



Islamabad POST

Saturday, December 16, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Gaza 'integral part' of Palestinian state: President Abbas

Detailed News On Page-08

Orbán blocks EU financial support to Keiv

Detailed News On Page-07



Novak Djokovic, wins elusive ITF award 2023

Detailed News On Page-06



ECP issues election schedule

Supreme Court foils 'attempt' to derail polls; democracy

CJP Faez says prima facie LHC judge committed misconduct; petitioner sought to derail democracy

ANSAR M BHATTI/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Following much deliberation over measures to avoid delay in holding of sought-after general elections, the Supreme Court Friday evening suspended the Lahore High Court's poll-related order, paving way for the elections to take place on February 8, a major demand of political stake holders and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, took up the appeal filed by the ECP on the LHC order halting the training of district returning officers (DROs) and returning officers (ROs). "The election commission should do its job [...] we will not micromanage you," CJP Isa told the ECP's team at the court, noting that there should be no hindrance in staging the polls now. In its order on the ECP's petition, the three-member SC bench ruled that the LHC would not hold further hearings on the petitions related to the appointment of polling officers and that any matter pertaining to the issue should be referred to the top court. The LHC's decision, which came on a plea filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawyer Umair Niazi, suspended ECP's decision to appoint the ROs and DROs from the executive branch. The single-member LHC bench then referred

ECP directed to carve out 2 NA constituencies afresh

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Friday directed ECP to notify the delimitation of two National Assembly (NA) constituencies afresh as the poll-related issues grow with the date of the general elections nearing. The national polls governing body had notified the final list of delimitation of constituencies of the national and four provincial assemblies last month, for the elections slated for February 8, 2024. In its notification, the ECP said that according to Article 51(3) of the Constitution, the National Assembly consists of 266 general seats, with 60 seats reserved for women and additionally 10 for non-Muslims. The development paved the way for the announcement of the election schedule, which was expected during the first week of December as announced by the ECP, but is yet to be announced, with a Lahore High Court order further complicating the issue.

the matter to the court's chief justice, seeking the formation of a larger bench to hear the issue further. The LHC, today, constituted a bench to hear the case on December 18. However, after the top court's order, the issue will not be taken up in the high court as the petitions have been deemed "non-maintainable" by the SC. CJP Isa, while reading out the order, also issued a contempt of court notice to the PTI lawyer, seeking an explanation from him as to why proceedings should not be initiated against him. At the outset of the hearing, CJP Isa clarified that the benches are being constituted under the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023. "It was my wish that senior-most judges should be part of this bench and I proposed the same. However, Justice Ijazul Ahsan could not come due to his engagements. Then, I asked Justice Mansoor Ali Shah." CJP Isa then asked ECP's lawyer Sajeel Swati what was the hurry that he had to appear before the court at this hour. In response, Swati said: "Our petition regarding the February 8 elections needed to be heard today." The CJP - who was set to leave abroad today - asked the lawyer what would have happened if he had boarded his flight. "But well, it's my constitutional responsibility and I have to fulfill it." The ECP's lawyer then informed the court that the LHC had

Continued on Page 06



MUZAFFARABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses a Press Conference along with the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Ch. Anwaar-ul-Haq. - DNA

Kashmir never was, never will be part of India, asserts PM

Kakar pointed out that more than 90,000 Kashmiris had been killed, over 1,500 forced disappearances and pellet gun injuries, and thousands of women had suffered rape

BUREAU REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister AnwaarulHaqKakar, while describing the recent verdict of the Indian Supreme Court as a tool to consolidate Indian illegal occupation, stated on Friday that such unilateral and illegal decisions will further stimulate the Kashmir freedom movement. Addressing a press conference here, the prime minister asserted that Kashmir had never been and never would be part of India said that despite the silence of world powers on the issue, India could not succeed in its nefarious designs to diminish the freedom movement. Instead, it was attempting to resolve the Kashmir issue according to its own agenda, he added. "The movement is not diminishing, and this is the biggest problem for India. It is repeatedly trying to bury it through various tactics." Kakar pointed out that more than 90,000 Kashmiris had been killed, over 1,500 forced disappearances and pellet

Action plan to announce in light of law

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs MurtazaSolangi said on Friday the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would announce its action plan in the light of the Constitution and law. Talking to the media outside the ECP he said under Article 218(3) of the Constitution, the only constitutional body responsible for conducting elections in the country was the Election Commission. "We neither can question the Election Commission, nor we can

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

JUI-F ready for elections on Feb 8

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Hafiz Hamdullah said on Friday that his party was ready for the general elections on February 8. Expressing his thoughts, Hamdullah questioned: "What is the need for creating doubts in holding the elections? The decision regarding the elections had already been made." He took a jibe at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying, "The PTI has a negative role to play in this regard."

Sardar Abbasi parts ways with PML-N

KHAYAM ABBASI

PESHAWAR: Former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) governor Sardar Mehtab Abbasi has parted ways with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), announcing that he will contest the elections as an 'independent candidate'. In a statement, the former KP governor said that he was parting ways with PML-N and would contest the election as an independent from NA-16 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Holiday Notice

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

Judge removal case SC issues notices to Faiz Hamid, others

Toshakhana reference

LHC issues notices to ECP on Imran's plea

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday issued notices to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on former prime minister Imran Khan's plea challenging his five-year disqualification in the Toshakhana case. On August 8, the ECP had disqualified the ex-premier, presently confined at Adiala Jail, for five years following his conviction in the Toshakhana case for concealing details of the gifts he received as the premier during his tenure. An Islamabad trial court had found him guilty of "corrupt practices by hiding the benefits he accrued from the national exchequer wilfully and intentionally".

Continued on Page 06

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday issued notices to former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) director-general Faiz Hamid and others on former Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's petition challenging his removal. The notices were also issued to former IHC chief justice Anwar Khan Kasi, former registrar of the Supreme Court Arbab Muhammad Arif and retired brigadier Irfan Ramay. A five-member bench led by CJP QaziFaez Isa and comprising Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan conducted proceedings on the plea. Today's proceedings were broadcast live on the apex court's website as well as on its YouTube channel. A day earlier, the top court ordered Siddiqui to nominate former spy chief Hamid, former army chief General (ret) QamarJavedBajwa and others in the plea against his dismissal.

Continued on Page 06

3 policemen martyred in Tank

Meanwhile, two FC officials martyred in Teshil Bara

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: On 15 December 2023, five terrorists including a suicide bomber attempted to attack the Police Lines in Tank City, however, brave policemen offered stiff resistance. Security forces in the vicinity were immediately mobilized to support the Police force and in the ensuing operation, all 5 x terrorists were sent to hell. However, during intense fire exchange with the terrorists, three brave Policemen, having fought gallantly, embraced shahadat. Effective response of the Policemen is a testament of their unrelenting resolve in the fight against terrorism. Pakistan's security forces stand shoulder to shoulder with other law

Continued on Page 06

Security, defence top agenda in COAS meeting with US officials

COAS appreciated positive role being played by Pakistani overseas community towards the country's progress and development

STAFF REPORT



WASHINGTON: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), COAS called on key US Government and Military officials during his ongoing visit to US including, Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State, General Llyod J. Austin (Retired), Secretary of Defence, Victoria Nuland, Deputy Secretary of State, Jonathan Finer, Deputy National Security Adviser and General Charles Q Brown, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff. Matters of bilateral interests, global and regional security issues, and ongoing conflicts were discussed during the meetings. Both sides agreed to continue engagement for exploring potential avenues of bilateral collaboration in pursuit of shared interests. During the meetings with defence officials, counter terrorism cooperation and defence collaboration were identified as core areas of cooperation. Both sides reiterated the intent to increase interaction and explore ways to expand the scope of mutually beneficial engagements. COAS underscored the importance of understanding each other's perspectives on regional security issues and developments affecting strategic stability in South Asia. In this context, COAS especially highlighted the importance of resolving the Kashmir

Continued on Page 06

TURKISH AIRLINES

BEST PART OF THE JOURNEY

Stopover IN ISTANBUL

EASY VISA

FREE ACCOMMODATION

Economy Business

PM Kakar assures financial assistance to AJK government

He said the speech was highly appreciated by Kashmiri people, overseas Kashmiris, academia, civil society, and media

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday said the federal government would extend every possible financial assistance to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) for completion of development works in the area. Chairing a special meeting Azad Jammu and Kashmir cabinet, he stressed that the road network between AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) was crucial to ensure connectivity. PM Kakar said the government would provide

assistance on the construction of Shuntar Tunnel connecting AJK and GB, the Murree-Muzaffarabad Expressway, and the Mansehra-Muzaffarabad-Mangla-Mirpur Expressway. He said the federal government would instruct its ministries to complete the projects relating to AJK on a priority basis. The prime minister also emphasized to benefit from the tourism potential of AJK. PM Kakar said his visit to AJK was aimed at reiterating the stance of the State of Pakistan about the internationally recognized disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir. He said India could not escape from its op-

pressive designs of altering the status of the Valley. Prime Minister of AJK Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq and his cabinet thanked PM Kakar for visiting the AJK in solidarity with Kashmiris after the Indian Supreme Court validated the government's illegal decision of revoking the special status of J&K. The AJK prime minister also paid tribute to PM Kakar in his speech in the AJK Legislative Assembly, which he said, effectively represented the voice of Kashmiris. He said the speech was highly appreciated by Kashmiri people, overseas Kashmiris, academia, civil society, and media.

Jamal Shah for following Iqbal's teachings

LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Syed Jamal Shah has said that the nation can move forward in the light of thoughts and teachings of Allama Muhammad Iqbal as creation of Pakistan was the result of his intellectual guidance which was acknowledged by the leaders of the Freedom Movement and especially by Hazrat Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

He was addressing the International Iqbal Conference organized by Iqbal Academi Pakistan with a theme "Allama Iqbal and Nesad No" here at Aiwan-e-Iqbal on Friday. Justice (R) Nasira Javed Iqbal, Prof. Dr. Baseera Ambreen, Prof. Dr. Waheeduz-zaman Tariq, Dr. Abdul Rauf Rafeeqi, Prof. Dr. Faleeha Zehra Kazmi VC Home Economics University and other speakers also addressed

the conference. Caretaker minister paid rich tribute to the services of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and said that "we can resolve many of our social and national problems by following the teachings of our national poet". He said that Pakistan was the country with 65 to 70 percent of youth, they must had awareness about Iqbal's teachings and services to the nation. "In this conference

of scholars, new angles of thoughts will be opened, Iqbal's thoughts will be promoted and new ways will be found for solving political, social and national problems", he added. Jamal Shah further said that it was the efforts of our scholars that the tradition of understanding of Iqbal was progressing in a good way, adding that "we want to see Iqbal Academy, a national institution.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi is talking to citizens at the Liberty Police Service Center.—DNA

Sanitation challenges demand proactive approach, proper planning

PESHAWAR: Sanitation problems have turned to become a worse nightmare, aggravated with rapid population growth, which had enormously affected almost every aspect of life including water, environment, and health sectors. The population growth is considered the root cause of sanitation problems, putting service delivery system under stress while making lives of millions of people miserable in slum areas of almost all major cities. Besides others, urbanization is causing several governance challenges in big cities that demands proactive approach realizing seriousness of problems, which are growing difficult with each passing day making the lives of mega city dwellers very difficult.

A visitor might have been unnerved after inhaling the bad water and garbage smell of drainage channels while moving in Peshawar's interior areas including Kohati, Gunj, Khalasa, Hazarkhwan, Lateefabad and Faqirabad. "The sanitation services in these areas are very poor with bad smell emanating from uncovered drainage channels since long that has exposed residents to different health ailments and need to be addressed on priority basis," said Haseeb Khan, a social worker and resident of Kohati Peshawar while talking to APP. He said residents of these localities were further exposed to unhealthy drinking water due to leakage of rusted water pipes with waterborne diseases. He said although the governments were spending huge funds to address sanitation and related issues posed by rapid urbanization and population growth, but a lot of work was still required to provide safe drinking water and immediate replacement of leakage water pipes to avert health hazards. "Our problems had become hard due to increased urbanization in provincial metropolis as people are continuously migrating to various localities of the city for better economic and social services," said Kaka Masih, a sanitation worker. He said that various other challenges including shortage of sanitary workers, vehicles, equipment and waste dumping sites have also aggravated the issue.—APP

CM Mohsin Naqvi visit Liberty police center

DNA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited Liberty Police Khidmat Markaz. CM issued directions to undertake steps for fixing a period of two weeks for retaking the driving test. Mohsin Naqvi issued orders on-the-spot to redress the complaints of delay with regard to renewal of the licence. CM halted while seeing a crowd of people at the entry path of Liberty Police Khidmat Markaz and conversed with the citizens one by one.

CM on the pointing out of cold by a youth directed to establish a canopy and a fire place outside the Khidmat Markaz for waiting. Mohsin Naqvi communicated with the citizens who came to obtain their licence and learner and inquired about the current situation. CM passed away smilingly on getting a reply from someone for running a vehicle without a license for 24 years. He inspected various counters of Liberty Police Khidmat. The citizens complained to CM for compelling them to

wait for hours. Mohsin Naqvi while talking with the citizens assured that the citizens visiting the Khidmat Centres from 25th December can avail advance appointment. The facility to install licence and learner application on the android and apple will be provided. The citizens can obtain their licence and learner through the website. Mohsin Naqvi apprised that the environment of police stations will also be changed like the Khidmat Marakaz. IG Police, CCPO and other officials also accompanied.

First Lady Samina Alvi visits Shalimar Garden

LAHORE: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi visited the historic building Shalimar Garden here on Friday. Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) Director General Kamran Lashari, Amateur Gardeners' Club Chairperson Nousheen Sarfraz received the distinguished guest on her arrival to the UNESCO world heritage site. Samina Alvi was briefed in detail about the recent restoration and preservation activities carried out by the WCLA and presented pictorial documentation of the restoration work. The first lady commended the WCLA's commitment to preserving the heritage of Mughal era and expressed appreciation for the floral art showcased by the Amateur Gardeners' Club.—APP

PFA wastes 450 kg dead chicken

MUZAFFARABAD: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) team wasted about 450 kg of dead chicken stuffed into a loader rickshaw at the main highway. According to a spokesman of the food authority the dead chicken was being supplied to different food points across the district through the vehicle number LEG-3916. The supplier was booked with the Civil Lines police station. The spokesman said further that dealers of dead meat won't be spared anywhere and dealt with iron hands. He appealed to the masses to register a complaint at 1223 in case of finding any crime relating to food adulteration or supply or sale of dead meat.—APP

CM directs food authority to ensure hygiene, safety of all food items in Sindh

DNA

KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar has said that the main function of the Sindh Food Authority is to ensure that food consumed in the society is safe, hygienic, and maintained with the highest standards of quality, but the food authority has failed to perform. He directed the Food Authority director general to work out a comprehensive inspection, and operational plan within two weeks, share it with his secretariat and then keep posting regular performance reports. He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting of the Sindh Food Authority here at the CM House.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, Secretary Food Nasir Abbas Soomro, DG Food Authority Agha Fakhar, Secretary Planning Asghar Memon, and other concerned officers. The CM said that food safety, quality and hygiene were not maintained in government hospitals, private hospitals, medical colleges and even Ice factories, sweets and bakers and milk producers/sellers and slaughterhouses were not following the law. "It was the maintain function of the food authority to inspect them and ensure safety and quality," he said and directed the authority officers to be active and work hard. Justice Baqar said that he had received reports that the mineral water companies, particu-

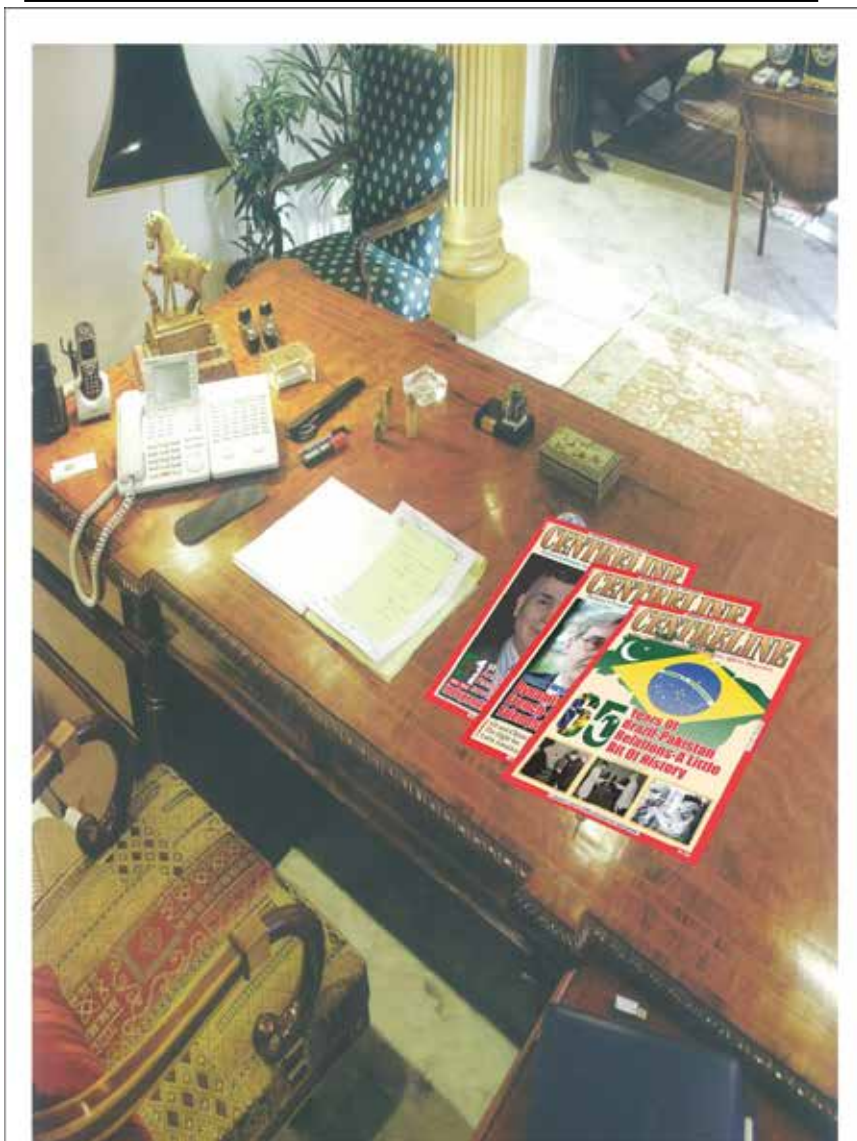
larly the locals were not following the law to maintain the quality. Similarly, open oil and ghee are sold in the market without adopting the required safety and quality measures. The DG SFA told the CM that their rules have been framed recently. He said that he would activate his teams and keep inspecting all the institutions involved in preparing/producing food items and ensuring their proper quality and hygiene. The chief minister directed the chief secretary to keep an eye on the performance of the food authority and make it functional in the interest of the general public. He also directed him (CS) to review the issues of the SFA and resolve them so that it could function to its capacity.

Russia rewards Dr. Shahid Hassan

ISLAMABAD—In recognition of his lifelong commitment to promoting Pakistan-Russia education collaboration, the Russian Federation has nominated Dr Shahid Hassan as Ambassador for Education and Science in Pakistan. Dr Hassan is a Chairman of the Association of Pakistani Graduates from Russia & Commonwealth Independent States (CIS). Dr Shahid dedicated his whole life to promoting Pakistan-Russia relations. In a recent ceremony held in Moscow, Dr. Shahid was awarded with the Ambassador for Education and Science for Pakistan, in recognition of his great contribution in the areas of education and promoting friendly relations between Pakistan and Russia. The event was attended by a large number of Rectors from different Russian educational institutions, Ministers, intellectuals, representatives from different spheres of life, and other dignitaries. It's a great honor not only for the Association of Pakistani Graduates from Russia & CIS but for the whole country. At the moment when the Pakistani relationship with Russia witnessing an upward trajectory, such recognition would further encourage people like Dr Shahid Hassan to play his role in public diplomacy and bring the people of the two countries closer. It's important to mention here that with Dr. Shahid's nomination as Ambassador of the Russian Federation for Education and Science, the opportunities for Pakistani students and researchers will be further increased, and prospective students will be further benefit.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Of Ministry Of Federal Education And Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi cut the ribbon to inaugurate 3rd Pakistan International Property Expo at Pak China Friendship Center in Federal Capital.—ONLINE



ANYONE WHO'S SOMEONE...
reads Centreline

MEMBERSHIPS Monthly ABC CENTRELINE
CENTRELINE
Largest Diplomatic Magazine

www.dnaneus.com.pk, www.centreline.com.pk

National Days and Armed Forces Days

DECEMBER

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

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

SECP's holds session about changes in companies act

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, ICCI thanked the SECP team for organizing an awareness session at ICCI for the business community

FAISAL SHIEKH

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in collaboration with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized an awareness session about the Incorporation of Companies, Leading Efficiency through Automation Prowess (LEAP), and the Latest Amendments in the Companies Act for ease of doing business. Faisal Lateef Khawaja Joint Registrar, Muhammad Naeem Khan Additional Registrar/Incharge Company Registration Office Islamabad gave a detailed presentation to the business community about the role of SECP and the latest amendments in the Companies Act in promoting ease of doing business. The presentation covered the role and functions of SECP, registration & regulation of companies, modes of doing business, kinds of companies, benefits of a company, companies established outside Pakistan, and establishment of businesses in Pakistan. They said that SECP has envisioned a digital transformation program named "Leading Efficiency through Automation Prowess (LEAP)" to position itself as a role model regulator and to deliver a world-class experience to its shareholders. They said that the concept of "startup companies" has been introduced to promote innovation and technological development. Earlier, the buyback of shares was restricted to only listed companies, however, all companies have now been allowed to buy back their shares. The private



companies having paid up capital up to Rs.1 million have been exempted from filing of unaudited financial statements. They said that these amendments have been made to promote transparency and good governance of companies. It will promote ease of starting and doing business, encourage innovation, and promote entrepreneurship. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Islamabad Chamber

of Commerce & Industry welcomed the SECP team and said that its role is very important in private sector development in Pakistan by ensuring transparent laws and good governance. He said that regulatory measures to promote fairness, transparency and accountability are key for Pakistan to emerge as a growing economy. He hoped that the latest amendments made in the Companies Act would facil-

itate the better growth of startups and companies to expand the business landscape in Pakistan. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, ICCI thanked the SECP team for organizing an awareness session at ICCI for the business community. He said that SECP should organize such awareness sessions in chambers of commerce regularly to educate the business community and help them in business promotion.

BISP holds round table discussion on promoting partnerships

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has organized a Round Table Conference at its headquarters, bringing together key stakeholders to promote collaboration between BISP, civil society organizations, and other NGOs. The conference, chaired by Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Chairperson of BISP, aimed to enhance partnerships for the betterment of needy families. Dr. Amjad Saqib welcomed the participants in his opening remarks, highlighting BISP's commitment to providing additional financial support to families in need. Dr. Amjad Saqib said that as the largest social safety program in the country, BISP plays a pivotal role in addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by

vulnerable households. Dr. Amjad Saqib emphasized the importance of a newly launched savings scheme designed to instill a culture of saving among needy households. Dr. Amjad Saqib outlined a strategy focused on lifting needy families out of poverty and appealed to civil society and partner organizations to adopt the principles of Mawakat, nurturing a sense of collective responsibility. Additional Secretary BISP, Dr. Tahir Noor, provided a detailed briefing on various BISP initiatives, including Benazir Kafalat, Nashonuma, Taleemi Wazaif, and undergraduate scholarships. Dr. Tahir Noor highlighted significant achievements, stating that 361.5 billion rupees have been distributed under the Benazir Kafalat program. He further disclosed that more than 55 billion

rupees have been disbursed to 8.8 million children through the Taleemi Wazaif program. Additionally, 1.4 million pregnant, lactating mothers, and their children under 2 years of age are benefiting from the Nashonuma program to address the issue of stunting. Providing a glimpse into BISP's infrastructure, Dr. Tahir Noor mentioned the authentic data of 35 million households and the existence of 647 Dynamic Registry Centers across the country. DG NSER, Naveed Akbar, delivered a comprehensive briefing on BISP data and its accessibility procedures during the conference. A significant highlight of the event was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between BISP and Allah Wale Trust. According to the agreement, Allah Wale Trust will provide

free food to needy women who come to receive scholarships. The MoU was signed by Mr. Shahid Loan representing Allah Wale Trust and Dr. Asim Ijaz, DG (OM) from BISP. During the conference, heads of organizations working in the social welfare sector across the country participated, contributing to insightful discussions. Prominent figures present at the conference included Mr. Ehtishamul Haq, CEO Tariq Jameel Foundation, Mr. Faisal Edhi, Chairman Edhi Foundation, Abdul Kabir Qazi, MD Sindh Education Foundation, Syed Asad Ayub, President Citizens Foundation, Mr. Morris Khurshed, Country Head Darul Skoon, Major General (Retd) Rehmat Khan, President Al Shifa Trust, Prof. Dr. Qaiser-ul-Zaman Khan, Vice-Chancellor UET Taxila, Dr. Rashid Bajwa, CEO NRSP, and others.

Dr. Umar Saif lays foundation of an organisation to develop economy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Umar Saif has emphasized the crucial role of technology in economic development. He underscored its ability to drive innovation, boost productivity, and enhance efficiency across diverse industries. The Minister made these remarks during the foundation-laying ceremony of the Indigenous Research and Development Agency (IRADA) at the National Science and Technology Park, NUST, here on Thursday. Highlighting the objective of IRADA, he emphasized its role in fostering collaboration between the Defense sector, academia, and industry in Pakistan for technological advancement. He noted that while linkages between these sectors have existed, IRADA aims to formalize and institutionalize these connections. During the event, Dr. Saif Umar expressed his vision for IRADA, envisioning a collaborative effort involving NUST, universities, industry, and the Defense sector. He emphasized the potential for joint projects and products that can be commercialized to contribute significantly to the country's economic development. Drawing a historical parallel, the minister referred to the launch of Sputnik by Russia in 1957 and the subsequent creation of DARPA by the USA. He highlighted the success of connecting the defense sector, academia, and industry, resulting in the invention and commercialization of transformative technologies such as the Internet, GPS, and cryptography. The Minister informed that NUST has graciously agreed to host IRADA and provide the necessary ecosystem for its success. The Ministry of Science and Technology will fund and support IRADA as an independent entity, he added. The Minister said this initiative will bring together the top minds in academia, defense, and industry, furthering Pakistan's technological advancements and economic growth.—DNA

Interior Minister inaugurates ANF Forensic Lab

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Sarfraz Bugti, inaugurated the ANF Forensic Lab at the Anti-Narcotics Force Academy (ANFA) on Friday in the agency's Headquarters. Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control, Capt(r) Munir Azam, and DG ANF, Major General Muhammad Aneeq Ur Rehman Malik, HI (M), warmly welcomed the chief guest, alongside the Police Liaison Officer and Police Consul from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. During the visit, Commandant ANFA provided insights into comprehensive counter-narcotics training programs. Expressing gratitude, the minister thanked the Chinese delegates for their invaluable assistance in establishing the forensic lab. He emphasized the lab's crucial role in expediting prosecutions, easing the burden on other forensic facilities, and improving drug detection efficiency through advanced equipment.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Mr. and Mrs Ali of MCC cutting their wedding anniversary cake on the occasion of a dinner hosted by CEO Serena Hotels (Global) Aziz Boolani.—Photo Mudassar Raja

Ambassador Afrasiab's unusual book "Expressions" launched

ISLAMABAD: The unique publication of former Ambassador Afrasiab Mehdi Hashmi authored on an unusual subject was launched here on Friday at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) that revealed historical accounts of Pakistan's interaction with the world since its creation. Ambassador Afrasiab is a prolific writer, who has several books to his credit. He has served in the Pakistani Missions in Washington DC, New Delhi, Beijing and Vienna. He also worked as High Commissioner to Bangladesh and New Zealand. His book recently published by the National Book Foundation (NBF) is a compendium of 'over 400 books' written by 'more than 140 Pakistani diplomats', since the establishment of the country in 1947. The enclosures in the book include: writeups on important Pakistani diplomats and speeches related to Pakistan's foreign policy. Addressing the ceremony, Ambassador Afrasiab Hashmi said the motivation behind taking up the uphill task of collecting knowledge and compiling it into a book was the teaching of the Holy Quran and the Prophet (PBUH) for seeking knowledge not only as a source of illumination but also as a weapon for preservation of civilizations. "Books are important as Knowledge is important. The Quran gives instructions to read in the name of your Lord. However, in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), whoever provides productive knowledge every creature in the heavens and on the earth like fish in the water pray for that person. He referred to the book of famous Andalusian Muslim Philosopher and Sufi, Ibn Arabi titled "Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya" that was reported to have 14,000 to 24,000 pages but could not remain preserved. However, there were different references but the one in Chapter 366 had connectivity with the future mainly the present times with regards to international relations and politics, he added. He added that there was a dearth of knowledge among the masses as they were unaware of the diplomatic scholars and were raising questions about any of their publications. "It pricked me to dig out the reason for it and find how many diplomats have written books. During my postings in New Delhi, Washington, Vienna and Wellington, I used to visit libraries.—APP

Purchase of Telenor by PTCL welcomed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif said that the purchase of Telenor operations in Pakistan by PTCL is welcoming for the telecom sector. He was talking to Etisalat and Telenor delegation here on Thursday. Matters related to promotion of telecom sector, Spectrum auction, and the merger of Telenor in PTCL were discussed during the meeting. Dr. Umar Saif said that merger of Telenor in PTCL will accelerate the process of digital transformation in the country, urging PTCL and Telenor to play their role for the development of telecom sector. Dr. Umar Saif said that Ministry of IT & Telecom is committed for the provision of better telecom services to masses. He also urged cellular operators to take steps for providing quality services to consumers. He said that the Spectrum will be auctioned very soon. Mr. Mikhail Gerchuk, CEO International Etisalat Group, Mr. Abdulrahim Al Nooryani, Chairman Etisalat International Pakistan, Mr. Hatem Bamatraf, CEO PTCL/Ufone, Mr. Petter-Brrre Furberg, Head of Telenor Asia, Mr. Khurram Ashfaq, CEO Telenor Pakistan, and officers of MoITT attended the meeting.

Daraz and NAVTTC Join Forces

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Daraz, Pakistan's leading e-commerce platform, and the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) have formally entered a strategic partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU was signed by Mr. Hafeez Abbasi, Director General of SS&C, NAVTTC, and Mr. Ehsan Saya, Managing Director of Daraz. Mr. Amir Jan, Executive Director NAVTTC, was also present remotely. The collaboration aims at empowering individuals by improving their skills commerce, thereby enabling them to become successful sellers on the Daraz platform and boost entrepreneurship in the country. This partnership implies NAVTTC's adoption of a special e-commerce curriculum crafted by Daraz. The curriculum is strategically designed to equip NAVTTC students with the necessary skills to thrive as online entrepreneurs, marking a significant stride in enhancing digital entrepreneurship in the country. Two streams of programs will be offered under the program a beginner-friendly 3-month course and a more in-depth 6-month course, catering to a wide range of learning preferences and objectives. Daraz extends its support beyond curriculum development by offering complimentary training for NAVTTC teachers to ensure that the educators are adept at delivering this modern curriculum, enhancing the overall effectiveness and reach of the program. Certificates will be awarded to students upon successful completion of the course.—APP

DECEMBER 2023

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:
www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pl
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@Postislamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



Briefs

Eight drug peddlers netted with over 14 kg charras

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up eight accused on recovery of over 14 kg charras. According to a police spokesman, Gujjar Khan police netted an accused namely Sharafat for having 3600 grams of charras while another accused namely Gul Nabi was sent behind bars for possessing 2600 grams of charras. Saddar Wah, Saddar Baroni, Wah Cantt, Jatti and Bani police arrested Muhammad Khan, Naveed, Waqas, Zahid, Husnain and Zaheer and recovered 8480 grams of charras from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway. —APP

Gang busted; three thieves arrested

RAWALPINDI: In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police have busted a gang and arrested three thieves including ringleader besides recovering cash Rs 450,000, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a Police spokesman, Dhamial Police arrested three accused namely Shakeel alias Shooter, ringleader, Murad and Suleman, who were wanted in different cases. The accused were also involved in cattle theft cases. He informed that the Police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Dhamial Police Station on the directives of SP Saddar Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar conducted a raid and managed to net the gang members including the ringleader. —APP

Chinese investors to get special visa treatment

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani government decided to give special visa facility to investors from China. The Executive Committee of SIFC formally approved the business and investment-friendly SIFC Visa Facility, which is an important milestone in creating a conducive atmosphere for foreign investors. A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council was held in Islamabad with Caretaker Minister for Planning and Development Muhammad Sami Saeed in the chair. The minister later told Gwadar Pro that Pakistan will give special treatment to investors from China. "China has invested so much in Pakistan. We aim to facilitate them as much as possible. We will also facilitate investors from other parts of the world," he added. "We expect more investments from China in the coming months," he maintained. —APP

Punjab University, JXUST ink agreements on Chinese language education

ISLAMABAD: Punjab University, Pakistan, and Jiangxi University of Science and Technology (JXUST), China, signed the "Implementation Agreement of the Council of Confucius Institute at Punjab University" and the "Agreement on '2+2' program for undergraduate students majoring in International Chinese Language Education". According to the "2+2" program agreement, the course will be completed in four years. The first two years will be studied at the Confucius Institute at Punjab University, and after meeting the requirements of the mid-term assessment, the last two years will be completed at JXUST. Eligible students can apply for the International Chinese Language Teacher Scholarship from the Center for Language Education and Cooperation of the Ministry of Education. —APP

Pak-China marine protection coop to combat climate change

"The temperature of the shallow seawater gradually increases, and the temperature difference between the shallow and the bottom seawater further expands, which seriously affects the upwelling of nutrients from the depths of the ocean"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pak-China marine protection cooperation is urgent need of the hour to combat climate change, experts said. "The increasingly severe climate change has an immeasurable impact on the marine ecological environment, and thus on global fisheries," according to Shoaib Kiani, Assistant Professor at the University of Karachi's Institute of Marine Science. During an interview with Gwadar Pro, he stressed that the impact will be even greater on tropical maritime countries. "The temperature of the shallow seawater gradually increases, and the temperature difference between the shallow and the bottom seawater further expands, which seriously affects the upwelling of nutrients from the depths of the ocean. Fish will not be able to obtain the nutrients needed for reproduction, growth and other life processes. In addition, the ecology of those organisms at the lowest level in the food chain, such as phytoplankton, will

be severely damaged, triggering a domino effect that will affect the entire marine ecosystem." Statistics showed that about 850 million people worldwide live within 100 kilometers of tropical coastal ecosystems and derive income from industries such as fishing, aquaculture and tourism. Nearly 20 percent of the per capita animal protein intake of 3 billion people comes from fisheries, and 400 million people rely heavily on fish production for their food security. "There is no doubt that countries like Pakistan that rely on fisheries and lack systematic marine ecological protection measures will suffer extremely." "Not only limit to the impact on fisheries, research shows that global upper ocean temperatures have increased over the past few decades, with sea levels rising by an average of 1.7mm per year. And long-term ocean circulation trends, surface winds, storm systems and wave patterns have also experienced regional changes. Salinity has decreased in high and mid-latitudes, while it has increased in low latitudes. Increased surface temperatures

have led to less oxygen in warm water, while there has been a long-term trend of ocean deoxygenation. Carbon dioxide stored in the ocean more than 50 times higher than the atmosphere, and the global ocean's expanding storage of carbon dioxide is causing the ocean environment to become increasingly acidic, potentially accelerating the rate of sea level rise. Floods in Pakistan caused more than USD 30 billion in direct losses, and as a result, sea levels rise is definitely not good news for us," Prof Kiani told reporter. Lately, Dr. Adnan Arshad, Director of the Climate Change Education Program at Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy (PODA)-Pakistan, called for increased collaboration with China to combat the crisis at the just concluded COP28 conference held from November 30 to December 13 in Dubai, UAE. "For poor and developing countries, they are badly in need of stronger and more practical measures. Today, the industrial activities of many developed countries have caused a series of major harm to

the global climate, however, the consequences are overwhelmingly borne by developing countries," echoed Prof Kiani. "By now, Pakistan has taken a series of substantive steps. Our government has begun funding various climate research projects. There are also organizations established to respond to natural disasters, but it far from enough. Government needs to provide more sustainable funding for basic research on climate change and adaptation," he added. In 2017, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, Astola Island, located about 39 kilometres east of Pasni, Balochistan, in the Arabian Sea, has been declared the first dedicated Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the country. Although small in size, Pakistan has taken the first successful step. "In the future, I hope that Pakistan and China can cooperate in the field of comprehensive coastal area management. In China, many related projects have achieved great success. Our two countries can carry out frequent exchanges of information on ma-

rine ecological management, and China can also provide relevant consultation," Prof Kiani indicated, "on the other hand, in order to maximize the sustainable development of marine ecology, fishery-related laws need to be further clarified, and illegal fishing, illegal nets and the like need to be strictly prohibited. Pakistan can learn from China's work experience in this regard. Marine pollution is also an important aspect that we need to pay attention to. China and Pakistan can exchange information and learn from each other in wastewater treatment." Both China and Pakistan enjoy long coastlines and diverse marine life species. "Therefore, the long-term sustainable cooperation strategy under the CPEC framework is of great benefit." Prof Kiani believes the two countries should cooperate to train related ecological protection personnel, and even establish work group to hold regular exchange meetings. "Sustained development goes hand in hand with improving our marine environment, which are going to benefit generations to come."

ANF recovers 348 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover over 348 kg of drugs and arrested a drug trafficker, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that in an operation at Allama Iqbal International Airport, 36 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a passenger. The accused was leaving for Doha by flight number QR-0621. In another operation, 312 kg of opium was recovered from a house in the Gali Mir Jan Zai area of Pishin. 26 kg hashish was recovered from the Zakhkhal Khyber area while 7.2 kg hashish was recovered from Dera Ismail Khan. In the fifth operation, 3.3 kg of Ice drug was recovered from a parcel booked for Kohat at a courier office in Gulberg-III, Lahore. Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered while further investigations are under process. —APP

Akhawat acknowledges donors' support

ISLAMABAD: Akhuwat successfully organized its Donors Get-Together on Thursday evening to acknowledge the unwavering support of its donors for the uplift of disadvantaged segments of society. The event served as a platform to propagate the profound message of Mawakhat. Founder and Chairman of Akhuwat, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib expressed heartfelt gratitude to the generous donors whose unwavering support has been instrumental in driving forward Akhuwat's multifaceted initiatives. He acknowledged their pivotal role in shaping and uplifting communities through the lens of Mawakhat. In addition, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib extended sincere appreciation to esteemed entities such as the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and D Watson for their invaluable contributions, which significantly contributed to the success of this impressive event. The event's success was further enhanced through the generous support of sponsors like Waltex Paints, Premiere Choice and Jawees Pvt Ltd, whose commitment to social responsibility echoes Akhuwat's vision of fostering inclusive growth and community betterment. The donors get-together served as a testament to the collective dedication and shared commitment towards advancing the principles of Mawakhat. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Madad Ali Sindhi inaugurated the digitization of Pir Hassanuddin Rashdi collection and library at Quaid-e-Azam university.—DNA

FRIA suggests SBP to adopt accommodative monetary policy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the State Bank of Pakistan has kept the policy rate unchanged at 22% at its recent Monetary Policy Committee meeting the Ferozpur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has suggested the central bank to adopt an accommodative monetary policy stance instead of keeping it at higher level. The FRIA Senior Vice Chairman Shahbaz Aslam while demanding the competitive interest rates at regional countries' level, said the SBP's stance of keeping the monetary policy rate at 22 per cent was already high, compared with the markup rate of China, India and Bangladesh. In a statement issued here on Friday, the FRIA leader, who is also PIAF EC member warned the central bank of aggressive high key

policy rate, as the present economic crisis is the outcome of the government's wrong economic policies. The investors were stuck in a selling frenzy over economic fallout from the country's record trade deficit and the fear of another discount rate hike, Shahbaz Aslam said. The FRIA SVC observed that the central bank last hiked the policy rate by 100 basis points to 22% in an emergency meeting in June ahead of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Since then, it has maintained the rate in meetings held on July 31, September 14, October 30 and December 12. He took note of several significant developments since October. Firstly, the successful finalisation of the staff level agreement under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Stand By Agreement (SBA) program, is expected to bolster finan-

cial inflows and enhance SBP's foreign exchange reserves. Secondly, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the first quarter of 2024 met expectations for a moderate economic recovery. Thirdly, recent surveys indicated a positive shift in consumer and business confidence. Finally, core inflation persists at elevated levels, showing a gradual decline. Considering these developments, he affirmed that the current monetary policy stance is not suitable to meet the inflation target of 5-7% by the end of the fiscal year 2025. This assessment hinges on sustained targeted fiscal consolidation and timely realisation of planned external inflows. He said that the MPC's decision did not take into account the recent hike in gas prices in November, which pushed inflation higher than initially expected. —APP

Gwadar Trade and Investment Forum

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar Trade and Investment Forum 2023 is all set to be held from December 18-19 at the newly inaugurated Huafa Exhibition Center in Gwadar Free Zone. Co-organized by China Overseas Ports Holding Company and Gwadar Port Authority, the Expo is the third of its kind in Gwadar. The first day of the event will feature Blue economy while the second day will highlight the potential of petrochemical business in Gwadar Free Zone. To tap the potential of aquaculture, fish farming and fish processing, Haixintian Pelagic Fisheries Company Limited will promote the sector through the event. It has already planned to establish a cold storage in Gwadar Free Zone, perhaps one of the largest in Pakistan, with a capacity of 5000 metric tons and equipped with state of the art machinery with an objective to cater to international transshipment and aqua culture needs of the international market. —APP

Railways ask officials to recover outstanding dues from federal

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has asked its officials concerned to initiate the procedure to recover outstanding dues from the federal and provincial departments for using its land and services. The Ministry of Railways has asked the federal and provincial departments to pay their outstanding dues worth billions of rupees on account of using its land and other services, within the least possible time as the department was facing economic issues, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. About the amount payable against the different departments, the official said that over Rs 8,375 million (over 8 billion) are

payable by different departments on account of using its land and various services. He said the federal departments had to pay an amount of Rs 709.084 million, provincial departments Rs1980.217 million and autonomous and private bodies Rs 5685.736 million. To a question, he said Pakistan Railways has upgraded as many as 181 vulnerable un-manned level crossings to manned level crossings, out of 550 which are identified by the department over the entire railway network. "The relevant provincial government provided the finances to Pakistan

Railways for the upgradation of un-manned level crossings in the country," he added. He said the department was taking several steps including the upgradation of un-manned and vulnerable railway level crossings across the country in collaboration with respective provincial governments. The official said there were two types of level crossings over the Pakistan Railways network, un-manned and manned level crossings, adding that the un-manned level crossings were without gate leaves. "There are a total of 1,565 un-manned level crossings

over the entire railway network and as per railway policy in vogue, the up-gradation of any un-manned or manned level crossing is the responsibility of road owning authority," he added. He said that a joint survey of Pakistan Railways and the Provincial Government was also conducted in 2013-14 to identify accident-prone/vulnerable un-manned level crossings across the country. The official said that it also mentioned Section 12 of the Railway Act of 1890 that the district administration or road authority should bear the expenses for the upgrade of these un-manned level crossings. —APP

Expert stresses media awareness

ISLAMABAD: Health Expert Friday said that 'digital awareness campaigns' to empower youth between ages fourteen to eighteen to discourage the 'modern tobacco products use' especially nicotine pouches which increase the risk of different kinds of respiratory diseases. Talking to the PTV News, Clinical Psychologist and addiction therapist Dr Sana Aslam highlighted that this was present society's acceptance and easy availability of smoke trends which was leading to high prevalence among youngsters. She mentioned lifestyle modifications, outdoor health promotion activities and the need for stronger implementation of legislative orders for the prevention of smoking, adding, that we need collective efforts among all stakeholders such as parents, schools and healthcare experts to effectively combat this growing problem. She further shed light that these modern and sleek products which have a fashion element to them, have gained increased accessibility and affordability, despite lacking essential health warnings and posing significant health risks. Experts said that urgent need for comprehensive action to counteract the pervasive influence of these products, adding that modern products are harmful because they contain nicotine, which is the first step to many other forms of drug addiction and can cause serious physical and mental health problems in young generations. To save the nation from undoing, we should produce awareness among youths about the negative effects of smoking, she said, adding, that smoking socially or occasionally, is generally seen as safer particularly put side by side with people who smoke a pack a day or more. Students have made it fashionable to smoke in everyday life; even they know that smoking some serious heart, and blood problems and cancer, she mentioned. "Smokers should be encouraged to correct their misconception that smoking elates moods, reduces stress and provides comfort," Dr added. —APP

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
UNIFORMS AND COLOURED BELTS

Ashraf

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD
127 C, Industrial Estate
Sector-5/140, Pakistan
Phones: +92-51-3258000 / 3255788
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 61

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off 11: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

Climate change imperatives

As the impact of climate change becomes increasingly evident, the world has turned its attention to global initiatives aimed at mitigating its effects. One of the most pivotal events in this regard is the Climate Change Summit, where leaders from around the globe converge to discuss strategies, set targets, and foster international collaboration to address this pressing issue. Climate Change Summits serve as crucial forums for nations to share their commitments, innovations, and policies aimed at combating climate change. These gatherings provide an opportunity for world leaders, scientists, activists, and policymakers to come together, exchange ideas, and negotiate agreements that will shape the future of our planet. Setting Ambitious Targets: Perhaps the most significant aspect of these summits is the establishment of ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Nations are expected to pledge specific actions and initiatives that contribute to the global effort of limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Adaptation and Resilience: In addition to emission reduction goals, climate change summits also focus on strategies for adaptation and building resilience against the unavoidable impacts of climate change. This includes addressing issues such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and disruptions to ecosystems. Financial Commitments: Climate change mitigation and adaptation require substantial financial resources. The summits are platforms where developed nations commit to providing financial assistance to developing nations to support their efforts in transitioning to sustainable practices and adapting to the changing climate. Technological Innovation: Another key objective is fostering technological innovation. Nations come together to share advancements in clean energy, sustainable agriculture, and other technologies that can contribute to reducing emissions and promoting environmental sustainability. In recent years, climate change summits have gained increased attention due to a growing sense of urgency. The release of alarming reports from scientific organizations and the visible effects of climate change, such as extreme weather events and melting ice caps, have underscored the need for immediate action. One of the notable developments is the increased involvement of non-governmental entities, including businesses and civil society organizations. Many companies now recognize the importance of sustainability and are making voluntary commitments to reduce their carbon footprint. Despite the importance of climate change summits, challenges persist. International cooperation requires navigating geopolitical complexities, and some nations may be hesitant to commit to stringent measures that could impact their economies. Striking a balance between environmental sustainability and economic growth remains a considerable challenge. However, these challenges also present opportunities. The urgency of the climate crisis has prompted a surge in innovation and collaboration. Nations and industries are increasingly recognizing that sustainable practices can lead to economic benefits, job creation, and improved quality of life.

Chinese President's visit to Vietnam

President Xi Jinping's tightly scheduled state visit to Hanoi on Tuesday and Wednesday has taken bilateral ties to an unprecedented height, paving the way for a wider range of outcomes in pragmatic cooperation and setting the stage for more robust people-to-people ties, according to officials and analysts. Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, reached key consensus in talks during the visit with Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, and Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong. At the conclusion of the trip, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the highlight of the visit was "the major historic decision" by the top leadership of both parties and nations to build a China-Vietnam community with a shared future that carries strategic significance. The decision was the most significant political outcome reached by both nations, representing the culmination and inevitable choice after 15 years of bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership, Wang said, adding that the vision aligns with the fundamental interests of both countries and their peoples. "China-Vietnam relations have thus entered a new stage, marked by clear objectives and infused with new momentum," he said. When Xi bid farewell to Trong on Wednesday, the top leader of the CPV congratulated Xi on having made a visit that was "completely successful". In addition to the signing of dozens of bilateral cooperation agreements during the visit, mutual understanding and trust were enhanced, which was even more important, Trong said. The trip was also lauded for having led to a buildup in pragmatic cooperation between the two neighboring countries, which also have strong economic and trade links. China has long been Vietnam's largest trading partner, while Vietnam is China's largest trading partner within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and fourth-largest trading partner globally. The two nations will continue to closely coordinate efforts to promote cooperation on land, air and rail transportation and strengthen logistics cooperation, the statement said. China will also promote access procedures for Vietnamese agricultural produce, according to the statement. Song Qingrun, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University's School of Asian Studies, said the two nations are set to embrace a new window of opportunity for pragmatic cooperation. Expediting efforts to build smart ports on the China-Vietnam border will significantly facilitate the flow of goods and people and serve as a strong impetus for economic and trade cooperation and people-to-people exchanges, he added. Song also said the development of smart ports will enable the development of an international logistics corridor connecting China with ASEAN economies, which will offer shorter transit times, higher efficiency, better services and more competitive prices. In addition, Song highlighted the commitment from Beijing and Hanoi to actively explore and implement maritime cooperation projects and to jointly promote maritime development. According to the joint statement, leaders of the two countries held an in-depth and candid exchange of views on maritime issues, stressing the need to better manage and actively resolve maritime disputes, in order to safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea and the region.



Army Chief's USA visit: Divergence to convergence

Qamar Bashir



The stated objectives of the visit encompass strengthening military ties, bilateral defense cooperation discussions, intelligence sharing on regional security threats, and exploring avenues for potential collaboration. Pakistan seeks US support in countering threats from

to Biden's adamant refusal to participate. This development is perceived as a significant setback for India, which, without legitimate grounds, is endeavoring to position itself as a major global power.

The army chief's visit is perceived as a crucial step toward rebuilding and fortifying trust and cooperation between Pakistan and the US. However, the success of this visit hinges on tangible agreements forged and the willingness of both sides to address longstanding issues of mutual concern, which may carry different connotations for Pakistan and the US. The stated objectives of the visit encompass strengthening military ties, bilateral defense cooperation discussions, intelligence sharing on regional security threats, and exploring avenues for potential collaboration. Pakistan seeks US support in countering threats from groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Afghanistan, while emphasizing economic cooperation and seeking assistance for its ongoing economic challenges. Urging a more constructive US role in stabilizing Afghanistan, discussions focus on countering regional threats and exploring investment and trade opportunities between both nations. Discussions are likely to cover contentious issues straining relations between Pakistan and the USA, including the forced repatriation of Afghan refugees, Pakistan's relations with Afghan Interim Government, Kashmir issue, China Pakistan relations with emphasis on CPEC, engaging IMF, World Bank and International Financial Institutions, Russian Ukraine conflict. The US has vehemently opposed this, citing concerns about the refugees' safety and well-being. Stressing Afghanistan's instability and potential human rights violations, the US highlights Pakistan's obligations under international law to protect those seeking asylum. It firmly opposes the forced return of refugees, citing potential violations of international commitments. The US holds deep suspicions regarding Pakistan's alleged support for the Taliban's interim government. Moreover, the US has voiced concerns about Pakistan's perceived lack of transparency and mistrust, casting doubt on its sincerity and the effectiveness of its cooperation. Pakistan is engaging the Taliban's interim government aiming for a cooperative relationship that prioritizes mutual interests, seeking moderation from the Taliban while averting Afghanistan's transformation into an extremist breeding ground. The stance remains dynamic, navigating complexities while emphasizing stability, human rights, and bilateral concerns in this evolving Afghan landscape. Despite varying priorities and mutual distrust, the US must rely on Pakistan's declared Afghanistan policy and seek active cooperation. This collaboration aims to prevent militant and weapon movement across the porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border, leveraging Pakistan's historical ties and economic influence to influence the Taliban positively. Additionally, the US seeks insights into Taliban activities and intentions, particularly concerning terrorist threats, aiming to promote regional cooperation and prevent Afghanistan from becoming a source of instability in South Asia. The Kashmir issue has long been a delicate and intricate matter for the US focusing on fostering dialogue and diplomacy between India and Pakistan, advocating for peaceful resolutions of outstanding issues especially

Kashmir. The stance underscores non-interference in internal affairs, recognizing Kashmir as a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan, refraining from taking a specific legal position or advocating for predefined solutions. Pakistan's Kashmir expectations from the US are a mixed bag. They crave acknowledgement of the issue's international dimension, US-mediated dialogue, advocacy for Kashmiri self-determination, human rights pressure on India, and a balanced portrayal of the conflict. Neutrality, deep engagement with Pakistan, and action beyond just listening to India are also key. In essence, Pakistan wants the US to be a proactive and constructive player in resolving Kashmir peacefully, respecting Pakistani concerns, and seeking a lasting solution. The US stance regarding Chinese involvement in Pakistan, particularly through initiatives like CPEC and military collaborations, is marked by apprehensions. It sees Chinese increasingly influence in Pakistan as challenges to US interests in the region, including Afghanistan and maritime security; worries about unsustainable debt and opaque financing within CPEC projects; unease about Pakistan's deepening military ties with China and the potential transfer of sensitive technology with potential military applications; and the perceived threat of upsetting the regional balance of power, possibly leading to instability. The US emphasizes the importance of transparency in CPEC contracts, encourages diversification of foreign partnerships to prevent overreliance on any single nation. Pakistan's state policy toward Chinese relations and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) centers on fostering a robust strategic partnership with China while maximizing the transformative potential of CPEC for national development. This policy underscores the depth of the Pakistan-China alliance, prioritizing mutual support on core issues while harnessing CPEC's economic promise. Embracing CPEC as a game-changer, Pakistan positions it as pivotal for economic growth, job creation, and regional connectivity, emphasizing responsible management to safeguard national interests. Additionally, Pakistan aims for a balanced foreign policy, cultivating relations beyond China while nurturing cultural ties and remaining adaptable to evolving global dynamics. The US wields significant influence over International Financial Institutions (IFIs), positioning them as potential tools to nudge Pakistan towards aligning with its strategic objectives. Through its sway over these institutions like the World Bank and IMF, the US prioritizes projects beneficial to its goals—such as regional connectivity and counterterrorism initiatives—compelling Pakistan to cooperate in securing vital funding. Furthermore, the US holds the power to impact Pakistan's global standing by leveraging assessments of creditworthiness and economic stability from IFIs. A negative evaluation could hinder foreign investment and access to credit markets, pressuring Pakistan to comply with US demands to avert potential economic isolation. Beyond financial clout, the US exercises soft power through leadership roles in IFIs, subtly influencing policy discussions, advocating its values, and diplomatically pressuring nations like Pakistan. Pakistan's expectations from the US regarding engagement with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like

the IMF and World Bank revolve around seeking assistance devoid of stringent conditionalities or obligations. This encompasses favorable loan terms with lower interest rates and extended repayment periods, enabling economic reforms without hindering sustainable development. Additionally, Pakistan seeks technical expertise in critical areas, aiming for institutional strengthening and capacity building to manage debt responsibly and implement effective reforms. Moreover, it anticipates the US to advocate within IFIs for its development goals and international trade agenda, while also seeking public recognition of its progress, without attaching any strings or obligations to the support provided. The US holds nuanced expectations from Pakistan regarding its stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Primarily, the US urges Pakistan to publicly condemn Russia's invasion while reducing military ties, supporting humanitarian aid efforts, and diplomatically pressuring for a peaceful resolution. Additionally, countering Russian disinformation is expected. Recent but confirmed and unsubstantiated reports suggest that Pakistan might be providing non-lethal military assistance to Ukraine, potentially due to increased US pressures. Pakistan's official stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict embodies a nuanced approach that has evolved over time. Notably, Pakistan has consistently abstained from UN resolutions condemning Russia's actions, underscoring its pursuit of a diplomatic resolution. Emphasizing dialogue and diplomacy, Pakistan urges direct engagement between Russia and Ukraine while advocating for the importance of respecting international law and territorial integrity without explicitly condemning the invasion. Additionally, Pakistan expresses concern for the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict and calls for unimpeded access to humanitarian aid to address the escalating situation. USA expectation from Pakistan on Israel-Hamas conflict would be hands off or to support Israel in the ongoing Israel Hamas Standoff, whereas Pakistan expressed its unwavering commitment to supporting the Palestinian cause declaring that Pakistan has no intention to send troops to Palestine and expressing grave concerns about the ongoing humanitarian crisis infringed by Israel in Gaza advocating ceasefire and restoration of international aid. In conclusion, the Army chief inaugural visit to the USA is of paramount importance. With his pragmatic approach, he will be fostering convergence rather than divergence of views and strategies between Pakistan and the USA which are pivotal for the advancement of Pakistan's progress, regional stability, and global peace and development. He will find common ground with objectives regarding security, economic growth, regional stability, and humanitarian concerns for mutual prosperity. It goes without saying that aligning efforts, addressing differences, and cultivating cooperation stand as fundamental pillars for a constructive partnership that not only benefits both nations but also contributes significantly to fostering peace and progress in the region and beyond. Through shared objectives and collaborative endeavors, Pakistan and the USA can pave the way for a more stable, prosperous, and peaceful future, both domestically and on the global stage.

Risks involved in AI revolution can be overcome

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

What are the social and technological implications of widespread AI adoption? What impact will AI have on the jobs market? And how can societies prepare workforces for the changes that AI brings? In many sectors, tasks that typically require human intelligence in order to be performed are now being replaced by AI, which is built on algorithms and models that enable computer systems to analyze and interpret data, adapt to changing circumstances and improve their performance over

Artificial intelligence is undoubtedly revolutionizing the way we live and work. It has become one of the world's fastest-advancing technologies, as its applications in 2023 can be found in various industries, such as healthcare, finance, transport and entertainment. Nevertheless, this has raised several key questions and concerns, including: What are the social and technological implications of widespread AI adoption? What impact will AI have on the jobs market? And how can societies prepare workforces for the changes that AI brings? In many sectors, tasks that typically require human intelligence in order to be performed are now being replaced by AI, which is built on algorithms and models that enable computer systems to analyze and interpret data, adapt to changing circumstances and improve their performance over time. AI applications have evolved from performing simple tasks such as speech or image recognition to virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa and now to performing complex systems that are utilized in healthcare, finance and autonomous vehicles. For example, in the healthcare system, AI algorithms can be instrumental in examining and analyzing medical images, such as X-rays, MRIs and CT scans, in order to identify patterns and abnormalities, assisting radiologists in making a diagnosis. This is why it is critical to encourage innovation in the medical field and invest in emerging technologies, including big data and AI. Several countries in the Middle East have been investing significantly in this area. It is a step in the right direction that the Saudi Ministry of Health last month signed a memorandum of understanding with the medical technology giant Becton, Dickinson and Co. in order to advance its digital transformation through such novel technologies. There are several benefits when it comes to using AI. First of all, it increases efficiency and productivity. In other words, AI systems can

automate repetitive tasks, allowing organizations to streamline processes. This also allows organizations to allocate human resources to more complex and creative endeavors. This efficiency boost is particularly evident in industries like manufacturing, customer service and data analysis. One of the most common concerns that people have is related to the intersection between AI and job displacement. Dr. Majid Rafizadeh Secondly, this can lead to an enhanced decision-making process and save a considerable amount of time due to the fact that AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data at incredible speeds, extracting valuable insights and patterns that may elude human analysis. This capability can assist decision-makers in making informed choices across various areas, from business strategies to healthcare diagnoses. The third benefit is related to improving personalized experiences. For example, in sectors like e-commerce, entertainment and marketing, AI algorithms can examine and analyze user preferences, priorities and behavior to recommend products, services or content that are tailored to their individual preferences. This will, in return, enhance user satisfaction. But in spite of its benefits, there are concerns and potential risks associated with the development and deployment of AI. One of the most common concerns that people have is related to the intersection between AI and job displacement. The problem is that, as AI and automation technologies advance, there are concerns that certain jobs may become automated. This could lead to unemployment or underemployment for some workers. For example, some jobs in manufacturing, customer service and transport are considered to be at a higher risk of automation than other roles. But it is also important to point out that new jobs may be created in AI-related fields. Another important risk to consider is related to fairness: how fair will AI be in the future and what im-

pact will it have on society? To answer this question, it is critical to note that AI operates only on the data and information it has been provided with by human beings. As a result, AI systems can inherit and perpetuate any biases that are present in the data they are trained on. So, if the input or training data contains biases and prejudices, the AI system built using this data may make biased decisions, reinforcing existing social inequalities. For instance, if a facial recognition system is trained primarily on the data of a specific demographic group, it may perform inefficiently on other demographic groups, which may lead to discriminatory outcomes. Finally, we should pay attention to the issues of privacy and security. AI systems and technologies can be susceptible to cyberattacks and misuse, which could create significant security threats. In addition, the collection and analysis of vast amounts of personal data for AI applications raises concerns about privacy. For example, malicious actors could manipulate AI systems to make incorrect decisions, leading to significant financial or physical harm. In the context of privacy, concerns also arise when AI systems are used for surveillance or when personal information is mishandled. It is important to note that these risks can be addressed, but doing so will require a combination of technical solutions and ethical considerations, as well as thoughtful regulatory frameworks in order to ensure the responsible development and use of AI technologies. In a nutshell, AI has the power to transform industries, revolutionize the way we work and live and shape the future of technology by automating mundane tasks, improving efficiency and providing innovative solutions in almost every sector. Ethical concerns and risks related to AI can be adequately tackled by responsible advancement and deployment, ensuring that the benefits are maximized and potential risks are minimized.

Briefs

Security, defence top agenda..

FROM PAGE 01
Issue in accordance with international law and relevant UNSC resolutions. COAS also interacted with the Pakistani overseas community. In a reception hosted by Embassy of Pakistan, COAS met members of the Pakistani community. COAS appreciated the positive role being played by Pakistani overseas community towards the country's progress and development. During interaction, topics of varying dimensions were discussed and COAS appreciated efforts of Pakistani Diaspora. He also welcomed & encouraged the diaspora to invest through SIFC which is already yielding success in various dimensions.

Kashmir never was, never will...

FROM PAGE 01
gun injuries, and thousands of women had suffered rape. Human rights abuses were also documented in two UN reports. "Such painful memories cannot be forgotten for centuries," he remarked. In response to a question, the prime minister expressed the government of Pakistan's resolve to support the Kashmiris in their just cause for freedom. He said this movement would continue with new strength and remain consistent. During his two-day visit to Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the prime minister had useful and constructive interactions with the Hurriyat leadership, members and the cabinet of the AJK Legislative Assembly, students and journalists to inject new vigour and energy into the Kashmir freedom movement.

Action plan to announce in light...

FROM PAGE 01
supervise it, in fact, the Election Commission supervises the caretaker government," Murtaza Solangi maintained. He said if anyone had a complaint with the ECP, he could contact the Election Commission. The ECP under the Constitution enjoyed the power to appoint District Returning Officers, Murtaza Solangi remarked. The present caretaker regime was appointed under the constitutional process.

SC issues notices to Faiz...

FROM PAGE 01
The case was fixed for hearing earlier this month after the judge filed a miscellaneous application with the Supreme Court to conduct an early hearing of his plea against the decision by the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on his dismissal. Following the order, the ex-judge filed a plea seeking to make Gen Hamid, Gen (ret'd) Bajwa, Ramay, Brigadier (ret'd) Faisal Marwat, Kasi, and Arif as parties in his case. Lawyer Hamid Khan represented the former IHC judge in the case.

LHC issues notices to ECP on...

FROM PAGE 01
"He cheated while providing information of gifts he obtained from Toshakhana which later proved to be false and inaccurate. His dishonesty has been established beyond doubt," the court order had said. It should be noted that on August 29, the IHC had suspended Imran's sentence in the case.

3 policemen martyred...

FROM PAGE 01
enforcement agencies to ensure peace and stability in the country. Meanwhile, at least two FC officials martyred and seven officials of FC and police sustained injuries in a militant attack on a joint check post of FC and police in Malik Deen Khel, in Teshil Bara, district Khyber.



ISLAMABAD: A picturesque scene unfolds as fallen leaves pave the way for the arrival of a new season. Captured through the lens of Mudassar Raja, this photo encapsulates the subtle beauty of nature's transition. The earthy hues of the fallen foliage signal the changing landscape, marking the beginning of a season filled with transformation and renewal. — DNA

Pak make steady progress after dismissing Australia for 487

Australia were dismissed for 487 in their first inning as pacer Aamer Jamal, who is making his debut, claimed a six-wicket haul for Pakistan

SPORTS DESK

PERTH: Pakistan reached 132-2 after dismissing Australia for 487 at stumps on the second day of the first Test in Perth on Friday. The visitors still trail by 355 runs in their first innings. Abdullah Shafique and Imam-ul-Haq gave Pakistan a solid start as they added 74 runs for the first wicket. However, Lyon gave Australia a breakthrough after dismissing Shafique for 42. Captain Shan Masood looked good during his 30 runs, in 43 balls, but he was also dismissed towards the close of play after chasing a wide delivery from Mitchell Starc as Alex Carey completed the catch behind the stumps. However, Imam played a resolute knock and was unbeaten on 38 runs while facing 136 balls. Nightwatchman Khurram Shahzad was not out on seven runs.

Post-lunch session: Pakistan's openers made a solid start as they reached 43-0 at tea in their first innings on the second day. Imam-ul-Haq scored nine runs and Abdullah Shafique added 25 as Pakistan batted for 20 overs in the pre-tea session. Earlier, Australia were dismissed for 487 in their first inning as pacer Aamer Jamal, who is making his debut, claimed a six-wicket



haul for Pakistan. Jamal was on song as he claimed four out of five wickets that fell on the second day during Australia's batting. The right-armers finished with figures of 6 for 111. The other debutant for Pakistan, Khurram Shahzad, claimed two wickets. Meanwhile, Shaheen Afridi and Faheem Ashraf bagged one each. David Warner top-scored for the hosts with 164 runs, meanwhile Mitchell Marsh

scored quick-fire 90 runs. **First session:** Australia were 476-7 at lunch on the second day with Mitchell Marsh unbeaten on 90 with the help of 15 fours and a six. With Australia looking for quick runs, Marsh took the attack to the Pakistan bowlers as the home side scored 130 runs in 26 overs. Aamer Jamal picked up both wickets which fell in the morning session after cleaning

up Alex Carey (34) and Mitchell Starc (12). **Opening day:** The home side reached 346-5 at stumps on day one with Mitchell Marsh (15) and Alex Carey (14) on the crease. In the lead-up, former paceman Mitchell Johnson questioned whether Warner deserved a hero's farewell given his recent poor red-ball form and involvement in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal. The 37-year-old Warner, in his 110th Test, responded in typical swashbuckling fashion, scoring 164 runs while hitting 16 fours and four sixes in his 211-ball knock. Earlier, Australia won the toss and decided to bat on Thursday. Pacers Aamer Jamal and Khurram Shahzad made their Test debut for Pakistan. Australia made just one change to the most recent side that took the field in the Ashes finale in August at The Oval, with the fit-again Nathan Lyon replacing Todd Murphy. Whitewashed in each of their last five Test tours of Australia, optimism will be in short supply with new captain Shan Masood's task made even more difficult by a depleted bowling corps. The last time Pakistan won a Test Down Under was in late 1995 when nearly half of the current side were not even born, and in Pat Cummins-led Australia they face the reigning world Test champions.

PCB, Cricket Australia eye 'organising' T10 league

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Cricket Australia (CA) are eyeing to stage a T10 league in the future, sources told Geo News on Friday. According to the sources, PCB Management Committee Chairman Zaka Ashraf will visit Australia where he will discuss the proposal with Cricket Australia officials. Both boards will explore possibilities of jointly conducting the T10 league in the future. Ashraf will depart for Australia on December 22. Cricket Australia has invited Ashraf to witness the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, on December 26. Ashraf will also hold meetings with the authorities in Australia. They will discuss the possibilities of exchange programmes and age-in October, PCB Cricket Club signed a T10 league. Both parties in this mutually agreed plans, financial pro-gramme structure. T10 Leagues are over the world after it started in December 2017. The tournament is being held every year in Abu Dhabi. Zimbabwe also launched their own T10 league by the name of Zim Afro T10 which took place in July this year. US Masters T10 League; based in the United States, featuring former international players, held in August 2023. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) are also in line to host their very own T10 league. Earlier, Indian media reported that BCCI is considering launching a T10 format cricket league, and it may begin between October and September next year. It said that BCCI secretary Jay Shah is working on a blueprint for the proposed league. — DNA



Djokovic, Sabalenka win elusive ITF awards

DNA

LONDON: Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka were honored as the International Tennis Federation's 2023 World Champions on Thursday after being the only singles players to reach at least the semifinals at all four Grand Slam tournaments this season. Djokovic, who finished at No. 1 in the ATP rankings for a record-extending eighth time, won the Australian Open, French Open and US Open to raise his major trophy total to a men's-leading 24 and was the runner-up at Wimbledon. He went 56-7 and led the men's tour with seven titles. This is his eighth ITF World Champion award, also a record.

NZ defeat Pakistan to clinch ODI series

CHRISTCHURCH: The New Zealand women's team defeated the Pakistan women's team in a close encounter by one wicket in the second ODI match to clinch the three-match ODI series. New Zealand were leading the series 1-0 after winning the opening game, and the victory in the second match gave them a series-winning lead of 2-0. The hosts invited Pakistan to bat first and reduced to 35-4 in 12 overs. However, Pakistan captain Fatima Sana scored an impressive unbeaten 90 from 104 balls with the help of seven boundaries and one six to help her side reach 220. Other notable contributors were Natalia Pervaiz with 39 and Najjha Alvi with 32 runs. Meanwhile, New Zealand's Sophie Devine returned with bowling figures of 3-25. In response, New Zealand lost two early wickets to Pakistan skipper Fatima Sana. However, Suzie Bates and Maddy Green knitted a solid 142-run partnership to bring New Zealand's chase on track before Ghulam Fatima dismissed both players. Bates scored 74 off 91 with the help of eight boundaries, whereas, Green scored 83 runs from 96 balls, featuring five boundaries. Ghulam Fatima picked two more wickets to reduce New Zealand to 182-6 in the 40th over. Lea Tahuhu (21) held on to her nerves amidst falling wickets on the other end to help his side reach the finish line with seven balls at the loss of nine wickets. Ghulam Fatima topped the bowling charts for the Pakistan women's team with figures of 4-47, while Fatima Sana picked two wickets. The last ODI will be played on 18th December at the same venue. — Agencies

UAE upset Pakistan in U19 Asia Cup semi-final

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) stunned Pakistan by 11 runs in a low-scoring thriller and stormed into the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup 2023 final. Set to chase a modest 194, Pakistan's batting unit unfolded on a mere 182 despite a gritty half-century by their captain Saad Baig. Pakistan, after having a dismal start to the run chase when they were reduced to 22/2 in the sixth over, managed to recover well, courtesy of a sensible partnership between Baig and Azan Awaiz. The pair took Pakistan past the 100-run mark and had put their side in command for a comfortable victory before both perished in successive overs. Baig remained the top-scorer for Pakistan U19 with a 52-ball 50, laced with four boundaries and a six while Awaiz struck five boundaries amid his cautious 41-run knock in 71 deliveries. The back-to-back dismissals sparked a collapse in Pakistan's batting lineup and they soon slipped to 121/7 in 29 overs. Ali Asfand and Amir Hassan then put together a cautious partnership for the eighth wicket and added 44 runs to the total. The duo, however, conceded a whopping 94 deliveries in the process, causing the required run-rate to skyrocket.

The dire need to go big saw Hassan falling victim to Dhruv Prashar in the 45th over. He scored 27 in 47 deliveries with the help of two boundaries and a six. Asfand, on the other hand, held his ground firm but his efforts went in vain as the UAE bowlers ran through Pakistan U19 tailenders to wrap up a historic victory in the final over of the run chase. Asfand remained stranded at the crease

with an unbeaten 16 in 61 deliveries. Hardik Pai and Ayman Ahamed led the bowling attack for the UAE with two wickets each while Omid Rehman, Prashar and Ammar Badami made one scalp each. Putting UAE into bat first, Pakistan U19 did well to restrict the home side to 193 in 47.5 overs despite Aayan Afzal Khan's half-century. He played a captain's knock of 57-ball 55 with seven boundaries to his name. Opener Ar-

yansh Sharma chipped in with his 46 from 70 balls with the help of six boundaries. Ethan D'Souza played a handy knock of 37 off 63 balls with two fours and a six to his name. Ubaid Shah, younger brother of star Pakistan pacer Naseem Shah, was the pick of Pakistan's bowlers with his 4-44 in 9.5 overs. Ali Asfand and Arafat Minhas took two wickets each. In another semi-final clash, Bangladesh outclassed India by four wickets and also made it to the U19 Asia Cup final. India, after being sent to bat first, scored 188 in 42.4 overs on the back of Murrigan Abhishek and Musheer Khan's fifties. The former top-scored with 74-ball 62 with six fours and two maximums to his name. The latter struck three fours on his way to 50 off 61 balls. Maruf Mridha was the pick of Bangladesh bowlers with his 4-41 in 10 overs. Rohan-at-Doullah Borson and Sheikh Paveez Jibon bagged two wickets each. Bangladesh successfully chased the 189-run target at the loss of six wickets in 42.5 overs. Arif Islam was the star performer with his 94 off 90 balls. His knock included nine fours and four sixes. He was supported by Ahrar Amin who stuck three fours on his way to 101-ball 44. — Agencies



Supreme Court foils 'attempt'...

FROM PAGE 01

suspended the commission's notification to appoint ROs and DROs from the bureaucracy. "The LHC's order stopped the election process," Swati said. When the court asked the lawyer to explain the issue further, he said that PTI's Umair Niazi had moved the LHC seeking the appointment of the DROs and ROs from the judiciary and not from the executive. Accepting the PTI's petition, he said, the LHC suspended the commission's notification. The lawyer further said that for ECP, its priority was the judicial officers, but the judiciary declined. He also noted that it isn't the ECP that provides the list of the officers for polling duties, the government does — rebutting PTI's allegations of bias. The ECP's lawyer also said that PTI has demanded elections be held in a transparent manner under Article 218. At this, Justice Shah wondered whether Article 218 that transparent polls cannot take place. The lawyer then said that the PTI wanted the provision of appointing DROs and ROs from the bureaucracy to end forever. The petitioner, PTI, had also prayed to the LHC that the returning officers be appointed from the judiciary. "This section could have been challenged at any time, so why is it being challenged now? Did the LHC also suspend the Sindh, KP, and Balochistan ROs appointments?" Justice Shah wondered. Moving on, the CJP wondered what the PTI's lawyer wanted. The CJP asked how could the high court pass an order against its own verdict. He then reminded the people that the SC had passed the Feb 8 polls order on the plea of PTI — the same party whose plea in LHC led to this conundrum. The CJP then asked whether Umair Niazi's LHC petition could stop the entire polling process across the country. "Umair Niazi's petition is in contempt of the Supreme Court's order. It is a bid to derail democracy," the CJP said and asked whether the SC should start a contempt proceeding. He added that it seems that Niazi does not want elections. The chief justice asked if judicial officers, election commission, and executive do not conduct elections, then who will? "Prima facie, it seems like a bid to postpone the polls." The CJP asked the ECP counsel about who is responsible for holding the elections. At this, the lawyer said that ECP is responsible. At this, CJP Isa said: "Sorry we are very clear. Do you remember when your petition was underway in the apex court we said that we'll not do your job but we'll ensure your job is done. There is a big difference in both things," "I'm very sorry that such orders are being passed by the judiciary," he said, lamenting about the LHC's order and the judiciary's refusal to provide staff. The hearing went on for several more minutes, following which CJP Isa announced the order to suspend high court's order.

Briefs

Japan expands sanctions over Russia

TOKYO: Japan announced expanded sanctions on Friday over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, revealing dozens of newly sanctioned firms and other organisations, including export bans against some outside Russia and its ally Belarus. Tokyo added to its sanctions list 57 organisations in Russia and six others in countries including the United Arab Emirates, Armenia, Syria and Uzbekistan, the trade ministry said in a statement. With the additions, Japan has now imposed an export ban on 494 Russian organisations, 27 Belarusian entities and six more in other countries. Russia was hit with a wave of sanctions after it sent forces into Ukraine in February last year, but calls have grown from Kyiv and its allies for tougher action against Moscow. Tokyo had already frozen assets of Russian individuals and groups, and banned the export of goods to Russia's military-related organisations, as well as the export of construction and engineering services. The new sanctions will take effect on December 22 for newly added Russian organisations, and on December 27 for other entities.

New Azerbaijan Party nominates Aliyev for reelection

BAKU: Azerbaijan's governing New Azerbaijan Party on Friday nominated President Ilham Aliyev for reelection in the country's early presidential poll next year. Baku-based Trend News Agency reported that the decision was made at an extended meeting of the party's leadership held in the country's capital. Ilham Aliyev's candidacy was unanimously approved, it added. Last week, Aliyev announced that an early presidential election will be held in the country next February. "The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan should ensure that the extraordinary presidential elections of the Republic of Azerbaijan are scheduled for February 7, 2024," the order stated. The next presidential elections in Azerbaijan were scheduled for 2025.—Agencies

ECOWAS court orders release of Bazoum

ABUJA: Niger's ousted president Mohamed Bazoum, who has been held in detention since a July 26 coup, must be freed immediately, the court of the West African bloc, ECOWAS, ordered on Friday. The court called for his "immediate and unconditional release" and ordered that Bazoum be reinstated, according to the judge in the case heard in Nigeria's capital Abuja. Niger is currently suspended from the Economic Community of West African States after the presidential guard overthrew Bazoum and put him and his family in detention. "It is Mohamed Bazoum who represents the state of Niger... he remains president of the republic," the court ruling said. "There are constitutional rights that have been violated." Bazoum has been held in his presidential residence with his wife and their son since he was overthrown. Niger's military rulers did not immediately respond to the ruling. Other member states have, in the past, ignored rulings from the ECOWAS court. In mid-September, the deposed president appealed to the ECOWAS Court of Justice to obtain his release and the restoration of constitutional order in the country. "The decisions of the court are not subject to any appeal," Bazoum's collective of lawyers said in a statement sent to AFP. According to Seydou Diagne, one of Bazoum's lawyers, the court "for the first time convicted military authorities who with their coup d'état violated the principles of the constitution of ECOWAS"—APP

Digital rights foundation's moot on countering threats

He advocated for the Election Commission of Pakistan to develop a code of conduct for media house that is focused on combating disinformation on social media

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) held a conference titled, 'Countering Digital Threats and Building Resilience of Communities' on Friday, 15th December 2023 in Islamabad. DRF's conference addressed the lack of discourse relating to online freedoms in the country particularly with the rise of hate speech and disinformation against vulnerable and at-risk communities in Pakistan. The conference brought together experts from across the country with two panels that highlighted DRF's engagements and redressal mechanisms available in the country for at-risk communities in Pakistan. The event started with welcome remarks by Seerat Khan Programs Lead at DRF in which she highlighted the particular vulnerabilities that religious minorities face in the country, especially with respect to rising hate speech and disinformation. Nighat Dad, Executive Director at Digital Rights Foundation also noted that "With the upcoming elections we see how harmful content pertaining to religious minorities in the country is increasing, particularly the



ISLAMABAD: PPP former Senator and rights activist Farhatullah Babar speaks during the conference. — Photo Mudassar Raja

elements of disinformation and hate speech. The rise in hate speech and disinformation will be even more rapid with the use of AI and generative AI which is quite concerning. The Election Commission and government institutions need to address this and include hate speech in the code of conduct for political parties that the Commission is developing. Social media platforms also need to do more to address how hate speech and disinformation spread and the impact they have on at-risk communities in countries like Pakistan." In 2021, DRF conducted a research on "Religious Minorities in Online Spaces (2021)," addressing communities' vulnerabilities to attacks, disinformation campaigns, harassment, and hate speech. The research mapped the experiences of religious minorities in online spaces and through surveys and interviews, we found a majority of respondents for the aforementioned research experienced online negativity, including backlash or threats on the basis of religious affiliation and/or a combination of factors. The first panel of the conference, 'Navigating Digital Boundaries: Combating Online Hate Speech and Disinformation' was a conversation about the challenges posed by online hate speech and disinformation targeting at-risk communities. The panel was moderated by Senior Program Manager Zainab Durrani and included NCHR Secretary Mr. Kamran Rajar, Dr. Shoaib Suddle.

Southeastern Iran terrorist assault claims 11 police lives

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: A terrorist attack on a police post in southeastern Iran has killed 11 police forces and injured at least six others. Iranian media report quoting some provincial officials that the attack occurred early on Friday in Rask County in Sistan and Baluchestan province. Iran's police spokesman General Saeed Montazer-al-Mahdi slammed the "cowardly" and "blind" terror attack in a short statement on Friday morning. He said that police forces had neutralized several terrorists in the firefight, noting that the situation was fully under control.

The spokesman said a special team of police officials has been deployed to the area at the order of police commander General Ahmadreza Radan. Alireza Marhamati, deputy governor of Sistan and Baluchestan Province in security and political affairs, said that terrorists staged the attack at around 2:00 AM against the headquarters of Rask Police. He said that 11 police forces, including officers and conscripts, were killed in the attack. Some of the injured are in critical condition, Marhamati added. The Pakistan-based so-called Jaish-al-Adl terror group claimed responsibility for the attack. Majid

Mirahmadi, the deputy interior minister for security and police affairs, said the terrorists attacked the police post from several directions and later ambushed reinforcements deployed to the location. He said two of the terrorists were killed and one of them was injured and arrested in hours-long clashes, while the rest escaped. Six police forces were injured during the exchange of fire, he said. The region is sealed off and the search for the perpetrators is underway, added the official. Iranian police forces have flown helicopters over the region to hunt down the terrorists. The names of the

11 Iranian forces killed in the attack are as follows: Abolfazl Shahraki, Pouria Sheikh, Mohammad Hassan Baraheui, Hamidreza Rezaei, Hassan Babania, Ehsan Babaei, Moslem Shojaeyan, Majid Firoozinia, Mohammad Khamari, Ali Dashtpuri, and Alireza Akbari-Mazar. Police say seven were injured in the terror attack, identifying them as Ismael Dehkordi, Hamed Khomar, Mohammad Ali Hasani, Mohammad Reza Jafari, Mohammad Sayadi, Mohsen Parishan, and Eskandar Abbasi. The terrorist group has conducted several bomb attacks and kidnappings in southeastern Iran, targeting both civilians and security forces over the past years.

Finland to shut entire border with Russia again

HELSINKI: Finland has again announced a complete border closure with Russia, claiming that Russian authorities are continuing their "hybrid operation" against the country. The Helsinki decision came late Thursday, just hours after it announced the opening of the main Vaalimaa and Niirala crossings in the southeast of Finland to traffic, with plans to keep them open until Jan. 14. Last month, Finnish authorities accused Moscow of carrying out a suspected "hybrid attack" and purposefully assisting undocumented migrants in crossing into the Nordic country, which Russia denied. "The phenomenon has started again and we will close the whole border," Interior Minister Mari Rantanen said in a statement. "This is a sign that the Russian authorities are continuing their hybrid operation against Finland. This is something that Finland will not tolerate," Rantanen said, reiterating the accusation against Moscow. Finland, which shares a 1,340-kilometer (832-mile) border with Russia and has eight official border crossings, became the 31st member of NATO last April, ending decades of military non-alignment as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine, which began on Feb. 24, 2022. Earlier this week, Finland Prime Minister Petteri Orpo warned at a press conference that the government would close border.—Agencies

Migrant boat carrying over 60 capsizes in Channel

LILLE: A boat carrying more than 60 migrants capsized in the Channel off France overnight Thursday to Friday while attempting to reach Britain, with one person dead and another in critical condition, French maritime authorities said. Among the 66 people recovered, "one unconscious victim, in critical condition, was taken by helicopter to the hospital in Calais" while a second "could not be revived," the authorities said. French sea rescue coordinators at Griz Nez near Calais were warned during the night that a migrant boat was in difficulty less than eight kilometres (five miles) from the coast. A rescue vessel arrived in the area at around 30 minutes past midnight (2330 GMT), maritime authorities said. After the crew found one of the migrant boat's buoyancy tubes "deflated" and people "in the water", they brought everyone they could find back to Calais. Boats and aircraft are still looking for remaining survivors, with French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin expected in Calais on Friday morning. Tens of thousands of people a year have been making the dangerous crossing over the English Channel from France in small boats, making the issue a political priority for the British government and a bone of contention between London and Paris. The human toll has been high, with one of the worst-ever sinkings two years ago claiming 27 lives. In late November a migrant boat carrying 60 people sank and a man and woman drowned. And in August this year, six Afghans drowned after their small boat capsized. French authorities say that boats are increasingly overloaded, with the average number of about 53 passengers nearly double the average of two years ago. More than 28,000 people have crossed the Channel since the start of this year, according to British government statistics running to the end of November, compared with almost 46,000 over the whole of last year.—DNA

ECC approves agreements for KE with govt entities



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar presided over a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, today. The meeting was attended by the Minister for Communica-

tion, Railways & Maritime Affairs Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar, the Minister for Privatization Mr. Fawad Hasan Fawad, Minister for Power & Petroleum Mr. Muhammad Ali, Advisor to PM on Finance Dr. Waqar Masood, Federal Secretaries, and other senior government officials of the relevant ministries. ECC took up the matter of approval of the

draft PPA, ICA, TDA & Mediation Agreements to be signed with K-Electric. Ministry of Energy (Power Division) briefed the Committee on the observations made by the members of the ECC and provided the requisite additional data on the working of CPPA-G. After detailed discussion and deliberation, ECC decided to approve the proposal of

Power Division for signing of the draft PPA, ICA, TDA & Mediation Agreements between K-Electric & GoP Entities. ECC also directed Power Division to present the matter related to KE's generation enhancement plan to the CCOE, which should focus on reducing the cost of electricity as well as on the resultant subsidies.

Orbán blocks €50bn EU financial support to Ukraine

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: European Union leaders failed to clinch a deal on a long-term financial package to Ukraine in talks that extended into the early hours on Friday, as Hungary's Viktor Orbán refused to compromise. The Hungarian prime minister opposed Brussels' proposal to provide 50 billion from EU coffers to Ukraine through 2027, a decision that requires the unanimous blessing of all EU leaders. The 50-billion 'Ukraine Facility' - made up of 33 billion in low-interest loans and 17 billion in non-repayable grants - is pegged onto a broader 100-billion review of the EU's long-term budget, known as the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF). A group of northern countries fiercely opposed the hefty size of the top-up and bargained for a scaled-down review. The President of the European Council Charles Michel told reporters

early on Friday that all 26 EU countries, bar Hungary, had come to an agreement on "all components" of the budget revision, including the cash for Ukraine. Sweden needed to consult its parliament before giving its final green light. "One leader couldn't agree on this," Michel said, in a reference to Hungary. Leaders will get a second chance to strike a deal at an extraordinary summit expected to be held in Brussels in January. "We will revert to this matter early next year and we will try to project unanimity in order to make it possible for us to implement this," Michel said, also leaving the door open to the possibility of 26 member states pushing through a deal without the explicit backing of Hungary. Several leaders also signalled they could back a support package that would not include Hungary, in order to bypass Orbán's veto. Estonia's Prime Minister told reporters as she arrived for the second day of the summit that "we are working

on these ideas." "But of course, it's much more difficult because you have to think of new instruments and that means also going to the parliaments, getting a mandate and it is more, more difficult this way," she noted. Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said that "it is possible for 26 member states to provide the money on a bilateral basis, not through the MFF, not through the European Union structures." "But it's not where we want to be," he added. Earlier on Thursday, EU leaders took the momentous decision to open negotiations on Ukraine and neighbouring Moldova's accession to the bloc without Hungary's vote, despite the decision requiring unanimity. Orbán unexpectedly dropped his veto when he was asked by German chancellor Olaf Scholz to leave the room, a prime minister confirmed to Euronews, in an unprecedented choreographed move that allowed Hungary to abstain. Michel did not dismiss the possi-

bility of similar political manoeuvres in January's summit. But there are fears a decision without unanimous consensus from all 27 leaders could debilitate EU unity and set a dangerous precedent for future decisions on foreign policy. The Hungarian premier has fiercely criticised sending further cash to Ukraine, citing fears about what he claims to be high levels of corruption in the war-torn country and calling on the bloc to rather devote its resources to making peace with Russia. "The money for Ukraine in the short term is already in the (EU) budget. If we would like to give longer-term and bigger money, we have to manage outside the (EU) budget. And we support it," Orbán said before the negotiations on Thursday. The failure to seal the deal comes at a pivotal time in Kyiv's war efforts, with US funds also currently blocked in Congress amid resistance from Republican senators. Government officials in Kyiv say the country could face a budget

deficit of \$43.58 billion (39.46 billion) in 2024, with a single day of fighting costing \$136 million (124 million). "Ukraine is in peril, Ukraine will not stand without support and ongoing support from both the European Union and the U.S., the two towers of freedom and democracy in the world," Ireland's prime minister Leo Varadkar said on Thursday. "And if Ukraine doesn't have support from the EU and the US, well, then Putin will win and all of the consequences that flow for the world after that," he warned. Earlier this week, the European Commission released 10.2 billion in EU funds to Orbán's government, after the money had been frozen over rule-of-law breaches in Hungary. The timing of the decision fueled speculation that the remaining frozen funds, worth around 20 billion, could be used as a bargaining chip to draw concessions from Orbán on the money to Ukraine.

Israel heading into world isolation: Erdogan

ISTANBUL: Israel is now heading towards international isolation, a trend which will only grow in the coming days, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday. Speaking to reporters after performing prayers in Istanbul, Erdogan said during a phone call Thursday with his US counterpart Biden, they extensively discussed developments in Gaza, with Erdogan telling Biden that now is the time for the US to step in. Israel has bombed the Gaza Strip from the air and land, imposed a siege, and mounted a ground offensive in the wake of a cross-border attack by Hamas on Oct. 7. At least 18,787 Palestinians have since been killed and nearly 51,000 injured in the Israeli onslaught, according to Gaza's health authorities. The Israeli death toll in the Hamas attack stands at 1,200, while 135 hostages are still held by the Palestinian group in Gaza, according to official figures. On the US sale of F-16s to Türkiye, Erdogan said Biden told him that he has a "positive perspective" on the matter and is ready to present his proposal to Congress.—APP

Prince Harry's legal battles with press

LONDON: Prince Harry has had a turbulent relationship with the media and holds the press responsible for the death of his mother Princess Diana, who died in a Paris car crash in 1997 as she fled from paparazzi. Harry and his wife Meghan in 2020 stepped back from royal duties and relocated to California, in part blaming media attention for the move. The prince has vowed to make reforming the British media his life's mission and has waged several battles with UK tabloids over privacy concerns. Here is a breakdown of his legal cases: The High Court in London ruled on Friday that Harry was a victim of phone hacking by journalists working for Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN), and awarded him £140,600 (\$179,600) in damages. The judge agreed that 15 of 33 sample articles submitted by Harry as evidence in his lawsuit against MGN, which publishes The Mirror, Sunday Mirror and Sunday People, were based on unlawfully gathered material. Bosses at the Mirror "could and should have put a stop to it" but instead "turned a blind eye to what was going on, and positively concealed it," said the judge, as he awarded the prince damages and compensation "for the distress that he suffered".—APP

Inflation-hit Serbia heads to polls

BELGRADE: Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic will not be on the ballot in Sunday's parliamentary and local elections, but the contest is nevertheless a referendum on his government amid soaring inflation and months of protests. After more than a decade in power, Vucic's right-wing populist Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) looks likely to extend its rule, according to polls, despite hard-fought municipal races in the capital Belgrade. Serbians have been battered by rising prices, with inflation hitting roughly 12 percent. "The situation in the country is not ideal... I know your life is hard, that you have problems," Vucic told supporters at a campaign rally last week. To blunt the hard edges of inflation ahead of elections, he unleashed a torrent of state spending - boosting pensions and handing out cash to the elderly. The policies appear to be paying off, with the SNS forecast to secure at least 40 percent of the vote, which would pave the way for victory for Vucic and his allies. Vucic's SNS faces the toughest competition from a loose coalition of opposition parties and candidates running under the "Serbia Against Violence" banner. The movement was formed in the wake of back-to-back mass shootings earlier this year that spurred hundreds of thousands to take to the streets.—Agencies

Briefs

HRCP disappointed by SC order on military courts

DNA

LAHORE: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) fears that the Supreme Court's decision to suspend the operation of its earlier short order, which had declared the military trial of civilians 'unconstitutional', will result in delayed justice to those who deserve to be exonerated from the charges levelled against them. Moreover, suspending the earlier decision means, from a practical perspective, the denial of bail to all the affected individuals, thereby violating their right to liberty. This order of the honourable court is deeply worrying from a human rights perspective because it paves the way for continued military trials of civilians which, as HRCP has consistently pointed out, violates their right to due process and fair trial. The secrecy surrounding military court proceedings, the extremely high conviction rate of these courts and the possible means used to achieve such rates, and the absence of the right of appeal to civilian courts—whose role is restricted to exercising narrow powers of judicial review in such cases—are all reasons for which military jurisdiction over civilians has been globally disapproved.

KSA, Iran committed to Beijing-brokered deal: Statement

DNA

BEIJING: Saudi Arabia and Iran said on Friday that they were committed to the deal brokered by China earlier this year to normalize ties, Saudi Press Agency reported. The statement came after a tripartite meeting was held in Beijing at the level of deputy foreign ministers to discuss progress on the agreement reached earlier this year. Saudi Arabia and Iran both thanked China for hosting the meeting and for its role in mediating between Riyadh and Tehran. The three sides also expressed concern over the situation in Gaza and said that any solution to the conflict must adhere to the will of the Palestinian people. The next tripartite meeting between Saudi, Iranian and Chinese officials will be held next June in Riyadh, according to the statement issued on Friday.

Austria tightens law banning Nazi, extremist symbols

DNA

VIENNA: Austria's parliament on Friday tightened the law banning Nazi symbols, broadening its scope and increasing punishments for the display and dissemination of any prohibited symbols to counter rising anti-Semitism and extremism. Austria — which the Nazis annexed in 1938 — has some of the world's strictest laws against Holocaust denial and pro-Nazi activities, but nonetheless convictions are rare. In 2022, the Austrian government decided to amend its so-called Prohibition Act of 1947 to accommodate for recent developments such as an increase in anti-Semitism and rising radicalization. According to the legislation approved by all parties except the far-right FPÖ, wearing Nazi insignia or any banned symbols linked to the Palestinian group Hamas or far-right movements among others will be punished by fines of up to 20,000 euros (\$22,000). Under the amendment, any trivialization or denial — even if only in part — of National Socialist genocide and Nazi crimes against humanity of the Holocaust is punishable, expanding the scope which previously only criminalized "gross" trivialization.

Gaza 'integral part' of Palestinian state: Abbas

Israel's war on Gaza aims to wipe out Palestinians: Palestinian FM

NEWS DESK

GAZA: The brutal Israeli aggression entered its 70th consecutive day Friday on the Gaza Strip, by continuing the bloody war, intensifying aerial bombardment and artillery shelling, and committing massacres, including field executions and mass arrests, as part of the genocide and ethnic cleansing operations, amid a catastrophic humanitarian situation. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said Gaza was an "integral part" of the Palestinian state during talks with a top US official at his West Bank headquarters Friday, his office said. The meeting came as Israel pressed its offensive in Gaza despite mounting international calls for restraint, with key backer the United States saying the war must not lead to a long-term Israeli occupation of the territory. Abbas told visiting US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan that "Gaza is an integral part of the State of Palestine," his office said in a statement, adding that "the president underscored that separation or any attempt to isolate any part of it is unacceptable." Abbas "emphasized the urgent need to halt the ongoing Israeli aggression, particularly the genocide being carried out these days upon the Palestinian people in Gaza," the statement added. He said it was crucial to "spare civilians from the woes and devastation caused by the Israeli war machine." Medical sources reported the arrival of 18 martyrs and dozens of wounded as a result of Israeli aerial and artillery bombardment in various areas of Khan Yunis, including 5 martyrs as a result of shelling targeting Haifa School, which shelters



displaced people in Khan Yunis. The Israeli artillery fired flare bombs in Khan Yunis before dawn, while the savage artillery shelling continued. Clashes between the resistance and Israeli occupation forces (IOF) took place in eastern Rafah, where aerial and artillery bombardment targeted the area, including the targeting of a house in Tal Al-Sultan neighborhood in Rafah. Four martyrs, including two children, and more than 15 injuries arrived at Nasser Hospital as a result of an Israeli bombardment of the Abu Nasr family's house in the refugee camp west of Khan Yunis. Israeli warplanes bombed Al-Saadi Tower in the Nuseirat camp. The IOF forced the medical staff, patients, and journalists to evacuate the Jabaliya

Martyrs Medical Center. Israeli warplanes bombed a residential area near the Kuwaiti Hospital in southern Rafah, resulting in dozens of martyrs and injured, who were transferred to the Martyr Abu Yousef Al-Najjar Hospital in the city. Al Jazeera bureau chief Wael al-Dahdouh was injured in an Israeli drone strike near a school in Khan Yunis. Al-Dahdouh and his colleague Samer Abu Daqqa were both injured in the attack while reporting from the Al-Haifa school in southern Gaza, Al Jazeera Arabic reported. Al-Dahdouh was hit in the hand and waist by shrapnel and is being treated by doctors at Al-Nasser Hospital. Abu Daqqa remains trapped at the Al-Haifa school, with ambulances unable to reach

him due to heavy Israeli gunfire and shelling. Al-Dahdouh was in the headlines in October after his wife, son, daughter, and grandson were killed in an Israeli airstrike on the Nuseirat refugee camp. The media office of Gaza's government says the "targeting" of Wael Dahdouh and Samer Abu Daqqa in Khan Yunis "comes within the framework of intimidation and intimidation of journalists". It called it "a failed attempt to obscure the truth and prevent them from blatant media coverage of the crimes of the occupation against children, women and civilians", according to a statement posted on Telegram. At least 56 Palestinian, four Israeli and three Lebanese journalists and media workers have been killed since October 7, according to figures compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). The media watchdog says that 11 journalists have also been reported injured, three were reported missing and 19 were reported arrested. Journalists also have endured multiple assaults, threats, cyberattacks, censorship and killings of family members. At least four Al Jazeera journalists have lost relatives in Israeli attacks. "CPJ emphasizes that journalists are civilians doing important work during times of crisis and must not be targeted by warring parties," said Sherif Mansour, CPJ's Middle East and North Africa programme coordinator. "Journalists across the region are making great sacrifices to cover this heart-breaking conflict. Those in Gaza, in particular, have paid, and continue to pay, an unprecedented toll and face exponential threats. Many have lost colleagues, families, and media facilities, and have fled seeking safety when there is no safe haven or exit."

PML-N gears up for polls on Feb 8

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Marriyum Aurangzeb made it clear on Friday that her party was ready for the general elections on February 8. Expressing his thoughts, Marriyum said: "The political parties are depending on the PML-N's preparations for the general elections." "Those who led the country towards political instability cannot be forgiven. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is staging a conspiracy in a bid to halt the elections in the country," she said. She stated: "The Election Commission Pakistan was having its preparations for holding the elections, but everything had happened to sabotage the elections in the country."

Siraj sees 'political uncertainty' in country

DNA

PESHAWAR: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq said on Friday that the country was witnessing "political uncertainty." Addressing the youth workers' convention in Lower Dir, Haq said, "The solution to all the problems in the country is the timely elections. If the timely polls are not held then the country will be further dragged into the quagmire." He took a swipe at the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). "The PML-N, PPP, and PTI are responsible for harming the country," Haq said, "There is no room for upholding the remote control democracy in the country. If there had been the rule of the JI in the country, none of the single Indian troop would have been allowed in Kashmir." The JI chief said on Thursday that corruption and poor governance had harmed the country's economy. Expressing his thoughts in Lahore, the JI chief said, "Every citizen is having concerns about the ballooning inflation and unrest prevailing in the country. Those who deceived the nation will be held accountable in the upcoming elections". Taking a jibe at the opponents, Haq said: The rulers have no narrative in line with the upcoming elections.



ISLAMABAD: Ethiopian Ambassador H.E Jemal Beker Abdula exchanging views with Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs H.E. Murtaza Solangi on matters of mutual interest here at his office. — DNA

LHC issues notices in Sher Afzal Marwat's detention

Lahore Bar Association bans entry of police in courts

LAHORE: The LHC on Friday issued notices to the deputy commissioner and police on a petition challenging the detention of PTI Senior Vice President Sher Afzal Marwat under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). Marwat was arrested from outside the LHC on Thursday, where he had arrived to join a protest. Footage of his arrest shared by the PTI on X (formerly Twitter) had shown policemen dragging him by the collar as several lawyers tried to stop them. He was later moved to an undisclosed location. Police sources had told media that the arrest was made under the MPO. The law empowers the police to detain a person considered "prejudicial to public safety or the maintenance of public order". The arrest was strongly criticised by PTI leaders and lawyers' bodies. A statement shared on the party's official X account held the caretaker government responsible for "acting as a facilitator" during the "unabated lawlessness". Today, Marwat's brother filed a petition in the LHC seeking the quashing of the PTI leader's detention orders. He urged the court to declare the arrest "illegal, maliciously motivated, ab initio void and non-est". The plea, a copy of which is available with media, named Lahore deputy commissioner, superintendent central jail, Lahore inspector general of police, Lahore capital city police officer, DIG operations, DIG investigations, Civil Lines SP, district intelligence and the station house officer of the Mozang police station as respondents in the case. — DNA

3 Pak Navy officers promoted to rank of Rear Admiral

ISLAMABAD: Three commodores of the Pakistan Navy have been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral with immediate effect on Friday. Rear Admiral Mazhar Mahmood Malik was commissioned in Marine Engineering Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1992. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, National Defence University Islamabad and qualified Masters of Science in Mechanical Engineering from National University of Science and Technology (NUST), a Pakistani Navy news release said. During his illustrious naval career, the Admiral has served on various key appointments. His prominent appointments include Fleet Marine Engineering Officer at Fleet Headquarters, Deputy MD Pakistan Navy Dockyard and Chief Staff Officer to Commander Logistics. Currently, Rear Admiral Mazhar Mahmood has been appointed as Managing Director Pakistan Navy Dockyard, Karachi. The Admiral is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military). The Admiral has a vast experience of Command and Staff appointments which include Command of P-3C aircraft Squadron and Commander Naval Aviation. He also served as Chief Staff Officer to Commander North as well as Naval Attaché of Pakistan in United States. Rear Admiral Shahzad Hamid has been appointed as Director General Naval Intelligence in his new rank. The Admiral is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-i-Basalat. Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1993. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, Defence Services Command and Staff College Bangladesh and National Defence University, Islamabad. — DNA

Presence of some clouds must to induce artificial rain: Punjab CM

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has admitted that there are traffic issues on the Walton Road in Lahore, saying Walton Road would be connected to the Main Boulevard. While talking to the media on the Main Boulevard in Gulberg on Friday, the Punjab CM said that the government is committed to respect the courts, saying it is mandatory for everyone to respect the courts. He said work is continuing at fast pace on CBD projects. Naqvi further said that the government is making all-out efforts to control the smog issue. He informed that for artificial rain, presence of some clouds is necessary, which are not there at the moment. He said that more research needs to be conducted to know the real causes

of smog. "The development work on Garden Town Square will be started soon," the CM announced. Meanwhile, the Punjab CM on Friday visited the King Edward Medical University (KEMU) and inaugurated the five-day 13th International Scientific Conference as chief guest there. Punjab Health Minister Dr Javed Akram, secretary health and senior doctors were also present on the occasion. On the occasion, Naqvi announced that Surgical Tower would be named after Dr Faisal Masood. The CM also visited the stalls of teachers and students at the conference and took keen interest in the medical equipment and gadgets, including laparoscopy stimulator, surgical instrument and home dialysis machine, developed by the university and other manufacturers. The passed out doctors of KEMU were given shields on the occasion. KEMU

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mahmood Ayaz thanked the CM for visiting the university on behalf of faculty and students. In his address, the CM said that services of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff for the service of the masses are commendable. The CM announced that the upgradation of hospitals would be completed in the province till January 31, adding that the government is trying its best to improve the services of big hospitals in Punjab. "We are doing upgradation work (in hospitals) on an area of 600000 square feet," he informed. He informed that the hostels of medical students and nurses are also being upgraded. "It is our duty to upgrade the hospitals and we are fulfilling this duty," he pointed out. Naqvi said that the upgradation work in the hospitals affiliated with KEMU is in full swing and it would be completed within a couple of months.

Pakistani rupee appreciates against dollar

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee maintained its upward momentum against the US dollar in the interbank market for the fourth consecutive day on Friday. According to the information collected from the forex traders, the local currency appreciated by 41 paisas and was currently being traded at Rs283.10. The stock market reflected this positive momentum as well, with the KS Hundred Index witnessing a bullish trend. The index rose by an impressive 362 points, reaching 65,812 points since the opening of business. Furthermore, the State Bank of Pakistan reported a significant boost in domestic foreign exchange reserves. On Thursday, the Pakistani rupee went up 0.04 percent against the US dollar, setting for the day at Rs283.51 up by 10 paisas. Meanwhile, foreign exchange reserves held by SBP increased by \$21 million on a weekly basis, clocking in at \$7.04 billion as of December 8. Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at \$12.2 billion. Net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$5.16 billion. "During the week ended on 08-Dec-2023, SBP's reserves increased by US\$ 21 million to US\$ 7,040.8 million," the bank said. Last week, Pakistan's forex reserves had decreased by \$237 million. In July this year, reserves held by the central bank got a boost as Pakistan received the first tranche of around \$1.2 billion from IMF after the lender approved a new \$3-billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA). It also got inflows from Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

FAISALABAD SERENA HOTEL

Winter Escape

Premier Package

- Deluxe room
- Welcome drinks on arrival
- Free stay for children under 5 years
- Free airport transfers
- Fruit basket on arrival
- Buffet breakfast for 02 at Lyallpur Coffee Shop
- Temperature controlled swimming pool
- Access to recreational facilities
- High speed internet

Luxe Package

- Executive room
- Access to Executive lounge
- Minibar (beverages only)
- Welcome drinks on arrival
- Free stay for children under 5 years
- Free airport transfers
- Fruit basket on arrival
- 4 pieces pressing per night
- Buffet breakfast for 02 at Lyallpur
- Access to recreational facilities
- Temperature controlled swimming pool
- High speed internet

Discounts:
15% discount on food and beverages, international calls, rent-a-car service and laundry.

PKR 18k
plus tax per night

PKR 21k
plus tax per night

Validity: December 10, 2023 - January 31, 2024

*Terms and conditions apply

For bookings, please call: 041 111 133 133 or
Email at: reservation.fsh@serena.com.pk