, Farhan Hassan, Head of easypaisa Wallet Business, said, "At easypaisa, we are dedicated to leveraging technology to empower individuals and foster financial inclusion. This collaboration with Unikrew and USAID is a significant step towards ensuring that women have access to user-friendly financial tools that cater to their unique needs. We believe that by offering a seamless, digital experience and attractive incentives, we can encourage more women to take control of their financial future." easypaisa is also introducing an attractive high saving rate of 16%. Through the app's "Goal-Based Savings" feature, women can delineate financial objectives and determine timelines to achieve these goals. easypaisa will provide guidance and support to women customers in making monthly contributions, rewarding them with a 16%—DNA

Briefs

PFC delegation leaves for China to explore potential market

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) delegation, headed by Chief Executive Officer, Mian Kashif Ashfaq, Wednesday embarked on a visit to China to explore potential market and work out prospects for joint ventures. He said the visit underscored the commitment to explore the global furniture market, said a PFC news release. He said in the context of bilateral relations, this venture would further enhance economic cooperation. The joint ventures had a proactive approach to leverage each country's strengths in the furniture sector, he added. Mian Kashif Ashfaq said by directly engaging with counterparts in China, it would open avenues for technological collaboration. He said this economic initiative reflected the dynamism of Pakistan's furniture industry and its aspirations for global competitiveness.—APP

Jiani felicitates Mohamad Hassan on becoming Malaysian FM

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jiani on Wednesday felicitated Mohamad Hassan as he was appointed as the Foreign Minister of Malaysia. "Heartiest felicitations to H.E Br. Mohamad Hassan on becoming Foreign Minister of brotherly country of Malaysia," Foreign Minister Jiani wrote on X. The foreign minister said that he looked forward to deeper collaboration to further strengthen close bonds of friendship and multifaceted cooperation between Pakistan and Malaysia.—APP

Power suspension schedules

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 14th December 2023, From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Shikar Padian, T&T, Iqbal Road, Sohtran Road, Highway, Cherah, F-10, G-10/1, I-9/4, Old Exchange, G-13/1, F-11/4, Shahpur, Dhala, Shahdara, Kotli Sattian, Balawara Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Kamalabad, Lakho, Raja Sultan, Faizabad, Shukrial, Al Noor Colony, Farooq Azam, Gulzar Quaid, Zafarul Haq, Dhok Khaba, Sarafa Bazar, Major Masood, Jinnah Road, Abu Bakar, Industrial, Quaidabad, People's Colony, Race Course, Radio Pak-I, Nust Road, Lakho Road, Mohanpura, New Milpur, 6th Road, T&T, PTCL Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Kohala, Murt, Bank Road, 502 Workshop, Qureshiabad, Chongi No. 22, Chahan, Dhok Ghazan, Zaraj, IST, Chowk Pindori, Lahtrar.I, Seep Abrar, Ghazan Khan, Gumti, Pind Jatla, Bhangali, Syed Kasran, Gagan Feeders, Attock Circle, Bohi Ghar, Ghazi Kohli, Margala, Nisar Shaheed, Lala Zar, Sarai Kharboza, Shahullah Dutta, Hussainabad, Pathargarh, Musa, Haji Shah, Dilawarabad, Shakra.—APP

Pakistan's huge scope of sports tourism: President

The event themed 'Revival of Mountain Glory' was organized by the Alpine Club of Pakistan and gathered the country's renowned mountaineers including Samina Baig, Naila Kiani, and Sajid Sadpara among others who won titles by scaling the highest peaks of the world

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said Pakistan had immense potential for sports and adventure tourism, however stressed effective regulation and improved infrastructure to explore the untapped sector. Addressing the concluding ceremony of the third Sustainable Mountain Sports Tourism Conference, he said the provision of facilities was the top factor in the development of domestic and sports tourism. The event themed 'Revival of Mountain Glory' was organized by the Alpine Club of Pakistan and gathered the country's renowned mountaineers including Samina Baig, Naila Kiani, and Sajid Sadpara among others who won titles by scaling the highest peaks of the world. President Alvi said Pakistan was blessed with incredibly serene natural beauty, particularly its northern areas where the mountains and snowy peaks were a big source of attraction for tourists and trekkers. He mentioned that the country's scenic Malam Jabba and Naltar areas offered amazing skiing facilities and had huge potential for adventure sports. Also, the Hunza Valley has the world's best treks amidst the gigantic mountains of Karakoram, he added. The president, however, stressed the need to put in place a tourist regulatory mechanism to promote domestic tourism. He emphasized ensuring facilities for tourists such as easy access to destinations, better roads, clean hotels and



guest rooms, and trained human resources. He pointed out that the unregulated influx of tourists caused nuisance of traffic jams and disruption of the civic system. In this regard, he proposed proper management and development of new tourist destinations to shift the quantum of visitors. The president also called for raising consciousness among the general

public to be kind towards the environment while exploring tourist places. VHe termed security and a peaceful environment significant factors in promoting tourist activities in the country. Patron Alpine Club of Pakistan Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) Ijaz Malik said Pakistan being the home of the highest mountain peaks and glaciers outside the Arctic region had great scope for ad-

venture and mountain tourism. He outlined the outcome of the sports tourism conference which stressed the need for formulating a policy on domestic tourism to accrue economic benefits, introducing tourism as a subject in the national curriculum, and training human resources with contemporary skills. President Alpine Club of Pakistan Abu Zafar Sadiq said the organization was

playing its role in promoting sports tourism in the country through rock and sport climbing, hiking, and trekking. The other activities in collaboration with partners included winter sports, paragliding, mountain biking, and rafting, he said. President Alvi on the occasion gave away recognition shields to the mountaineers, trekkers, and officials of the Alpine Club.

FBR chairman asks staff to work diligently

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The final passing out ceremony of Assistant Collectors of Customs from 50th Specialized Training Program (STP) was held at Customs Academy of Pakistan (CAP) today in Karachi. Mr. Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Ms. Zeba Hai Azhar, Member Customs FBR along-with Director General Customs Academy of Pakistan Ms. Saima Shahzad and Director Customs Academy Ms. Nawabzadi Aliya Khanji also attended the ceremony. Addressing the ceremony, the Chairman FBR congratulated the officers on completion of their training and wished them well for their professional careers. The Chairman appreciated the role of Customs Academy in making officers learn how to maintain harmony and balance in individual and collective capacity for better execution of their professional responsibilities and authority. The Chairman urged the young officers to remember their role as public servants, ensure their accessibility to the people and staff working under their supervision, protect FBR's core values, continue improving their professional competence and serve the Department with utmost dedication. Earlier, in her welcome note, Ms. Saima Shahzad, DG Customs Academy explained the key features of the training.—DNA

CPEC agro-project rep shares collaboration experience at COP28

DNA

ISLAMABAD: CPEC agro-project representatives shared collaboration experience at the COP28 being held in Dubai, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. "Through in-depth cooperation in the transfer of advanced technologies and industries, increasing production and expanding exports, China-Pakistan agricultural industry cooperation can not only ensure the demand and supply of China, but also create job opportunities and foreign exchange reserves for Pakistan. Through concrete project cooperation, both sides can better enhance the economic integration and people-to-people exchanges," said Peter Huang, Commercial Head of Litong Economic Corridor Co., Ltd (LTEC) at the

ongoing COP28. He noted that COP28 is likely to have a positive effect in promoting the sustainable development of agriculture in both China and Pakistan, as more than 100,000 people are expected to participate in COP28, including more than 140 heads of state and policy makers. "As one of the countries most affected by climate change in the world, Pakistan is expected to receive international attention at COP28 and such efforts will play a positive role in the sustainable development of agriculture in China and Pakistan," he added. Sustainable agricultural cooperation between China and Pakistan is of great significance to the two countries. Pakistan is an agricultural country, with agriculture employing around 40% of the population and accounting for about 23% of the agricultural GDP. Successful cooperation between China

and Pakistan in agriculture can better benefit ordinary farmers in Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan's large-scale agricultural exports can create foreign exchange reserves for Pakistan and play a certain balancing role in Sino-Pak trade. In addition, the stable supply of agricultural products in the market through Sino-Pak agricultural cooperation can promote the integration of Pakistan's agricultural and food industries, bring in value-added industries such as food processing to meet local demand, reduce imports and realize value-added exports. As the operating company of the first batch of agricultural projects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), LTEC has rich resources and long-term industrial planning in the agriculture and food industry, and the company has the layout of the whole industrial chain in

agriculture from seeds to tables. Peter stressed that Pakistan is heavily affected by climate change, and the precise matching of crop characteristics and planting times needs to be considered in the country's planting planning. He expressed optimism over the trend of Sino-Pakistan agricultural cooperation, stressing that industrialization of agriculture is the main direction. "LTEC plans to reach the annual export target of 200,000 tons of dried chili within five years, gradually increasing production capacity according to the decomposition target, giving priority to exports to China, while radiating the international market. And in 2025 it will start the construction of China-Pakistan food industrial park, including tomato sauce, animal oil refining and other related agricultural and food industries landing," he added.

China, Pak to tap new coop in textile industry

According to the meeting, Pakistan aims to boost its exports to USD 50 billion within five years by enhancing its textile sector and organizing a major expo to promote related products

ISLAMABAD: Zhang Xinmin, vice-president of China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles held here talks with Pakistani Federal Commerce Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz. The two parties discussed China-Pakistan textile and garment investment and trade, the development of Pakistan's textile industry, and the promotion of cooperation between the two sectors. Pakistan's textile sector is often referred to as the backbone of its economy and employs 40-45% of its total labor force. During the meeting, according to China Economic Net (CEN) Zhang mentioned that the textile and garment industry chains of China and Pakistan are highly complementary, and the two countries have great potential for cooperation in cotton industry and trade. "At present, the global supply chain pattern is undergoing significant changes. China and Pakistan can seize this opportunity to collaborate on organizing professional textile and garment exhibitions, trade and investment forums, business matchmaking activities, and entrepreneurial delegation exchanges," added Zhang. Gohar Ejaz stated that the textile industry accounts for over 60% of Pakistan's total exports and holds great significance for the country's economic development. Pakistan offers a superior investment environment and unique advantages in terms of natural resources, manpower, location, market access, infrastructure, and government incentives. "The Pakistani government places great importance on promoting cooperation and development in the textile industry between Pakistan and China. It has established a special investment promotion committee headed by the caretaker Prime Minister to provide strong support for overseas investors looking to invest in Pakistan," said Gohar. It's notable that Pakistan's Export Advisory Council held its inaugural meeting under the chairmanship of Gohar last Friday. According to the meeting, Pakistan aims to boost its exports to USD 50 billion within five years by enhancing its textile sector and organizing a major expo to promote related products.—DNA

FGEHA not paid any compensation to affectees in sector G-12, F-12

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Housing Authority (FGEHA) has not paid any compensation of land to any affectees in sectors G-12 and F-12 of the federal capital. "However, the compensation will be made to the affectees as per laid down criteria by the FGEHA," an official in the authority told APP. He said the FGEHA has opened the registration for allotment of plots to general public in sectors G-12 and F-12 in the federal capital in August 2023. The award of land in sectors F-12 and G-12 was announced by the Deputy Commissioner of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) on June 1985 and April 1985 respectively under section 25 of CDA Ordinance 1960, an official told APP. Since, he said there is no provision for de-notification the award once announced. Neither is there any provision in the Land Acquisition Act 1894, which allowed for setting aside of an award. Accordingly, he said the Judgment of Land Award was passed by DC, FGEHA on April 2021 after addressing the court orders and other relevant issues. The rate for an award issued is Rs. 62,90,000+ 15% compulsory land acquisition charges (Total Rs. 72,33,500/-). Thereafter, a summary with the following proposal for amendment in award was placed for approval from the Federal Cabinet: "Entire record of Sectors G-12 & F-12 along with award issued in 1985 are withdrawn from CDA and assigned to FGEHA for decision of compensation, as per direction of Lahore High Court, Rawalpindi Bench and incorporation of modalities as decided by Cabinet Committee". He said the proposal for amendment was approved by the Federal Cabinet in its meeting held on December 2021. Thereafter, the CDA handed over the said land to the FGE housing Authority. To a question, the official said that the Katchi abadi known as Mehar Abadi consisting of houses, shops and markets have been established and constructed on the said land. The official said the Katchi abadi was not raised after handing over the said sectors to FGEHA and the authority has taken several steps to stop encroachment.—APP

Railways accidents reduced significantly in last three months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has beefed up precautionary measures to reduce passenger train accidents and only six minor accidents with no causality took place on the entire railway network in the country during the last three months. "Only two train accidents have taken place in September, no accident happened in October and four train accidents occurred in November due to effective steps of the department," an official in the Ministry told APP. The drastic decrease in accidents has been witnessed due to the efforts being undertaken to reduce trespassing at unmanned level crossings and unauthorized locations, he added. "Our staff is continuously monitoring the railway tracks across the country and conducting thorough inspection of the trains as the safety of the passengers is the top priority of the department," he said. The official said the department was taking several steps to improve the Railway services including the issues related to tracking maintenance that was given top priority. He said that the punctuality of trains was improved and all the trains were being monitored, reviewed and rectified while to facilitate the passengers, a mobile application "Pak rail live" has also been launched for real-time tracking of trains.—APP

Increased fines lead to substantial drop in traffic violations

ISLAMABAD: The stringent enforcement of traffic rules, combined with an increase in fine amounts, has resulted in a significant reduction in traffic violations in Islamabad. In an exclusive interview with APP, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk revealed that the city witnessed a considerable reduction in violations, with a reported decrease of 38,000 cases in October and November 2023 compared to the same period last year. He attributed this decline to the increased fine amount and registration of FIRs against serious violations, especially those involving underage drivers and one-way violations. This positive trend is also attributed to enhanced cooperation from the public, driven by increased fines and comprehensive road safety campaigns, he added. Sarfraz Virk, who assumed the charge as Chief Traffic Officer on September 28, 2023, emphasized the critical need for additional resources to further enhance road safety in the city. Proposing a strategic plan to fortify the Islamabad Traffic Police, Mr. Virk highlighted the submission of a proposal for increased resources, including the allocation of additional personnel and divisions. Currently managing with a workforce of 685 personnel, the proposal aims to secure eight divisions, encompassing extra DSPs, vehicles, bikes, and lifters. Chief Traffic Officer expressed optimism, anticipating that the competent authority's approval would provide essential resources, significantly bolstering the traffic police's capacity to manage the dynamic traffic scenario in Islamabad. Muhammad Sarfraz Virk highlighted the commitment of Islamabad police under the guidance of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan to raise awareness about traffic rules and ensure a safe road environment in the capital. To a query, he detailed efforts to educate road users, install special signboards, and conduct awareness campaigns in government offices, private institutions, and educational institutions. The priority, he stated, is to ensure smooth traffic flow and promptly address severe violations, he maintained.—APP

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ASEAN: Exploring region's untapped potential

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) stands as a testament to the power of regional collaboration and unity. Comprising ten member countries – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – ASEAN has evolved into a dynamic economic and geopolitical force. As the world navigates through the complexities of the 21st century, ASEAN's potential shines brightly on various fronts, including economic growth, geopolitical influence, and regional stability. One of ASEAN's most notable strengths lies in its economic potential. The region has experienced rapid economic growth over the past few decades, driven by factors such as a young and dynamic population, increasing urbanization, and a burgeoning middle class. With a combined GDP exceeding \$3 trillion, ASEAN has become a significant player in the global economy. ASEAN's commitment to economic integration through initiatives like the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has further fueled its economic potential. By fostering trade liberalization, promoting financial integration, and enhancing connectivity, ASEAN member states have created a conducive environment for businesses to thrive. As a result, the region has attracted substantial foreign direct investment, transforming it into a key player in the global supply chain. Beyond its economic prowess, ASEAN holds considerable geopolitical influence. The region has actively promoted a "ASEAN Way" of diplomacy, emphasizing consensus-building, non-interference, and conflict resolution through dialogue. This approach has contributed to the region's stability and has positioned ASEAN as a key player in shaping the geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia. ASEAN's centrality in regional forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the East Asia Summit (EAS) has allowed it to play a crucial role in addressing regional challenges. Whether it be maritime security, transnational crime, or environmental issues, ASEAN provides a platform for dialogue and cooperation, fostering a sense of shared responsibility among its member states. ASEAN's rich cultural diversity is a unique asset that adds to its potential. The region is home to a myriad of languages, religions, and traditions, creating a melting pot of diversity. This cultural tapestry not only enriches the lives of its people but also presents opportunities for cultural exchange, tourism, and collaboration in the arts and education. Moreover, the soft power emanating from ASEAN's cultural diversity contributes to its influence on the global stage. As the world becomes more interconnected, cultural diplomacy plays an increasingly important role in shaping international perceptions. ASEAN's ability to showcase its vibrant cultures enhances its attractiveness as a destination for tourism, investment, and partnerships. While ASEAN's potential is undeniable, challenges persist. Issues such as economic disparities among member states, political differences, and security concerns pose ongoing challenges to the realization of the region's full potential. However, the commitment to the principles of unity and cooperation remains strong within ASEAN. To unlock its full potential, ASEAN must continue to prioritize economic integration, address internal disparities, and enhance its resilience to external shocks.



US veto and plight of Gazans

One day after the United States vetoed a United Nations resolution calling for a cease-fire in the Israel-Palestine conflict on Friday, the Joe Biden administration said it had approved the emergency sale to Israel of nearly 14,000 rounds of tank ammunition worth more than \$106 million. It is clearly the US that is the true obstacle to a cease-fire in Gaza. The purchase will bypass the congressional review requirement for foreign arms sales. Although not unprecedented, such determinations in which an administration sees "an urgent need" for weapons to be delivered without waiting for lawmakers' approval are rare. That indicates Tel Aviv cannot afford to wait for a congressional green light to be given to the assistance, which might only take dozens of hours at the fastest given Israel's special bond with the US. That has exposed that even though it commands an indisputable upper hand in the conflict in Gaza, Israel's dominance cannot be sustained without the US' assistance. That should also serve to demonstrate the high cost it will take to implement Tel Aviv's plan of turning Gaza into a buffer zone in the future from where it expects to eliminate Hamas, which will necessarily entail the US' continuous inputs as well. It might not have become a problem to the US 20 years back when Middle East oil was central to the US economy and no other geopolitical challenge was in sight except the Taliban in the rugged mountains in Central Asia. Yet the situation is different now. Even though the US claimed it can handle both the Ukraine crisis and Gaza conflict at the same time shortly after the latter broke out, the increasingly palpable anxiety Kyiv has been expressing over the possibility of the US and its allies reducing or postponing their military and financial aid proves that the US' claim might not be true. The Republican House speaker has made it unequivocally clear that Israel is the US' priority while blocking US President Joe Biden's request last month for a nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other "national security" grounds, which is now languishing in Congress. The US is facing a difficult choice. On the one hand, Washington will have to start weighing its possible loss if Ukraine is weaned off US support. On the other hand, it cannot afford to lose the strategic fulcrum of Israel in the Middle East, not to mention the Jewish people's close connections with US finance and politics. Any setback for Ukraine might deal a heavy blow to the US' post-Cold War European project, and any setback for Israel could markedly accelerate the US' withdrawal from the Middle East, a strategic crossroad of the Eurasian continent, Africa and the "Indo-Pacific" region. Both are undertakings Washington has long painstakingly managed to defend the US' hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. Nobody should doubt the tears being shed in Washington over the loss of life in Gaza are crocodile tears, and US politicians are generally more concerned about the US losing its status as the head of the "civilized world". Before it can reconcile how to handle the two fronts at the same time, the US will continue to shed those hypocritical tears and meanwhile provide weapons to Israel and Ukraine, which will create fresh cause for genuine tears elsewhere.

The complex web from Ukraine to the pacific rim

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer


In the Philippines, China has been causing trouble, and Japan is publicly saying they'll help the Philippines defend themselves by sending warships if China attacks. Japan is also working more closely with Malaysia. Meanwhile, China and India have been having an on-and-off border war. Japan told India that they're ready to offer some support. China is going through

The war in Ukraine has been going on for almost two years. People are talking about the possibility of a peace deal, but fighting is still happening. In the Middle East, there's a bitter and intense war between Hamas and Israel that has been happening for about a month. There's also talk about Serbia getting ready for war. Back in 1998-99, Serbia and Kosovo had a really violent war, and the U.S. and NATO supported Kosovo, even bombing Serbia. I hope the information I've heard is wrong, but I'm worried that this could lead to more conflict beyond the Balkans. In the Philippines, China has been causing trouble, and Japan is publicly saying they'll help the Philippines defend themselves by sending warships if China attacks. Japan is also working more closely with Malaysia. Meanwhile, China and India have been having an on-and-off border war. Japan told India that they're ready to offer some support. China is going through economic difficulties, and even though some people think they have a strong navy, I don't believe it's as powerful as they say. Japan's decision to challenge China, with U.S. support, is a big change for Japan in the Western Pacific, and China might have a hard time dealing with that. China's economic troubles are also making its government weaker. Turkey is getting involved politically in Central Asia, an area that really matters to Russia. This could lead to a dangerous situation. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Moscow's influence there rapidly declined. Nearby Azerbaijan's effective victory in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, with Turkish military support, also shifted the regional balance. With Turkey's rise as a regional power, Erdogan has moved to capitalize on these geopolitical shifts to expand Ankara's

influence in Central Asia. He has championed the idea of a "Turkic world" bound by historical, religious and cultural ties. Turkey is trying to be more involved globally, and this in its actions concerning Afghanistan, the Syrian refugee crisis, and its role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Recently, Turkey has been mediating peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, helping with Ukrainian grain release efforts, and assisting in a prisoner swap between the two countries. Turkey is also looking to play a bigger role in Central Asia and China, aiming to create new trade routes that don't rely on Russia. This move is influenced by Turkey's own energy needs and its efforts to connect culturally and economically with the region. With Russia at war with Ukraine, Turkey is strengthening its global ambitions and foreign policy goals, positioning itself as a key link between Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. This could bring new trade opportunities and better regional connectivity for Central Asian countries. Turkey's involvement also opens up access to European and global markets for these countries and China, without relying on Russia. However, the increased use of drones by Turkey might lead to conflicts between Central Asian countries, especially Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In the larger picture, Turkey is striving for more geopolitical power on the world stage. Erdogan, Turkey's leader has stated that the country can and wants to pursue foreign policy goals that align with its own interests, rather than just those of NATO. However, it remains to be seen how successful Turkey will be in achieving these objectives. The tensions in Southeast Asia, the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Cen-

tral Asia don't seem to be connected in any big way. Unlike World War II, where countries were linked by common interests, the current situation doesn't show a clear connection between the different wars and potential conflicts. It seems unlikely that there will be a huge global war, but it's puzzling why there are so many ongoing and possible conflicts without a common cause. It could mean that nothing major is really happening, and the idea of disagreements turning into wars might not be true. But there are always questions I can't answer. Why are the Japanese talking tough at the same time as the Palestinians and Israelis are at war, and the Balkan states are on edge? It's not just that there are war situations; it's that they're happening at the same time.

The U.S. might be part of this complicated situation. Some people think the U.S. should get more involved in wars, even if they're not directly related to us. The U.S. is a major global power, with the biggest economy and military, so we're connected to a lot of countries, either through money or military alliances. Having choices is an advantage, but like Britain and Rome in the past, the U.S. needs to choose carefully where to get involved. The U.S. played a big role in World War II, the Balkans, the creation of Israel, and the shaping of Ukraine. As we look at all these wars and possible wars, the U.S. is deeply involved in many ways. The one country I didn't mention in the list is the United States, and sadly, we might get dragged into wars without much time to think. Historians will probably have to figure that out later. Right now, we're worried about whether my trusted friends really know what they're talking about. Most of the time, rumored wars don't actually happen.

US defense budget debate begins to turn ugly

Maria Malauf

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, which was unveiled last week, earmarks \$886 billion for different defense spending outlays, including a 5.2 percent pay increase for members of the armed forces. However, the most controversial aspect of the proposed defense budget is the unintended unity in the positions of the left-wing progressives in Congress and the ultraconservatives, especially the group known as the Freedom Caucus. This highlights the dilemma of American politics on the nature, the scope and the methods of political debate and it represents a problem for American democracy regarding how it can

In American politics, there are many ways budget funding fights can be manifested. There is the traditional rivalry between the Republicans and the Democrats in Congress over the size of the budget and what it is to be spent on. But the most acrimonious budget battles center on the defense budget. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, which was unveiled last week, earmarks \$886 billion for different defense spending outlays, including a 5.2 percent pay increase for members of the armed forces. However, the most controversial aspect of the proposed defense budget is the unintended unity in the positions of the left-wing progressives in Congress and the ultraconservatives, especially the group known as the Freedom Caucus. This highlights the dilemma of American politics on the nature, the scope and the methods of political debate and it represents a problem for American democracy regarding how it can function. There are many new policies that the defense bill introduces. Among them is an elevation in the status of the top general of the US Space Force, giving the role the same rank and stature as those of the army, navy, air force and Marine Corps. It makes the vice chief of the National Guard Bureau hold a statutory rank of general while serving in that position. It establishes the procurement of up to 10 Virginia-class submarines. Among the amendments made in the Senate are an effort to collect data on unidentified flying objects and the mandate of a two-thirds majority of members of the Senate before the president can withdraw the country from NATO. However, what makes this defense bill unprecedented is that it embraces many aspects of the so-called culture wars in American politics. Many Republi-

cans have stressed the need to abolish access to abortions for military troops and their families. They have attempted to remove permanent healthcare provisions for transgender service members and their family members. Both issues were left out of the draft bill. A few analysts have warned against the language of the budget, which prevents any racial equality phrases in its various items and categories. The political implications of the defense budget are numerous. It negates the goal of striking a consensus in American foreign and defense policies. Therefore, partisan disputes will dominate any foreign policy discussion in Washington. It makes American politics very unpredictable, since the least unpredictable outcomes could happen. For instance, Republican members of the Freedom Caucus have voted with Democrats to kill off previous defense budget bills and to stop the reelection of Rep. Kevin McCarthy as the speaker of the House. Moreover, many members of Congress have the economies of their congressional districts dependent on defense spending. With the debate on the defense budget getting more tense, the political mood inside Congress could get very bitter, demeaning and aggressive, as each member will try to secure the maximum benefits for his or her constituency from the huge and disputed budget authorization act. President Joe Biden has also contributed to this negative partisan fight over the priorities in defense spending. Biden's request for additional funding of more than \$100 billion to help support Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan has complicated the budgetary politics. Constitutionally, the president can invoke supplementary funding measures. Nevertheless, the timing and circumstances of such a request are very unfortunate. Sen-

ate Republicans have voted against this extra funding, while insisting on the inclusion of more spending on the US border with Mexico. This ties defense spending into a complex web of items that have little to do with the US' ability to fight wars or counter national security threats, which are the main challenges to any country's national security policy and politics. This defense bill is unprecedented as it embraces many aspects of the so-called culture wars in American politics. Maria Malauf The Pentagon's budget may impact the presidential election in 2024. Members of the Freedom Caucus share the same views as former President Donald Trump, with his emphasis on "America First." Such a slogan minimizes America's involvement in foreign wars and reduces the chances of its military getting involved in overseas missions. However, the Trump administration raised defense spending significantly. Trump went on to criticize the large amount of money the Biden administration has been spending on aiding Ukraine militarily in its war against Russia. Perhaps a future Trump presidency could direct the Department of Defense to focus more on increasing the salaries and benefits of armed services personnel. At least this would be a policy likely to make him more popular. Trump is very much present in the current debate on the defense spending bill, despite not being physically visible in its polemics. He will most likely make many references to the large amount of money Congress has allocated in its defense budget. Yet, there is a problem lurking for whoever wins next year's presidential election. The nature of American politics grants Congress the right to vote on the defense budget every year. Thus, the fight over the 2024 defense budget is not the final one. The fights could turn even nastier in the years to come.

Briefs

SC suspends
its own
verdict

FROM PAGE 01
Section 2(1)(d) of the Army Act and 59(4) (civil offences) are "ultra vires the Constitution and of no legal effect". "Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing the trials of civilians and accused persons, being around 103 persons [...] shall be tried by criminal courts of competent jurisdiction established under the ordinary and/or special law of the land in relation to such offences of which they may stand accused," the short order read. Following its verdict, the federal and the provincial governments along with the defence ministry filed intra-court appeals (ICAs). However, the caretaker government of Sindh refused to file any plea against the SC order. During the hearing today, Khawaja Haris, a counsel for the defence ministry, requested the top court to stay the military verdict until the final decision on the intra-court pleas. At the outset of the hearing, Justice Masood refused to recuse himself from the six-member bench after objections were raised on his inclusion.

Open letters
expose...

FROM PAGE 01
hearing the federal government's intra-court appeals against the judgement deeming the trial of civilians in military courts unconstitutional as well as Justice Naqvi's petition challenging the Supreme Judicial Council's proceedings against him. Both of Justice Ahsan's letters have been shared on the SC website as per his request. The public airing of internal disagreements within the SC has sparked intense debate among lawyers, prompting questions about the heightened display of differences with the contents of judges' letters being shared on social media platforms. On social media, PTI supporters are rallying behind the stance taken by Justice Ijaz Ahsan and Justice Naqvi, while PML-N followers are supporting CJP Isa.

Combat
Commander
Turkish...

FROM PAGE 01
its training setup, in order to address contemporary air warfare challenges. The Air Chief highlighted that both the brotherly countries enjoy long-standing religious and historic ties which are manifested through unprecedented strategic partnership. Appreciating the participation of Turkish Air Force in Exercise Indus Shield, the Air Chief reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral relations in military-to-military cooperation, strategic alliance and the training domain. The Air Chief further remarked that PAF pilots are playing an active role in imparting nursery to tactical level training to Turkish aircrew. He reiterated Pakistan Air Force's commitment to provide training and capacity-building assistance to the Turkish Air Force.

Bilawal sees
country's...

FROM PAGE 01
judiciary. We are optimistic that the judiciary will give the verdict according to the law, constitution, and democracy. We want justice, so no one has to face this kind of tragedy in the future." The PPP chairman said their party wanted the development of the state along with a democratic and transparent system. Their party mission was to improve history and the law book by getting justice in ZAB case. Referring to the case, Bilwal said that a cruel decision of hanging a prime minister was made during a dictatorial regime. There had been many prime ministers in the history of Pakistan, but Zulfiqar Bhutto was the one who was a true leader of the people. He (Bhutto) developed the atomic bomb, united the Islamic world, and advocated that oil could be used as a tool of power and influence in the Muslim world, said Bilwal.

Shaheen named vice-captain
for Australia Test seriesStar pacer Shaheen has played 27
Tests, 53 ODIs and 52 T20Is for
national side in his crickering career

SPORTS DESK

SYDNEY: As Pakistan gear up for the Benaud-Qadir Trophy against Australia, pace star Shaheen Shah Afridi has been named the vice-captain for the national squad for the three match Test series, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Wednesday. Shaheen, who is also Pakistan's captain for the T20 cricket, was appointed the vice-captain for Test cricket for this specific series slated to begin tomorrow (December 14), after the announcement of playing XI. Shaheen has played 27 Tests, 53 ODIs and 52 T20Is for the national side. For the first time Shan Masood would lead the national side in an international game after Babar Azam was removed from captaincy in all three cricket formats. Imam-ul-Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel and Sarfaraz Ahmed (wk) would strengthen

the batting line, whereas all-rounders Salman Ali Agha and Faheem Ashraf are also expected to deliver in the tough Australian conditions. Meanwhile, the bowling line-up will abundantly bank on newly appointed vice-captain Shaheen, and newly-inducted Aamir Jamal and Khurram Shahzad, who will make their Test debut for Pakistan in the first Test. It is pertinent here to mention that Pakistan have not won a Test on Australian soil since 1995. Pakistan have lost 26 matches and won just four in and against Australia, while in the last five series, Pakistan suffered whitewashes. The Australians are looking in red-hot form, after surprising India in the ODI World Cup final last month to leave the nation of over 1.4 billion in complete shock and sadness. In contrast to Australia, Pakistan cricket is in chaos and disarray. The poor results and administrative flaws have engulfed our cricket into

shambles. Shan's first assignment cannot be tougher, than leading his team in Australia – a tour where legendary captains Imran Khan, Javed-Miandad, Wasim Akram, and Misbah-ul-Haq miserably failed.
Pakistan squad:
Shan Masood (captain), Sarfaraz Ahmed (wicket-keeper), Imam-ul-Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel, Salman Ali Agha, Faheem Ashraf, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Aamir Jamal, Khurram Shahzad.
Australia squad:
Pat Cummins (c), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitch Marsh, Lance Morris, Steve Smith, Mitch Starc, David Warner
Test series schedule:
First Test: December 14-18, Perth Stadium.
Second Test: December 26-30, MCG
Third Test: January 3-7, SCG

PCB awards 3.6
million cash prize
to Wheelchair
Cricket Team

LAHORE: Chairman PCB Management Committee, Zaka Ashraf awarded a cash prize of PKR 3.6 million to the Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket team that became champions of the T20 Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup 2023 held in Nepal. Pakistan wheelchair cricket team demonstrated an all-round display to become back-to-back champions of the T20 Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup. The PCB in its bid to keep inclusivity and diversity as a paramount part of the sport acknowledges this achievement and supports people of all abilities. Chairman Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket (PWCC) Rukhsana Rajput, Manager Zavar Noor, Assistant Manager Javed Babar and captain Mohammad Zeeshan along with the triumphant squad were praised and appreciated by Mr Zaka Ashraf on this occasion. Chairman of PCB Management Committee, Zaka Ashraf while addressing the Asia Cup winning squad said, "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the team. We are proud of all the players and the PWCC management who achieved this wonderful feat." "All of you are blessed with great skills and making a name for Pakistan on the global stage. The PCB will make sure to provide more grounds and training facilities to the Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket team." Expressing his admiration for the Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket team, the COO of PCB, Mr Salman Naseer stated, "I congratulate you all on behalf of the PCB and the management committee." "You are ambassadors of Pakistan and we are delighted that you have won back-to-back titles showcasing your courage and resilience." – DNA

After on-field punch
Club matches in
Turkey to resume
on December 19

Ankara: Turkey's football federation chairman announced on Wednesday that matches in all top-tier leagues will resume on Tuesday of next week after a one-week suspension due to an on-field attack on a referee by a club president. The president of Ankaragucu, Faruk Koca, entered the pitch and punched the referee in the face at the end of a Monday match. The referee, Halil Umur Meler, was released from hospital on Wednesday with a swollen eye but no other health issues. A Turkish court on Tuesday ordered the arrest of Faruk Koca following the conclusion of a Super Lig match against Rizespor on Monday. The justice minister also remanded in custody two other suspects over the violence. The Turkish Football Federation (TFF) had suspended all leagues after the "shameful" incident. Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said Koca and two others were formally arrested for "injuring a public official" after prosecutors took statements from them. "The investigation is continuing meticulously," Tunc said on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter. A decision was

Usman Khawaja vows to
fight Gaza message ban

MELBOURNE: Pakistan-born Australia batsman Usman Khawaja said on Wednesday that the statements he wrote on his shoes in support of the people of Gaza were not political, adding he would fight the International Cricket Council (ICC)'s ruling that he cannot display them while playing. During training this week, the 36-year-old opening batsman had hand-written slogans "Freedom is a human right" and "All lives are equal" on his footwear. Khawaja, who is Muslim, wanted to wear the shoes for the opening Test starting on Thursday in Perth against Pakistan, his birth country. However, the ICC Code of Conduct forbids players wearing, displaying or conveying messages through arm bands or other items on clothing or equipment without prior approval. Messages related to political, religious or racial activities or causes are not allowed. Australia captain Pat Cummins said on Wednesday that the Pakistan-born opener had agreed not to display the messages during the match when it started on Thursday, but Khawaja later posted an emotional video on the social media site X. "Is freedom not for everyone? Are all lives not equal?" Khawaja asked. "To me personally it doesn't matter what race, religion or culture you are. I'm just speaking up for those who don't have a voice," he said. "The ICC have told me that I can't wear my shoes

on field because they believe it's a political statement under their guidelines," he said. "I don't believe it is so – it's a humanitarian appeal," he added. "I will respect their view and decision but I will fight it and seek to gain approval," he said. When asked for comment on Wednesday, the ICC directed reporters to the relevant regulations which make clear that the global governing body is the final arbiter of what is allowed and what constitutes a "political, religious or racial cause". Cricket Australia said that it supported the players' right to express their opinions. "But the ICC has rules in place which prohibit the display of personal messages, which we expect the players to uphold," it said in a statement. Four days ago, Khawaja shared a video on Instagram from the children's charity Unicef from Gaza. In the post, he commented: "Do people not care about innocent humans being killed?" he asked. "Or is it the colour of their skin that makes them less important? Or the religion they practise?" he said. In his message on Wednesday, Khawaja noted the fierce reaction his stance had caused in some quarters. "But let's be honest about it, if we saying all lives are equal has resulted in people being offended to the point where they're calling me up and telling me off, well isn't that the bigger problem?" he said. In 2014, the ICC banned England all-rounder Moeen Ali from wearing wristbands saying "Save Gaza" and "Free Palestine" during a home Test. – Agencies

Turkish President Tayyip
Erdogan said on X that
sport is "incompatible
with violence"

made to impose judicial controls on three further suspects. Koca entered the field and hit Meler when the final whistle blew after Rizespor scored a 97th minute equaliser in the 1-1 draw at Eryaman Stadium, footage from state broadcaster TRT showed. Ankaragucu fans invaded the pitch after the game and Meler was also kicked when he fell. He eventually made it to the dressing room with the help of the police. The federation said Ankaragucu, its chairman, club officials and all those guilty of attacking the referee will be "punished in the strongest terms possible". FIFA President Gianni Infantino said the events that took place after the match were "totally unacceptable and have no place in our sport or society". "Without match officials there is no football," he added. A FIFA referee since 2017, 37-year-old Meler took charge of Lazio's Champions League group game with Celtic on Nov. 28. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on X that sport is "incompatible with violence". "We will never allow violence to take place in Turkish sports." Referees in Turkey are often criticised by club managers and presidents for their decisions but are rarely the target of violent attacks. Ankaragucu are 11th in the standings on 18 points, three places below Rizespor on 22 points after 15 matches. – Agencies

Cricketer Babar
Naeem faces
life threats

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan cricketer Babar Naeem has faced serious threats to his life forcing him to live abroad. According to the details, Babar Naeem, who played 162 first-class matches for the Rawalpindi region, is currently residing in UK after being injured in a murder attempt last year. The 40 years old cricketer has also filed cases in the Rawalpindi Civil Court and the High Court against the powerful land grabbers. Along with cricket, Babar Naeem had also a good business in his home town Gorakhpur, a suburb of Rawalpindi but the land mafia had also occupied their property and refused to vacate it despite the court orders. Babar Naeem has also been threatened to lose his life if he returns to his homeland. Due to the current circumstances faced by the cricketer, he has decided to settle in the United Kingdom and will soon file a case for settling in the UK. It is also mentioning that Babar Naeem has represented Pakistan A, Pakistan Under-19s, PCB Blues, Rawalpindi Rams, PCB Patron's XI, Sayid Paper, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Federal Areas, Rwp Region teams as well as played league cricket in United Kingdom for the last fifteen years.

Franchises finalise squads in PSL 2024 Draft

Teams will start gathering on February 12 where they take part in practice sessions and matches across four days. The event will start from February 17 in Lahore with defending champions Lahore Qalandars facing Islamabad United in the opening match

THE Pakistan Super League (PSL) season nine will take place in February/March next year and the squads of all six teams have been confirmed. The PSL 9 Draft took place on Wednesday at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Lahore where teams finalised their squads after going through extensive process of team selection.

Final squads of PSL teams:

Karachi Kings: Kieron Pollard, Daniel Sams, Mohammad Nawaz, Tim Siefert, James Vince, Hasan Ali, Shan Masood, Shoaib Malik, Tabraiz Shamis, Mohammad Amir Khan, Anwar Ali, Arafat Minhas, Mir Hamza, Muhammad Akhlaq, Muhammad Irfan Niazi, Sirajuddin, Saad Baig, and Jamie Overton.
Lahore Qalandars: Fakhar Zaman, Rassie van der Dussen, Shaheen Afridi, Sahibzada Farhan, Haris Rauf, David Wiese, Sikandar Raza, Abdullah Shafique, Zaman Khan, Imran Jr, Ahsan Hafeez Bhatti, Dan Lawrence, Mirza Tahir Baig, Rashid Khan, Syed Faridun Mahmood, Jahandad Khan, Shai Hope, and Kamran Ghulam.
Islamabad United: Jordan Cox, Naseem Shah, Shadab Khan, Tymal Mills, Azam Khan, Imad Wasim, Faheem Ashraf, Alex Hales, Colin Munro, Matthew Forde, Salman Ali Agha, Qasim Akram, Shahab Khan, Rumman Raees, Hunain Shah, Ubaid Shah, Shamyul Hussain, and Tom Curran.
Peshawar Zalmi: Babar Azam, Noor Ahmed, Rovman Powell, Asif Ali, Saim Ayub, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, Naveen-ul-Haq, Aamer Jamal, Mohammad Haris, Salman Irshad, Arif Yaqoob, Umair Afridi, Daniel Mousley, Khurram Shahzad, Haseebullah Khan, Mohammad Zeeshan, Lungi Ngidi, and Mehran Mumtaz.

Multan Sultans: Mohammad Rizwan, David Willey, Iftikhar Ahmed, Dawid Malan, Khushdil Shah, Usama Mir, Reeza Hendricks, Reece Topley, Abbas Afridi, Tayyab Tahir, Shahnawaz Dahani, Mohammad Ali, Usman Khan, Ihsanullah, Faisal Akram, Yasir Khan, Chris Jordan, and Aftab Ibrahim.

Quetta Gladiators: Sherfane Rutherford, Mohammad Amir, Rilee Rossouw, Mohammad Wasim Junior, Jason Roy, Wanindu Hasaranga, Mohammad Hasnain, Abrar Ahmed, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Sajjad Ali Junior, Usman Qadir, Omair Bin Yousuf, Will Smeed, Khawaja Nafay, Adil Naz, Akeal Hossain, and Sohail Khan.
It must be noted that Geo News reported PCB is in favour of hosting these matches across four venues - Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi. The teams will start gathering on February 12 where they take part in practice sessions and matches across four days. The event will start from February 17 in Lahore with defending champions Lahore Qalandars facing Islamabad United in the opening match. Multan Sultans and Karachi Kings will play in Multan on February 18. Meanwhile, the first game in Karachi is recommended between Karachi Kings and Islamabad United on February 28. Matches in Rawalpindi will start on March 1 with United playing Quetta Gladiators. Six double-headers will also be played during the event. 11 matches will take place in Karachi, nine each in Lahore and Rawalpindi and five in Multan. Three playoff matches and the final will take place in Karachi, with the final scheduled on March 17. – DNA

Nawaz
seeks action
against...

FROM PAGE 01
Lt-Gen (ret) Faiz Hameed or any other person. "I have never conspired against anyone," Nawaz told the PML-N parliamentary board meeting held at the party's headquarters. Talking about his removal from the office in 2017 through judiciary and the consequences Pakistan has faced since then, Nawaz stressed that vendetta wasn't his goal; however, the individuals responsible for the nation's sufferings should be held answerable. Everyone should know who was part of the conspiracy, Nawaz said and added that they had been targeted for getting rid of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. The judge [Justice Ijazul Ahsan] who had given verdict against him was appointed as a monitoring judge [to supervise the affairs at the accountability court], the former prime minister said.

PM Kakar
reiterates...

FROM PAGE 01
well as the life hereafter but contrarily, the terrorists had not only destroyed their lives but would also rot in hell after their death. The prime minister told the media that the Ulama stood with the state, peace and the whole society. "With whom they are fighting? Do they want to frighten us with death? No one will be scared. They should fulfill the desire to fight us for any desired duration," he remarked. He said the state was pursuing an unyielding policy of no surrender and no retreat. Prime Minister Kakar said many thousands people had already sacrificed their lives in the war against terrorism and thousands more were ready to join the cause.

FO urges
Afghan...

FROM PAGE 01
The spokesperson said the foreign secretary delivered a strong demarche to the Afghan Charge D'Affaires yesterday over the recent deadly attack in Dera Ismail Khan. She said the Foreign Secretary demanded that the Afghan government denounce this act at the highest level, conduct an investigation into it, and take stern action against those responsible. The spokesperson said the Afghan government should fulfill its obligations and not allow the use of its land against Pakistan. When asked about the Indian Supreme Court's judgment endorsing Modi government decision to abrogate the special status of illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The spokesperson said it has no legal status and Pakistan has rejected it.

Afghan govt
pledges...

FROM PAGE 01
released a statement demanding immediate and verifiable actions from the Afghan government against militant outfits fomenting terror in Pakistan, as it issued a demarche to Afghan Charge d'Affaires Sardar Ahmad Shakib. Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi, who summoned Shakib, stressed the urgency and gravity of the situation, calling for a comprehensive investigation and decisive action against the perpetrators of the recent attack.

Pakistan
unveils...

FROM PAGE 01
international companies would operate through Low-Orbit Communication satellites, ushering in a new era of collaboration in the space sector. This approach is poised not only to attract foreign investment but also to alleviate the burden on foreign exchange previously expended on the costs associated with these services. Mr Solangi emphasised that the implementation of the National Space Policy is expected to have far-reaching economic benefits, while simultaneously advancing Pakistan's standing in the global space community. The policy includes provisions to establish a Space Regulatory regime in line with international standards, ensuring that Pakistan aligns itself with best practices in the rapidly evolving space industry.

Briefs

Japan reports 1st death from mpox disease

TOKYO: A man in his 30s living in Japan's Saitama prefecture near Tokyo has died of mpox disease, the first such death in the country, the health ministry said Wednesday. According to the ministry, the man suffered from immunodeficiency due to being infected with the human immunodeficiency virus. The man was diagnosed with mpox at a local hospital in September and died two months later, the ministry said, adding that he had no history of overseas travel. Japan confirmed the country's first case of mpox in July last year. As of Dec. 3, there have been 227 confirmed cases in the country, the ministry said. The disease causes high fever, headache and rashes, with serious symptoms lasting for about two to four weeks. In May this year, the World Health Organization declared that mpox, also known as monkeypox, no longer represents a global health emergency due to a decline in new infection cases.—APP

China, Pakistan to tap new coop in textile industry

BEIJING: The Vice President of China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles (CCCT) Zhang Xinmin held talks with Minister for Commerce and Industry, Dr Gohar Ejaz here. They discussed China-Pakistan textile and garment investment and trade, the development of Pakistan's textile industry, and the promotion of cooperation between the two sectors. Pakistan's textile sector is often referred to as the backbone of its economy and employs 40-45% of its total labour force. During the meeting, Zhang mentioned that the textile and garment industry chains of China and Pakistan are highly complementary, and the two countries have great potential for cooperation in the cotton industry and trade, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. "At present, the global supply chain pattern is undergoing significant changes. China and Pakistan can seize this opportunity to collaborate on organizing professional textile and garment exhibitions, trade and investment forums, business match-making activities, and entrepreneurial delegation exchanges," added Zhang. Gohar Ejaz stated that the textile industry accounts for over 60% of Pakistan's total exports and holds great significance for the country's economic development.—APP

NATO chief, Saudi deputy FM discuss regional issues

RIYADH: During a visit to the capital Riyadh, the chief of NATO and one of Saudi Arabia's top diplomats on Wednesday discussed regional issues. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg was received on Tuesday by Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed Al-Khuraiji. "During the reception, views were exchanged regarding regional and international issues of common concern," the ministry said, adding that Stoltenberg's visit is the first of its kind to the kingdom. Stoltenberg is expected to meet with Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman Al Saud and other top Saudi officials during his two-day visit. Earlier on Tuesday, the Gulf Cooperation Council said in a statement that its Secretary General Jasssem Al-Budaiwi held a phone call with Stoltenberg. According to a council statement, Al-Budaiwi urged a stop to the Israeli war on Gaza. The leaders discussed "the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and ways to enhance relations between the two sides," it added.—APP

Water aid Pakistan unveils country programme strategy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In a significant event held today in Islamabad, WaterAid Pakistan unveiled its visionary Country Programme Strategy for the period 2023-2028. This strategy aims to expedite Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) progress in the country, with a strong emphasis on enhancing the resilience of water, sanitation, and hygiene services in the face of climate change. Furthermore, the strategy seeks to prioritize WASH integration within the health sector to significantly bolster public health outcomes. The launch brought together a diverse array of stakeholders, including representatives from academia, community-based organizations, media, and more. Other distinguished guests included Ms. Sitara Ayaz, Secretary-General of the International Parliamentary Congress; Senator Seemee Azdi, Chairperson of the Climate Change Committee. A Panel Discussion was also



arranged to discuss the role of stakeholders, academia, and civil societies in improving WASH conditions in Pakistan. The panelists included Dr. Hifza Rasheed, Director-General of PCRWR; Mr. Liaqat Ali, Executive Coordinator of the Doaba Foundation; Muhammad Nawaz,

Climate Integration Lead at USAID Pakistan; Dr. Muhammad Rafiq, Head of the Center for Water Informatics and Climate Resilience at IM Sciences, Peshawar; and Sehr Afshen, Country Representative of VSO. Mr. Muhammad Faisal, Head of Program Strategy and Policy

at WaterAid, concluded the discussion with a commitment to collaborative actions by all stakeholders, academia, development agencies, government ministries, and parliamentarians to mainstream access to WASH for all in all policies and plans. Arif Jabbar Khan, Country Di-

rector of WaterAid Pakistan, expressed gratitude to all stakeholders who attended the event and reaffirmed the organization's commitment to working hand in hand with local communities, government bodies, and organizations to ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all.

China, Vietnam hail upgrade of ties; deals on rail links, data

HANOI: The leaders of China and Vietnam hailed as "strategic" on Wednesday their decision to strengthen ties and be part of a community with a "shared future", as a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping entered its second and final day. During the trip, Xi's first this year to an Asian nation, the Communist-ruled neighbours, close in economic areas but at odds over the South China Sea, signed dozens of co-operation pacts, following months of talks on how best to describe ties. The two sides "announced the establishment of a strategic China-Vietnam community of 'shared future' to promote the upgrading of China-Vietnam relations," Xi told the

chairman of Vietnam's parliament, Vuong Dinh Hue, at a meeting on Wednesday. In his meeting with Xi, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh called the decision "a historically important milestone", adding that being part of a community with a "shared future" was a "strategic" choice. In Chinese, the "shared future" phrasing makes use of a word that means "destiny" but which is translated in Vietnamese and English as the more prosaic "future". As China and the United States vie for influence in the strategic nation, the pacts mark an achievement for Vietnam's diplomacy, although analysts and diplomats said the improvement in relations could be more symbol-

ic than real. Xi has pushed hard for the upgrade in ties, especially after Vietnam elevated the United States in September to the highest tier of its diplomatic ranking, the same as China's. His visit to Vietnam, only his fourth overseas this year after trips to Russia, South Africa and the United States, shows the importance he attributes to the country, which is home to a growing number of Chinese manufacturers. The co-operation pacts cover possible investments in rail links and security, as well as three on telecoms and "digital data co-operation", a list from Vietnamese authorities showed. Details of the deals have not been made public, but experts

and diplomats said digital economy pacts could pave the way for Chinese support to build a 5G network in Vietnam and investments in undersea infrastructure. The deals reflect the interests of both sides, with China having recently built an undersea data centre off its southern island of Hainan, while Vietnam wants to develop its infrastructure, said Hung Nguyen, a specialist in supply chain issues at RMIT University Vietnam. Telecoms infrastructure, satellite ground tracking stations and data centres could be key areas for investment, he added. But some significant items did not find mention in the long list of deals signed.

Egypt's El-Sisi cruises toward victory as vote count begins

CAIRO: Egyptians cast their ballots on Tuesday, the third and final day of a presidential election expected to give President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi a sweeping victory and a new six-year term in the absence of real competition. Egypt's National Elections Authority (NEA) announced that voting for the 2024 Presidential Elections came to a close Tuesday evening, and the vote count has commenced. Polling stations that finished their tasks have already begun sorting ballots after polls closed at 9 p.m. (1900 GMT). Each sub-committee will announce a detailed breakdown of the votes in statistical reports. The election results are due to be announced on Dec. 18. Many Egyptians have shown little interest in the election, saying they believe that voting will make little difference, although authorities and commentators on tightly controlled local media continued urging them to cast ballots out of national duty. The election featured three other low-profile candidates. The most prominent potential challenger halted his run in October, saying officials and thugs had targeted his supporters — accusations dismissed by the NEA. The government's media body has said the vote was a step toward political pluralism and authorities have denied violations of electoral rules. Authorities have sought to address criticism of its record with steps including opening a national dialogue and releasing some prominent prisoners.

Taylor, Selena attend pro-Palestinian fundraising event

WEB DESK

CALIFORNIA: California: Pop icon Taylor Swift's recent attendance at a comedy show hosted by Rami Youssef has stirred discussions on social media regarding her stance on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Images surfaced of Swift alongside celebrities like Selena Gomez, Anya Taylor-Joy and Cara Delevingne at the event in Brooklyn, New York. Youssef announced on Instagram that he would donate all proceeds from his standup comedy tour to the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANEREA), providing aid to Gaza. While Swift and other celebrities' attendance was evident, there was no confirmation regarding any monetary donations. Swift herself has not publicly addressed the conflict or expressed support for either side. On social media, opinions diverged. Some users believed Swift's presence merely indicated attendance at a comedy show, suggesting that the initiative to support Gaza came from Youssef, not Swift. Conversely, others speculated that Swift's appearance might symbolize solidarity with the people of Gaza. Notably, Swift's silence on the conflict drew criticism from some of her fans. Despite her previous vocal involvement in social issues, particularly through her advocacy and speaking out on various matters, Swift's stance on the ongoing Gaza crisis remains undisclosed. The Israel account on social media platform X had previously urged Swift to utilize her platform and voice to speak about the conflict, calling attention to her influence and potential impact on raising awareness. Also, at the beginning of December, Abel "The Weeknd" Tesfaye pledged \$2.5 million to aid emergency humanitarian efforts in Gaza, translating to approximately 4 million emergency meals, capable of sustaining over 173,000 Palestinians for two weeks. This substantial contribution from Tesfaye, a United Nations World Food Programme Goodwill Ambassador, was directed from his XO Humanitarian Fund.

Pakistan confers Hilal-i-Pakistan with governor of Madinah



DNA

MADINAH: The government of Pakistan on Wednesday conferred the civil award Hilal-i-Pakistan on Prince Faisal bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Governor of Madinah Munawarah. The award has been given in recognition of Prince Faisal's outstanding services for Pakistan. Pakistan's ambassador in Saudi Arabia Ahmad

Farooq presented the award to Prince Faisal at a ceremony held here at the Governor's Office in Madinah. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Ahmad said the award was a reflection of the strong brotherly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and their continued cooperation in areas of mutual interest. He said the people of Pakistan held great reverence towards the Saudi royal family and the custodians of the holy

mosques. Prince Faisal Bin Salman thanked people of Pakistan for the award and said the brotherly relations rooted in historical, cultural and religious bonds stood the test of times. He said Saudi Arabia would cherish this relationship at all levels. Prince Faisal bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud has remained actively involved with various charity and development organizations including Sultana Foundation in Pakistan. Since

1990, more than 120,000 students have graduated from the schools operated by this foundation. As Governor of Madinah, Prince Faisal played an instrumental role in facilitation of Pakistani workforce employed in the Kingdom. Due to his active support, Pakistanis have received efficient service delivery from the government of Saudi Arabia for early processing of their death compensation claims, end of service benefits.

UN commissioner opens global refugee forum

FOREIGN DESK

GENEVA: UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on Wednesday opened the Global Refugee Forum with a call for an "immediate and sustained humanitarian cease-fire." "A major human catastrophe is unfolding in the Gaza Strip, and so far, the (UN) Security Council has failed to stop the violence," Grandi said in Geneva, addressing the three-day forum. Noting that the events happening since Oct. 7 are "outside the mandate of UNHCR," he said: "However, we foresee more civilian deaths and suffering, and also further displacement that threatens the region." "I cannot open the global refugee forum without first echoing the call of the United Nations Secretary-General (Antonio Guterres) for an immediate and sustained humanitarian cease-fire," he said. The high commissioner also asked for the release of hostages and said the resumption of a genuine dialogue would bring a "real peace

and security to the people of Israel and Palestine." Israel has bombed the Gaza Strip from the air and land, imposed a siege and mounted a ground offensive in retaliation for a cross-border attack by Hamas on Oct. 7. At least 18,412 Palestinians have been killed and 50,100 injured in the Israeli onslaught since then, according to Gaza's health authorities. The official Israeli death toll in the Hamas attack stands at 1,200, while around 139 hostages remain in captivity, according to official figures. Gazans face severe shortages of food, water and other basic goods as only a trickle of aid is allowed in. The UN General Assembly on Tuesday voted overwhelmingly to demand a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza. There were 153 votes in favor, 10 against and 23 abstentions. He stressed that there are 114 million people worldwide forcibly displaced and 75% of refugees are being hosted by low- and middle-income countries which are often "already struggling themselves to

provide and care for their own citizens." "This is why international support is so key and must be reinforced," he said. He warned that many humanitarian organizations are facing "severe funding challenges" and said that the UN refugee agency alone is lacking \$400 million to end the year with a minimum of needed resources. "This is a shortfall we have not experienced in years, and we're all looking with much concern at 2024," he added. The high commissioner also underlined the need for the support of donors. "Forum an opportunity to 'step up efforts' Switzerland, the co-host of the Global Refugee Forum, said that as the world is facing a "multiplication of crises and instability," the forum is an opportunity for the international community to step up efforts. "I am delighted the forum is taking place in Geneva - a city of dialogue and exchange," Christine Schaner Burgener, the state secretary for migration, said during her speech.

Russia cannot recognize Israel's methods against Hamas: FM Lavrov

MOSCOW: Russia's foreign minister on Wednesday said Moscow cannot recognize Israel's methods against the Palestinian group Hamas as "acceptable." "From the very beginning, we strongly condemned ... the Hamas terrorist attack on Oct. 7 against Israeli civilians ... and urgently called for the need to suppress such terrorist activities. But, at the same time, we cannot recognize as acceptable those methods which began to be used (by Israel) against Hamas, from which civilians suffered the most," Sergey Lavrov said in a speech at the Russian Federation Council. Saying that Israel apparently believes it has the right to destroy Hamas by any means, Lavrov said that they see the result of such a line of thought through the huge number of casualties in the Gaza Strip since Oct. 7, when Israel's offensive began, following the Hamas attack. "Neighborhoods are being razed to the ground, more than 18,000 civilians have already died, this figure is increasing every day, two-thirds of them are women and children. The situation is terrible," Lavrov said. His remarks come days after a conversation between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Vladimir Putin, in which the former criticized the cooperation between Russia and Iran, and expressed his dissatisfaction with the positions taken "against Israel by Russian representatives at the UN and in other forums." Lavrov said there currently is a dispute at the UN "about who will prevail in rhetoric, in the ideological struggle."—Agencies

50 injured in Russian missile attack on Kyiv

KYIV: At least 50 people were injured on Wednesday in an overnight Russian missile attack on Ukraine's capital Kyiv, with the Ukrainian military claiming that it downed 10 missiles on their way to the capital. "In total, 53 people were injured as a result of the enemy's night attack. 20 of them, including two children, were hospitalized. Doctors treated 33 victims on the spot, in particular 6 children," Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on Telegram. Earlier, Serhiy Popko, the head of the Kyiv City Military Administration, said on Telegram that 51 people were injured during the attack. Noting that about a dozen cases of falling debris were recorded due to the work of air defense systems in shooting down Russian missiles on their way to Kyiv, Popko said that those falling in the capital's Holosiivskyi district did not lead to any explosions. Popko said that falling debris in the Darnytskyi district caused a fire at a nine-story residential building in the Desnianskyi district. The Red Cross is working on the spot, and medical assistance is being provided to the injured, Popko further said. He also said that blasts in the Dniproivskyi district shattered windows in two residential buildings, led to a fire at a private residential building, and damaged a water supply network. A separate statement by the Ukrainian Air Force claimed that air defense systems downed all 10 missiles launched during an attempted Russian missile attack on Kyiv. "All ten targets flying in the direction of the city of Kyiv on a ballistic trajectory were shot down by an anti-aircraft missile unit of the Air Force. The type of missiles can be determined only after the wreckage has been studied by the relevant services," the statement said.—APP

Intruders spray coloured gas in India parliament

NEW DELHI: India's parliament witnessed chaotic scenes after at least two men intruded into the chamber, shouting slogans and spraying coloured gas. Images show MPs and security officials trying to catch one of the intruders, who is seen jumping from table to table. Reports say the men were overpowered by security officials and taken away. The security breach occurred on the 22nd anniversary of a deadly militant attack on India's parliament. Lawmakers said the two men jumped into the well of the house from the visitors' gallery. Their motive is not clear. The incident occurred while lawmakers were in session in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of India's parliament. Both houses were suspended for a short period before the session resumed. "We are investigating the matter and have asked Delhi Police to join the inquiry," Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla said. He added that according to the preliminary investigation, the smoke sprayed in the house appeared to be "harmless". Two other people - a man and a woman - have also been detained for protesting outside the parliament by setting off canisters of coloured gas. They were pictured being led away by police. "Two people jumped from the public gallery and there was smoke. There was chaos all around. Both of them were overpowered by security officials," lawmaker Danish Ali told reporters outside parliament. The breach occurred on the 22nd anniversary of a deadly attack on India's parliament, in which 14 people, including five of the attackers, were killed. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders had paid tribute to the victims of the 2001 attack on parliament - 14 people, including the five attackers, were killed on the day. Karti Chidambaram, an MP from the Congress party, said he was waiting for his turn to speak when chaos broke out.—Agencies

Briefs

Jilani felicitates Hassan on becoming Malaysian FM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani on Wednesday felicitated Mohamad Hassan as he was appointed as the Foreign Minister of Malaysia. "Heartiest felicitations to H.E Br. Mohamad Hasan on becoming Foreign Minister of brotherly country of Malaysia," Foreign Minister Jilani wrote on X. The foreign minister said that he looked forward to deeper collaboration to further strengthen close bonds of friendship and multifaceted cooperation between Pakistan and Malaysia.

Fitch affirms Pakistan at 'CCC'

DNA

KARACHI: Fitch Ratings Wednesday affirmed Pakistan's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'CCC' – and it typically does not assign outlooks to sovereigns with a rating of 'CCC+' or below. In a statement, the rating company also said that it expects Pakistani authorities to complete the ongoing stand-by programme with IMF – a crucial deal that kept the South Asian nation from defaulting on its sovereign debt. However, an expert voiced concerns over the fresh rating, noting that he expected the company to improve Pakistan's rating due to the slew of reforms that the caretaker government undertook to meet IMF's requirements. "One could have expected an improvement in the Fitch country rating for Pakistan after not only having joined a standby arrangement with the IMF but also completing the first review," former adviser of the finance ministry Dr. Khaqan Hassan Najeeb told media.

Jan Achakzai proposes counter terrorism measures

STAFF REPORT

QUETTA: A day after a deadly attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan claimed the lives of 23 Pakistan Army soldiers, Balochistan caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai has proposed a set of counterterrorism measures, including offering the United States "drone bases to target militant sanctuaries in Afghanistan". The minister shared a series of counterterrorism measures in a post on his X (formerly Twitter) account, noting that issuing a demarche to the Afghan government was insufficient and stressed the need for more stringent measures.

Team Europe aims to address Punjab's climate challenges

EU envoy underscored the EU's commitment to supporting Pakistan in improving resilience to climate change and the EU's readiness to redouble efforts



ISLAMABAD: European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Riina Kionka signing the agreement along with Country Director AFD Pakistan Vincent Thevenot following the Europe collaboration about new climate initiative set to address crucial water challenges in the urban centers of Punjab, at Federal Capital. – Online

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: As a part of the Team Europe Initiative 'Building Back Better through Green Jobs Creation,' combining support from the European Union (EU), Germany, France and Italy, the EU and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) today have signed an agreement to spearhead a new climate initiative in the urban centres of Punjab. The joint

effort by the Government of Pakistan and Team Europe partners will allocate €179 million to tackle urgent water and sanitation service delivery challenges in Faisalabad and Lahore, while strengthening climate resilience. The collaborative initiative, entitled 'Punjab Urban Water and Wastewater Governance and Services Improvement,' spans six years and blends grant support from the EU and a soft loan from the AFD. The agreement has been signed by EU Ambassador Dr. Riina

Kionka and Deputy Director AFD Eastern Europe, Middle East, and Asia, Ms. Julie Marsaudon, in the presence of German Ambassador Alfred Grannas and Italian Ambassador Andrea Ferraresse. Acknowledging Punjab's pivotal economic role in contributing 54% of Pakistan's GDP, EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka highlighted persistent water and sanitation challenges. She underscored the EU's commitment to supporting Pakistan in improving resilience to climate

change and the EU's readiness to redouble efforts to support the country's green inclusive growth, a priority under the EU Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan and also for EU assistance to the country. She further discussed the EU's role as the world's leading contributor to international climate finance, emitting about 9% of greenhouse gases but contributing some 30% of global public financing. The French Ambassador's representative noted that the fight against climate change was a top priority for France. Since the Geneva Conference on a "Resilient Pakistan" on January 9, 2023, France has committed to strengthening its cooperation on climate change: today, some 97% of AFD financing also benefits the climate. The partnership with the EU on water and sanitation is an example of this priority; it will mobilise expertise towards climate-resilient solutions in the water and sanitation sectors. The project aims to improve access to drinking water and sanitation services by installing 200 kilometres of new water supply pipes and providing 55,000 new connections. It focuses on enhancing capacities, increasing water treatment capacity by 135,000 cubic meters per day and bolstering urban water governance. The initiative will improve the access of 400,000 individuals to drinking water. This joint intervention underscores the joint commitment of the Government of Pakistan and Team Europe to sustainable development, marking a crucial step towards building climate resilience and ensuring a better quality of life for people and businesses in Faisalabad and Lahore.

Rain brings more despair to Gazans amid bombardment

Israel reported ten of its soldiers killed in the past 24 hours. It was the worst one-day loss since 15 were killed on Oct. 31

FOREIGN DESK

GAZA CITY: The IOF destroy homes on top of their residents and commit genocidal crimes, amid a catastrophic humanitarian situation, in light of the IOF ground incursions which are being confronted by valiant resistance. Hamas's armed wing says they have attacked a group of 15 Israeli soldiers in central Gaza, together with other armed fighters. "We caught a Zionist force of 15 soldiers with the al-Quds Brigades in a tight ambush and clashed with them," the group posted on their Telegram channel. "We killed and wounded the members of the force, after which the Qassam artillery and the al-Quds Brigades destroyed the area with high-calibre mortars." Al-Quds Brigades is the armed wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group. Strong wind and heavy rain in Gaza overnight on Wednesday brought even worse misery to displaced families, tearing and flooding flimsy tents, drenching clothes and blankets and

making everyone cold. At a tent camp in Rafah, located on sandy terrain strewn with rubbish, people were trying to recover from a horrible night, carrying buckets of sand to cover puddles inside or just outside their tents, and hanging up soggy clothes. Some families have proper tents, but others are making do with tarpaulins or thin, see-through plastic made to protect goods, not provide shelter for people. Many tents have no ground-sheets, so people spent the night huddling on wet sand. "It is torn and water poured on us. We were drenched," said Ramadan Mohadad, a middle-aged man who was trying to fix his family's shelter fashioned from strips of plywood and a thin plastic sheet. Rips were visible in other families' plastic shelters, and some showed puddles inside. One family had placed a cement block at the entrance to act as a sort of dam, as well as smaller bricks inside that looked like stepping stones. The Health Ministry says the number of people killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7 has increased to 18,608. Another 50,594 people have been wounded, it added.

Cipher case Imran, Qureshi indicted again

Former PM Imran has expressed no-confidence in IHC chief justice

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and the party's Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi Wednesday were indicted in the cipher case again. The two leaders were indicted by the special court established under the Official Secrets Act 2023. Judge Abul Hasanat Zulqarnain issued the verdict that framed charges against the PTI leaders. Both politicians have pleaded not guilty to their involvement in the offence related to the alleged misuse of diplomatic cable for political purposes. This was the second time that the PTI leaders were

indicted. During the hearing of the case, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Special Prosecutors Shah Khawar and Zulfiqar Abbas Naqvi appeared in the court, while Khan and Qureshi were represented by lawyers Usman Gul and Barrister Taimur Malik, respectively. Following Khan and Qureshi's indictment, the regular trial of the cipher case on the charges of leaking state secrets on October 23 will begin in Adiala jail in Rawalpindi. The case's hearing was also held on Tuesday during which the family members of the PTI leaders were also present. A few reporters were also allowed inside the courtroom to witness the proceedings. During Tuesday's hearing, the PTI lawyers submitted six separate petitions in the court pertaining to incomplete documents in the case challan, media access and jail trial notification. Meanwhile, Khan's lawyer Salman Safdar argued that the proceedings were being conducted in a "hasty manner", adding that the PTI had challenged two verdicts issued under the Official Secrets Act in the IHC. However, the FIA prosecutor highlighted that the high court had not stopped the special court from conducting the proceedings. He also urged the court to complete the indictment process. Judge Zulqarnain said he would take all the decisions on the basis of merit, adding that he was hearing the case impartially.

CM Mohsin Naqvi visits Sialkot, reviews development projects

SIALKOT: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi visited Sialkot and reviewed ongoing mega projects under the Punjab Intermediate Cities Improvement Investment Program (PICIIIP). During his visit, he visited Allama Iqbal Teaching Hospital, Sardar Begum Teaching Hospital Sialkot and reviewed the revamping of these hospitals. Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Shah Mir Iqbal and District Police Officer (DPO) Sialkot Muhammad Hasan Iqbal were also present on this occasion. Chief Minister Naqvi while talking to the media on the occasion said that Deputy Commissioner Sialkot Captain (R) Shah Mir Iqbal is fulfilling his responsibilities in the best way for the completion of welfare projects. Program Director Punjab Intermediate Cities Improvement Investment Program (PICIIIP) Hamza Salik while briefing the Chief Minister said that 11 out of 14 tube wells have been constructed under the Mega Water and Sanitation Project, 5 new overhead reservoirs have been completed under the project and 141km of water supply line has been laid. He said that under the Sewerage Project, 21 km of sewerage lines have been laid and 3.3km of conduits have been completed while 31% work on disposal station has been completed. He said that 9% of the work on the waste water treatment plant has been completed, and 16% work on Shahabpura flyover has been completed. Out of 80 units of parking sheds, 16 units have been constructed and 11% work has been completed, he added. Program Director PICIIIP Hamza Salik said that under the PICIIIP project, Paris Road, Defence Road, Khadim Ali Road and Kashmir Road have been completed and opened for public, while the remaining roads will be completed by the end of December. – DNA

Pak thwarts Arms smuggling from Afghanistan

DNA

TORKHAM/PESHAWAR: What could be termed a big achievement, the personnel of security agencies and Pakistan Customs posted at Torkham border crossing on Wednesday foiled a bid to smuggle made-in-the-USA weapons from Afghanistan to Pakistan. According to details, customs officials and security forces foiled the last arms trafficking bid at Torkham – a border town and crossing point located around 55 kilometres west of Peshawar – after earlier reports made it clear that the US weapons are being used in terror activities in Pakistan. A variety of weapons – including military-grade assault rifles like M4, night vision equipment, laser devices and thousands of rounds – are among the items recovered from a vehicle which was seemingly transporting onions. In this connection, the driver has been arrested and shifted to some undisclosed location for interrogation during which it is expected that important information about the source and the destination would be obtained.

Zelenskyy urges European leaders to release aid

NEWS DESK

OSLO: Ukrainian President Zelenskyy's surprise visit to Norway, hosted by Prime Minister Store, focuses on 'safeguarding' Ukraine and Norway's freedom. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has urged European allies to release financial and military aid for his country. Speaking to journalists in the Norwegian capital on Wednesday, Zelenskyy urged European countries to continue their aid at a time when Hungary has been blocking its release. "Of course, we cannot win without help," Zelenskyy said at a press conference after a meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas GahrStore. "But we can't lose because the only thing we have is our country." In the United States as well as within the European Union, the payment of tens of billions of dollars for the benefit of Ukraine is currently hampered by internal divisions.

Arab-Islamic ministerial delegation meets World Health Organization Chief

DNA

JEDDAH: Members of the ministerial committee commissioned by the joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit under the chairmanship of His Highness Prince Faisal Bin Farhan

Bin Abdullah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Tuesday 12 December 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland, met the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Mr Tedros Adhanom. The meeting was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Pal-

estine H.E. Mr Riyad al-Maliki, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Mrs Retno Marsudi, and the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Mr Hissein Brahim Taha. During the meeting, discussions centered around the rapid and grave developments in the Gaza Strip, the military escalation against defenseless civilians, and the importance of an immediate ceasefire in order to guarantee the return of security and stability to the Gaza Strip. The Committee members discussed with the WHO Director-General the systematic destruction of the health sector in Gaza, which is no longer able to provide care to the injured and the ill. They also discussed the critical health situation in the Strip and the spread of epidemics resulting from the violations by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people by denying them food, water, and medicine. They called for urgent action by all international organizations, including WHO, to stop the deterioration of the health situation in the Gaza Strip and affected regions. The ministerial committee members renewed their demand to the international community to take all serious and urgent steps to guarantee that safe humanitarian corridors are secured for the delivery of urgent humanitarian, food, and medical aid to the Gaza Strip, for evacuation of the wounded and the ill for treatment, for allowing international organizations to carry out their functions without hindrance and provide full protection for them.



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