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Israeli occupation failed to achieve goals of war in Gaza, says Haniyeh

Detailed News On Page-07

Era of dynastic rule must come to end: JI chief

Detailed News On Page-08



Salah aims to lead Egypt to African glory

Detailed News On Page-06



PM meets UNICEF delegation Kakar calls for boosting ties with African countries

Referring to the ongoing situation in Gaza, the Prime Minister stressed the need for dialogue among nations

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar met a group of resident envoys representing African countries as well as select Asian countries over lunch today. The meeting was attended by the Ambassadors of Algeria and Sudan as well as High Commissioners of Bangladesh, Brunei, Malaysia, Mauritius, and South Africa. Other participants included the Charge d' Affaires of Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe. The Foreign Minister, Secretary to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary also attended. The Prime Minister highlighted the importance Pakistan attached to Africa. He expressed the desire to strengthen ties with African countries, at the bilateral as well as regional level. While acknowledging that Pakistan and Africa had enjoyed excellent political relations over the years, the Prime Minister stressed the need to enhance trade and economic linkages which had yet to realize their full potential. He mentioned that the 4th Pakistan-Africa Trade Conference was under way in Cairo, Egypt from 9-11 January, 2024 where Pakistan was represented by a large business delegation led by the Commerce Minister.

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Commission submits 'revealing' report on missing persons

In its report, the inquiry commission said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported 3,485 cases of missing persons, making it the highest number in the country

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: In compliance with the Supreme Court's order, the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances on Tuesday handed over its "comprehensive report" on missing persons to the attorney general. Last week, the top court sought a report from the commission along with details about orders issued to law enforcement agencies (LEAs) for the production of missing persons.

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ISLAMABAD: PM Anwaarul Haq Kakar meeting with the envoys of the African and Asian countries. Seen in picture with her are High Commissioners of South Africa, Mauritius and Bangladesh. - DNA

US, UK say Bangladesh polls were not free and fair

FOREIGN DESK

DHAKA, Bangladesh: The United States and the United Kingdom said the elections that extended Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's rule were not credible, free and fair. Both countries, which have trade and development ties with Bangladesh, also condemned political violence that preceded Sunday's election in which Hasina's party won more than two-thirds of the parliamentary seats while turnout was low and the main opposition party boycotted. "The United States remains concerned by the arrests of thousands of political opposition members and by reports of irregularities on

Continued on Page 06

Toshakhana reference Court indicts Imran, Bushra

Ex-PM is accused of misusing his premiership to buy and sell gifts in state possession worth more than Rs140m

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court on Tuesday indicted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana reference filed against them by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The decision was announced during a hearing in the case today which was conducted in Adiala jail - where the former prime minister is currently incarcerated in the case. A five-member special prosecution team of the anti-graft watchdog perused the reference against the duo. Accountability court Judge Muhammad Bashir conducted the hearing of Toshakhana and £190 million cases in the prison. A day earlier, the court deferred the indictment of the former prime minister and his wife after the latter failed to appear before the court. During the hearing today, NAB prosecutor Muzaffar Abbasi along with his team was present in the court. Khan was represented by his lawyers Latif Khosa and Umair Niazi. Bushra Bibi was also provided with a copy of the £190 million case today. Meanwhile, the former premier has challenged his disqualification in the Toshakhana case. A five-member larger bench headed by Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan and

Continued on Page 06

PML-N refuses seat adjustment with PPP

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) will not be entering into a seat adjustment arrangement or an alliance with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), a top party leader said Tuesday, ahead of the February 8 elections. Addressing a press conference, PML-N's outspoken leader Mian Javed Latif, who is considered close to the party's Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz, announced: "There will be no seat adjustment with PPP at any level." His remarks came a day after PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, in view of the current political landscape in the country, anticipated the formation of a coalition government after forthcoming elections. Bilawal, in an interview with a private news channel, said: "Whether it is led by PML-N or any other party,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs Reopening doors of politics for Sharif deplorable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson categorically stated that all attempts were being made to reopen the doors of politics and loot and plunder for the national criminal Panama Sharif under the infamous "London Plan" but the people of the country were adamant to stamp this criminal with lifelong disqualification through their power of votes on February 8, 2024. Reacting to the issue of minimizing the period of disqualification of Jati umra's fugitive under the London plan, he said that those who converted Panama Sharif's ineligibility into eligibility should verily become his election agents, but they should present the real owners of Avenfield properties and the sources of money used for their purchase before the nation.

Khattak claims credit of health card

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: PTIP Chairman Perwaiz Khattak emphasised school-related challenges and highlighted accomplishments during his five-year tenure, particularly in the health sector. He also revealed the party manifesto in Peshawar. Addressing a press conference, Khattak mentioned providing free emergency treatment to 1.8 million people through health cards. He said the recruitment of staff in hospitals and police and reforms were made during his tenure in office. Khattak expressed concern over the discontinuation of health cards, highlighting its injustice to the needy. He outlined plans to engage with the federation for electricity and gas revenue for the province, citing the establishment of 250 small hydro projects during his tenure.

Defense technology Pak, KSA, Turkiye discuss collaboration

Meanwhile, the third meeting of the Pakistan-KSA Defence Collaboration was also held at the GHQ, Rawalpindi a day earlier



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye on Monday discussed a prospective collaboration in the defence equipment technologies including research and development (R&D), the military's media wing said on Tuesday. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said this was discussed in the second meeting of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye Trilateral Defence Collaboration at the General Headquarters

(GHQ) in Rawalpindi. "The three sides reaffirmed the importance of combining the intellectual, technical, financial and human resource of the three friendly nations towards the achievement of shared objectives and attainment of self sufficiency in the defence domain," the ISPR said. Acknowledging the historical brotherly relations, the three sides reiterated the strategic intent to increase the scope of trilateral cooperation and the need to enhance the pace of

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Pak 'hopeful' of \$2 billion UAE deposit rollover

Total amount of loans that Gulf state has deposited with the SBP is \$3 billion

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is hopeful of getting \$2 billion deposits rolled over by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), sources told Geo News Monday, as the authorities strive to keep the country's financial affairs afloat. Citing sources in the finance ministry, a private news channel reported that

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For and against the SC verdict in lifetime disqualification case

This incongruity raises pertinent questions about the prerequisites for those entrusted with the responsibility of making laws. Should not the guardians of legislation be held to at least the same standard of integrity as individuals seeking far less influential positions within the system?

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The recent Supreme Court verdict, which abolishes lifetime disqualification, has elicited a varied response from the general public and the legal community. While some express approval, others harbor concerns, particularly among legal experts. There is a prevailing sentiment that this decision might set a precedent, potentially leading to a series of revisitations by future chief justices. Experts argue that the possibility of a nine-member bench overturning this verdict raises questions about the stability and consistency of judicial decisions. This apprehension prompts reflection on the potential for a cycle of reversals, undermining the perceived sanctity of legal decisions. Legal scholars contend that the Supreme Court could have opted for a different approach, considering the precedent set by the five-member bench in the Samiullah Baloch case. They suggest that, instead of overturning Samiullah Baloch, the court could have recommended leaving the matter to the new parliament for resolution through a constitutional amendment to Article 62 F, requiring a two-thirds majority. This alternative course of action would ensure a more stable and democratic process, allowing elected representatives to deliberate and decide on issues of constitutional significance. It emphasizes the importance of all-inclusive parliamentary involvement in shaping and amending fundamental laws, maintaining the balance between the judiciary and the legislative branches. It remains uncertain whether the comprehensive judgment will address these questions. However, one certainty is

that the court might articulate in its detailed decision that amending Article 62 F requires a two-thirds majority. During the court proceedings, some judges correctly noted that the government had a significant opportunity to modify this article through the 18th Amendment, yet they consciously avoided addressing this matter. The Chief Justice's comments on this issue strongly suggest that parliamentarians might have refrained from amending the article due to concerns about potential backlash from the clergy. As we delve into the provisions of Article 62 F, which specifically addresses the conduct of parliamentarians, a noteworthy discrepancy emerges. The stipulation dictates that individuals aspiring to hold parliamentary positions must embody qualities such as fairness, righteousness, honesty, and truthfulness. In a striking contrast, individuals vying for even modest roles like a peon or an attendant in Pakistan are required to furnish a police character certificate, affirming their clean record and lack of involvement in any malpractices. This certificate explicitly attests that no legal cases have been lodged against them in any court of law. This incongruity raises pertinent questions about the prerequisites for those entrusted with the responsibility of making laws. Should not the guardians of legislation be held to at least the same standard of integrity as individuals seeking far less influential positions within the system? Addressing this disparity could foster a more equitable and transparent approach to the selection and conduct of parliamentarians, aligning with the principles of fairness and accountability that are foundational to a robust democratic framework.

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Nowshera: Nomination papers accepted, election anticipation grows

All eyes are on the two NA constituencies of Nowshera district for the general election 2024 where tough electoral battle is expected among political stalwarts

DNA

PESHAWAR: All eyes are on the two national assembly's constituencies of Nowshera district for the general election 2024 where tough electoral battle is expected among political stalwarts. The candidates of all mainstream political parties blew up horns after their nomination papers were accepted for two national and five provincial assembly seats in the politically fertile Nowshera district. Pakistan Tahir e Insaaf Parliamentarian (PTI) Chairman and former Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pervez Khan Khattak, Pakistan Muslim League-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Secretary and former member provincial assembly, Ikhtiar Wali Khan, Awami National Party's Khan Pervez, Barrister Sarwar Khan and Mustafa Anwar of PTI, Fayyazur Rahman of PMLN, Mufti Shakatullah and Ijazul Haq of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl and independents nomination papers for NA-33 Nowshera-I were accepted. Major-Gen (r) Saad Khattak of Aam Admi Party, Mian Babar Shah of ANP, Mian Khaliqur Rahman, Haji Akbar, Daud Khattak of PTI, Shaq Amin of Tehreek-e-Labbaik, Hamza Pervez of PMLN, Alhaj Pervez Khan of JUIF, Idrees Khattak of PPP and others filed papers for NA-34 Nowshera-II and others provincial constituencies. NA-33 Nowshera-I was previously won by PTI's Siraj Muhammad Khan in 2013 general election after securing 54,266 votes against Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah of PMLN's with 34,537 votes while in 2018 general election this constituency was clinched by Pervez Khattak who contested on PTI ticket with 82,118 votes against Khan Pervez of PPP with 35,658 votes. Pervez Khattak was also elected from NA-34 Nowshera-II on the ticket of PTI in 2013 general election after securing 70,053 votes against runnerup Daud Khan Khattak of ANP with 21,493 votes. Later, Pervez Khattak resigned from NA-34 and retained NA-33 Nowshera-I. Later, his son-in-law Dr Imran Khattak won NA-34 in by-election after securing 48,043 votes against Daud Khattak of ANP's with 27,569 votes. In the 2018 General Election, this constituency was again won by Dr. Imran Khattak who contested on PTI's ticket after securing 90,256 votes against Jamal Khattak of ANP's with 47,132 votes. The total

registered voters in NA-34-Nowshera-II are 377,306. "All political parties enjoy equal opportunities to win in the 2024 general election in Nowshera. However, political parties' manifestos, voters especially young and female voters' turnout and strong baradaris would play a crucial role in deciding the fate of these candidates," said former Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali Malik of Political Science Department, Govt College Nowshera while talking to APP. "The main problem of the area's people here are unemployment, flood vulnerability being located directly on River Kabul, lack of clean drinking water and adequate housing facilities," he said, adding any party with a solid program for resolution of these issues would get an edge over others on D-Day. NA-33-Nowshera-I constituencies comprises on Akora Khattak, Jaghangira, Pirsabaq, Risalpur, Nowshera Kalan, Nizam-pur, Manki Sharif, Misri Banda, Mera Akora Khattak, Adamzai and Inzari where literacy ratio is relatively higher compared to NA-34 Nowshera-II with key areas of Pabbi, Akbarpura, Charat, Amankot, Mohib Banda, Khesgi Payan, Saleh Khana and Shah Kot. "I eagerly await the February 8, 2024 general election. I will vote for that political party having solid a program for the resolution of Nowshera's core issues," said Riazul Haq, a former PST teacher and resident of Mohib Banda while talking to APP. "The 2022 floods in River Kabul have badly affected the groundwater table of my village and most of the residents were bringing water from tehsil Pabbi after covering five kilometres distance every day," he said, adding "we need clean drinking water and technical education institute in our area for our children and families."



KARACHI: Rashaan with meat were distributed among 2000 families in desert area of Nara Taluqa. It's have been distribute on order SH Haza bin Sultan al Nahyan. And SH Khalid bin Sultan al Nahyan. Every year rashaan is distributed in same area.—DNA

Governor stresses to maintain financial discipline in varsities

ABID RAZA

PESHAWAR : Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali chairing a senate meeting of the University of Swabi (UoS) here Tuesday directed universities of the province to maintain financial discipline keeping in resources of the province. The senate meeting was also attended by Vice Chancellor UoS, Nasir Jamal and concerned officials of education, establishment, finance and higher education commission. KP Governor said that the provincial government is paying Rs. 56 billion annually in lieu of salaries stressing that universities should explore new ways to overcome financial difficulties. He desired that varsities devise new plans to improve administrative, educational and financial affairs. The governor highlighted the need for research-based education and said that it would help improve capacity building of students and prepare them to meet challenges of emerging world. On the occasion, meeting also discussed amendments in universities statutes 2016-17, financial resource development plan 2023 and annual performance report of the varsity while matter relating to age relaxation was referred to Standing Committee for Higher Education Department. Afterwards, Governor also visited Iranian Consulate General in Peshawar and expressed grief over loss of lives in Kirman blasts. He also expressed sympathies with Iran people and prayed for peace of departed souls and early recovery of injured. The governor was accompanied by caretaker minister for information, Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel.—APP

IG Punjab launches E-Khidmat Markaz pilot project

LAHORE: Accordig to the sources of Daily Notable, Inspector General Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar has directed to start the pilot project of E-Khidmat Markaz in the provincial capital, citizens will be able to avail 14 police services from single machine in E-Khidmat Markaz, scanner will be attached to the machine and fee will be paid through PSID. Pictures will be taken on the spot. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that after the pilot project in Lahore, this service will be extended to all the districts of the province, being placed in khidmat markaz later. IG Punjab directed the traffic police to coordinate effectively with PITB to resolve issues and problems related to online traffic licensing and said that all services including web-based online licensing

should be shifted to the traffic application by January 31. The App is being launched to counteract the false practices. IG Punjab also directed to complete the work of infrastructure development & renovation of offices of traffic police by January 31. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that the Special Initiative Police Station in Model Town and Ichra and Saiban Project should be completed by January 10, all the work should be completed as soon as possible as per the SOPs of the Special Initiative Protocol. IG Punjab said that the wall of the basement of the Central Police Office will be decorated to honour the police officers with outstanding performance, it will feature their names, photos and thanksgiving messages. These views were expressed by IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar while presiding over a high-level meeting at Safe City Head-

quarters in Qurban Police Lines. In the meeting W khidmat Markaz, traffic licensing issues, special initiative police stations and other departmental issues were discussed. In the meeting, the ongoing construction work of Safe City projects in different districts of the province was also reviewed. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that MD Safe City will start field visits to review the ongoing work on Safe City projects in other districts. During the meeting, detailed discussion on construction work of police flats, other infrastructure development projects was also held. MD Safe City Authority Ahsan Younas, DIG Operations Lahore Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, Chairman PITB, Chief Operating Officer Safe City Mustansar Feroze, CTO Lahore Amara Athar, SSP Operations Lahore, SP Model Town, ASP Gulberg and other officers attended the meeting.

Couple, son found murdered at home

HYDERABAD: Three members of a family including a child were killed by slitting throat in a residential unit in Sikandarabad colony in Kotri SITE area of Jamshoro district on Tuesday. According to the police, the family lived as tenants on the first floor of a house in Sikandarabad colony. Unidentified people entered a house located in Sikandarabad Colony in SITE area and slit throats of the couple and their young son with a sharp-edged weapon. The police shifted the dead bodies of 35-year-old Altaf Ghori, his 34-year-old wife Meena and their 8-year-old son Adil to the hospital for postmortem. The police informed that they had recovered a knife, which was probably used to kill the victims, from the place of the incident.—APP

CM Baqar lays foundation for M9-N5 interchange

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI : The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar speaking at the stone-laying ceremony of the M9N5 Link Road interchange in Kathore said that the Link Road had been completed, but it needed to be integrated with the Motorway to make it fully operational for which he laid the foundation. The ceremony of the M9-N5 Link Road interchange was held at Kathore on Tuesday, a communique said. The ceremony was attended by Information Minister Muhammad Ahmed Shah, Secretary Works Muhammad Nawaz So-hoo, DG PPP Unit Asad Zamin, Director PPP Unit Sajjad Gilal, PD M9-N5 Link Road Mr Muhammad Ali Memon,

SE Works Khurram Mughal. He said that he had laid the foundation of interchange on the M9. He added that the intersection to bridge the final gap in the traffic flow originating from Karachi's industrial arteries through the M9-N5 Link Road Project, extending its reach upcountry. The CM said that with the culmination of the project, traffic would seamlessly navigate to the M9, streamlining the transportation network. He said that the road leading to this interchange M9-N5 Link Road Project was constructed in record time, and the facility was ready. "With the integration of this missing link, the whole project will be fully operational, effectively realizing the project's objectives," he said. The M9-N5 link road stands as a milestone as the first Pub-

lic-Private Partnership (PPP) in Pakistan, awarded solely based on traffic revenue, without any equity, Minimum Revenue Guarantee, or any form of financial support from the provincial government. The Concessionaire for the M9-N5 Link Road Project not only financed the project independently but also committed to managing operations and maintenance for the next 23 years using its resources, additionally, the Sindh government would reap the benefits of traffic revenue throughout this period. Baqar said that due to unforeseen delays in the finalization of interchange construction, our project revenues have taken a hit, leading the Sindh government to step in and compensate the Concessionaire for the incurred loss of revenue.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in carpeting of the road on E-11 Fly over as such project is on its final stage and soon will seem open for public in Federal Capital.—ONLINE

Woman arrested for making fake call on 15 police helpline

RAWALPINDI : Police have arrested a woman for making fake call on 15 police helplines in the jurisdiction of Wah Cantt police station here on Tuesday. According to a police spokesman, the accused Sonia called the emergency helpline 15 and said that her sister-in-law was killed by her family members. On receiving the information, Wah Cantt Police immediately reached the spot and found that no such incident had taken place. Police have arrested the accused Sonia who made bogus calls on 15.—APP

Govt to support private educational institutions

Madad Ali Sindhi said that the government will provide every possible support to private institutions in order to ensure their delivery of service to the public at large

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi on Tuesday said that the government will provide every possible support to private institutions in order to ensure their delivery of service to the public at large. He said this while chairing a meeting held here with the heads of major private educational institutions of Islamabad Capital Territory, which was also attended by the Chairperson PEIRA, Dr. Sayeda Zia Batool. Madad Ali Sindhi emphasized on improving equity through fostering a more inclusive educational environment,

and to increase the scope of fee concession/scholarships for needy students. The minister was told that on average all private institutions are giving scholarships between 15-25% to all its students. The innovative CSR approaches and sustainable practices were discussed by the representatives of the private educational institutions in detail. The minister appreciated the CSR initiative and activities that private educational institutions have already adopted. This will open the doors of quality education provision to children from the less advantaged segments of society. These initiatives are pivotal in elevating Pakistan's human development and strengthening the

nation's social capital. Madad Ali Sindhi highlighted the importance of teachers' training. He said that not only in the federal territory but in all of the provinces it should be given the highest importance. The minister was told that CDA has planned to auction plots for schools. He directed PEIRA and the ministry to support CDA in this process. The minister said that his focus has remained to improve the quality of education of public schools and to control the out-of-school children in Pakistan. He said that the federal education ministry has planned to make 2 model schools in every province as well. Madad Ali Sindhi acknowledged the issues of all private in-

stitutions and vowed to support them in every way possible. Madad Ali Sindhi said that the aim of the meeting is to focus on robust Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities including community engagement strategies, and the educational provisions offered by the private sector especially for the needy students. Madad Ali highlighted the importance of the contribution of the private sector to provide education to bridge the gap to ensure educational provisions under the ambit of article 25-A alongside public sector. All the representatives of private institutions appreciated the efforts of the minister in solving the issues of the private schools and colleges.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA	Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Palestine	Palestine Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Sudan	National Day
Jan 04 / Myanmar	Independence Day
Jan 06 / Iraq	Armed Forces Day
Jan 12 / Tanzania	Armed Forces Day
Jan 14 / Uzbekistan	Armed Forces Day
Jan 15 / Nigeria	Armed Forces Day
Jan 20 / Mali	Armed Forces Day
Jan 20 / Laos	Armed Forces Day
Jan 25 / Thailand	Armed Forces Day
Jan 26 / Australia	National Day
Jan 26 / India	Republic Day

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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
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PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

DHO Islamabad to facilitate chemists and druggists

They also shared their proposals about Nordex and Sanofi companies that needed the attention of DHO Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Baktawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation of Pakistan Chemists and Druggists Association (PCGA) Federal Branch met with Dr. Zaem Zia, District Health Officer, Islamabad, and discussed with him matters to promote ease of doing business for the chemists and druggists in the federal capital and facilitate the better growth of their business activities. Mian Tariq Saeed Chairman, Qaiser Masood Secretary General PCGA Federal Branch, Tariq Mahmood, Arif Yar Khan, Najeeb Abbasi, Abdul Aziz, Malik Ashfaq, Usman Hafeez, and others were in the delegation. Ahsan Zafar Baktawari briefed the DHO Islamabad about the key issues of the chemists and the druggists and offered useful suggestions to resolve them. He highlighted the impact of online buying and selling of medicines on the genuine business community and stressed that the government



should develop a proper mechanism to monitor such illegal activities. He lauded the efforts of DHO Islamabad to improve the performance of DHUs and BHUs in Islamabad and assured that the business community would cooperate with him in such good efforts. Speaking on the occasion,

Dr. Zaem Zia, DHO Islamabad assured the delegation that he would take measures to address the issues highlighted by them. He said that the online system of pharmacy licenses, medical store licenses, and distribution licenses would be further improved as per suggestions given by the del-

egation. He also briefed the delegation about the deployment of new ambulances arranged by the DHO Islamabad for the DHUs in Islamabad, which are equipped with modern equipment. Mian Tariq Saeed Chairman and Qaiser Masood Secretary General Pakistan Chemists and Druggists As-

sociation (Federal Branch) shared their ideas to further improve the digitization of licenses for pharmacies and medical stores to promote ease of doing business. They also shared their proposals about Nordex and Sanofi companies that needed the attention of DHO Islamabad.

04 drug dealers arrested

DNA

RAWALPINDI: In its ongoing drive, Rawalpindi Police have arrested 04 drug dealers and recovered more than 03 kg of drugs from their possession here on Tuesday. According to the police spokesman, Suddar Wah police held lady drug dealer Uzma and recovered 1.2 kg of drugs from her possession and same quantity was recovered from Nauman. Similarly, New Town police nabbed Nadeem and recovered 1.6 drugs from his custody. Pirwadhai police recovered 350 grams of charas from Naseem. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. SSP Operations appreciated the performance of police teams adding that strict action will be taken against drug dealers without any discrimination.

Last day of registration for AIOU convocation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is scheduled to take place on January 31, 2024, and today (Wednesday 10th January) is the last day for registration. Meanwhile, according to AIOU, the eligibility criteria for registration has also been amended and the condition of at least 70 percent marks has been removed. Now all the graduates from Semester Autumn 2004 to Spring 2022 can register on <http://convocation.aiou.edu.pk>. The convocation is of great importance in the life of a student, Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has advised students to take advantage of this opportunity, register themselves and make this convocation a memorable moment of life. AIOU Convocation 2024 will be held on January 31, 2024, at the Jinnah Convention Center, Islamabad. The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, who is also the Chancellor of the University, will be the chief guest at the event. Students from Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, AJK and Rawalpindi Division (Attack, Chaklala, Jehlum, and Rawalpindi) will participate in the convocation at Jinnah Convention Center in Islamabad. The convocation for the Karachi chapter is scheduled for March 3, 2024, while Lahore's convocation will be held on March 28. Quetta will host its ceremony on May 19, and the convocation for Peshawar is scheduled for June 9, 2024. PhD graduates are required to register in Islamabad only. The students of MPhil programs will be awarded gold medals and degrees at the convocations held in their respective cities. For more details about the convocation, students can contact convocation@aiou.edu.pk or 051-9571717.

Boycotting products from Israel; will it help

SAMAR KAINAAT

Have you ever heard about boycotting products from ISRAEL? Boycotts are a form of protest where individuals or groups choose not to buy or support products or services from a particular country or company. The reasons for boycotting can vary, and in the case of Israel, it's often related to political conflicts in the region. In the case of boycotting products from Israel, some people choose not to buy things made in Israel to express their concerns about the situation

between Israel and Palestine. The main reason people boycott products from Israel is because they want to bring attention to the conflict between Israel and Palestine. They hope that by not buying Israeli products, they can make a difference and encourage the Israeli government to change its policies. Boycotting can be complicated. It's not always easy to know where products come from because many things are made with materials from different countries. It can also be hard to measure how effective a boycott is and if it will

really make a difference. As being a supporter of humanity the ongoing situation in Palestine is not bearable at all especially when it comes to the loss of innocent lives, including children. The ongoing conflict has resulted in tragic consequences for both Israelis and Palestinians. It's heartbreaking to witness the suffering and violence that affects the lives of so many people, especially children. It's crucial that we continue to raise awareness, support humanitarian efforts, and promote dialogue to bring about a just and lasting

solution. It's important to note that the decision to participate in a boycott is a personal one, and individuals should educate themselves about the issues at hand and make informed choices based on their own values and beliefs. Boycotting can bring attention to important issues and raise public awareness. I hope that boycotting products create a positive impact in the world and create a peaceful resolution between Israel-Palestine conflict.

The writer is the student of FAZIA BIQUIS COLLEGE BS-ENGLISH

Woman arrested for making fake call on 15 police helpline

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested a woman for making fake call on 15 police helplines in the jurisdiction of Wah Cantt police station here on Tuesday. According to a police spokesman, the accused Sonia called the emergency helpline 15 and said that her sister-in-law was killed by her family members. On receiving the information, Wah Cantt Police immediately reached the spot and found that no such incident had taken place. Police have arrested the accused Sonia who made bogus calls on 15. Police have registered a case against her and started an investigation. SP Pothohar commended the police team and said that 15 is an emergency helpline which cannot be misused. He made it clear that strict action would be taken against such elements involved in malpractices and mischievous activities.—APP

Senate committee on Narcotics meets

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Narcotics Control was held today at the Parliament House, convened by Senator Gurdeep Singh. The session commenced with a briefing on the functions and operations of the Ministry of Narcotics by Mr. Munir Azam, the Secretary of the Ministry of Narcotics Control. Mr. Munir Azam highlighted that the ministry plays a crucial role on both national and international fronts, emphasizing that the eradication of drug trafficking is a shared responsibility at both the national and global levels. The ministry provided detailed insights into the policy framework, inter-provincial coordination, and assistance received from foreign countries in the field of narcotics control. They underscored their achievement in attaining Pakistan's poppy-free status. Key policy points focused on maintaining this status, preventing domestic drug production and trafficking, strengthening law enforcement, protecting vulnerable groups such as women, children, and youth, and promoting socio-economic development. Additionally, efforts were highlighted regarding the capacity enhancement of 32 agencies and evidence-based interventions based on abuse reports. Major General Muhammad Aniq, Director General Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), emphasized collaboration with neighboring countries on intelligence sharing, border control, and joint operations. Internationally, ANF has partnered with organizations like the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Interpol, and other international agencies for resources and technical assistance, it was informed.—DNA

The Minister for public health of Afghanistan visits COMSTECH

DNA

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH received H.E. Dr. Qalander Ibaad, Minister for the Ministry of Public Health, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan at COMSTECH Secretariat Islamabad, on January 9. During the meeting Prof. Choudhary proposed the holding of Pakistan Afghanistan joint health forum. This pioneering initiative aims to unite experts from the Ministry of Public Health, Kabul, and COMSTECH. The primary focus of this forum will be on collaborative training and capacity building for healthcare professionals at the primary health level.



Prof. Choudhary said that we believe that by joining forces and sharing expertise, we can significantly uplift the healthcare landscape in Pa-

kistan and Afghanistan. This collaborative forum will serve as a platform for collective growth and progress," said Dr. Iqbal in the meeting. Dr.

Qalander Ibaad expressed his appreciation for the collaborative spirit, emphasizing the shared commitment to progress in healthcare.

Pakistan, Egypt agrees to focus on collaboration

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Egypt on Tuesday agreed to focus on fostering collaboration in key economic sectors, including agriculture, textiles, engineering, and services. Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries and Investments, engaged in discussions with Ahmed Samir, the Minister of Commerce of Egypt and Chief Guest of the 4th Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference (PATDC) and Single Country Exhibition (SCE), said a press release issued here on Tuesday. Both parties recognized the mutual benefits that can arise from expanding economic and trade ties between Pakistan and Egypt. The meeting, held in the presence of policymakers and business leaders from various countries, facilitated a convergence of diverse ideas and opinions, creating an enriching environment for meaningful discussions. This event serves as a crucial platform aimed at fostering economic ties and exploring investment opportunities between Pakistan and Egypt. The discussions underscored the commitment of both nations to deepening economic cooperation and leveraging each other's strengths in key sectors. Dr. Gohar Ejaz reiterated Pakistan's commitment to making Pakistani markets accessible to the MENA region. The focus is on achieving this goal by strengthening economic ties with MENA economies, with discussions centered around the potential for collaboration in agriculture, textiles, engineering, and services. This commitment aligns seamlessly with the Look Africa policy, emphasizing Pakistan's objective to unlock its economic and trade potential. The focus is on facilitating investments and making markets more accessible, contributing to the broader goals of economic growth and cooperation. The 4th PATDC and SCE not only serve as a platform for bilateral discussions but also as a catalyst for the exchange of ideas and strategies to enhance economic ties.—APP

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Briefs

Mushahid for UN proactive role to end humanity crime in Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: Veteran politician and Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed Tuesday appealed to UN Secretary-General to play a more proactive role to end "crime against humanity" in Kashmir and Palestine. Talking to a Private news channel, he said that the Kashmir dispute and Palestinian issue are so similar that both nations have been promised the right to self-determination, which has yet not been fulfilled. "The two nations are facing an existential humanity threat and if the international community does not act immediately, these entities, their cultures, and populations will be wiped out," he added. Replying to a question about the Kashmir issue "Kashmir is the Jugular vein of Pakistan and no nation or country would tolerate that its Jugular vein remains under the sword of the enemy", he added.—APP

'Hosting 'Global Health Summit' Pakistan's honour'

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Tuesday that "Global Health Security Summit" was being held in Islamabad on January 10 and 11. Addressing a joint press conference along with Caretaker Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan here he said that problems related to the health of the people were the real problems. He opined that hosting the Global Health Security Summit was an honour for Pakistan. This conference had nothing to do with politics or artificial intelligence, it was related to the health of humanity, Murtaza Solangi added.—APP

ANF seizes 425 kg drugs in seven different operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its crackdown against drug traffickers managed to recover over 425 kg of drugs and arrested eight accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 240 kg hashish and 120 kg heroin were recovered from Galimain Ghandi Lakkas, Quetta. Thirty kilograms of hashish was recovered from Chenab Toll Plaza Gujarat while two accused were arrested. Eighteen kilograms of opium and 5 kg of hashish were recovered from a vehicle in Othal Lasbela while two accused were netted during the operation. Five kg heroin and 1 kg Ice drug were recovered from an accused in Sambrial, Sialkot. In the fifth operation, 3 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of a woman arrested near Niazi bus stand in Lahore. Two kg of Ice drug was recovered from an accused rounded up near Sher Shah Toll Plaza Multan. In the seventh operation, 1.1 kg of Ice drug was recovered near Zero Line, Torkham. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—DNA

Change Name

I, HAJIRA D/O Muhammad Bashir, resident of Rawalpindi, do hereby solemnly affirm

and declare that I was registered with FBISE at SSC Level under registration No. 1420352024 and passed the SSC annual examination 2014 under roll No. 151175. I have decided to partially change my name from HAJIRA to HAJIRA BASHIR which is written as HAJIRA in board documents/record. Hence the same may be changed. The statement given above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and nothing material has been concealed or withheld.

PM National award ushers in incubation phase for awardees

The Prime Minister's National Innovation Award underscores its commitment to nurturing a culture of creativity, innovation, and a knowledge economy

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's National Innovation Award (PMNIA) takes a significant stride forward as it initiates the incubation phase for Round 1 and 2 awardees. The commencement was marked by the formal signing of a Tripartite Contract involving the awardees, Host Incubator, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Notable signing ceremonies unfolded at Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar, Pak-Austria Fachhochschule Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology (PAF IAST), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, University of the Punjab, Government College University, and University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Lahore. PMNIA, a cornerstone of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme executed by the HEC, acts as a unique catalyst fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. It empowers young entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into tangible solutions, with 100 startup ideas earning cash prizes, through



a rigorous selection process in two rounds, the top 10 startups in each round secured a substantial prize of PKR 1 million each, while the remaining 40 received support of 0.5 million each. In this next phase, awardees are set

to receive a seed grant of PKR 1 million upon consenting to a 6-month incubation programme at designated incubators. A network of 18 incubators nationwide, in collaboration with HEC, is poised to deliver comprehensive incubation

services, encompassing training, mentorship, and networking opportunities with potential clients and investors. The Prime Minister's National Innovation Award underscores its commitment to nurturing a culture of creativity,

innovation, and a knowledge economy. This initiative provides crucial opportunities and support to young entrepreneurs, aligning with HEC's dedication to scaling innovative ventures through technical and financial backing.

Alvi for implementing job quota for persons with disabilities

He suggested that the government departments should identify jobs for PWDs and provide them employment as per their skill sets to increase their inclusion in the workforce, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday underscored the need to implement employment quota for persons with disabilities (PWDs) at all levels of the government for their financial empowerment. He suggested that the government departments should identify jobs for PWDs and provide them employment as per their skill sets to increase their inclusion in the workforce, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. The president expressed these views while chairing a meeting on implementing employment quota for

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Secretary Ministry of Human Rights Allah Dino Khawaja, Secretary Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) Syed Hasnain Mehdi, Special Secretary Establishment Division Ali Tahir and senior officials of the government attended the meeting. Highlighting the need to make PWDs productive members of society, the president said that they made up almost 12% of Pakistan's population and affirmative actions like job quotas could help overcome existing barriers to their employment. He underscored the need to equip PWDs with employable skills and link them with

potential employers to provide jobs to them as per the nature and severity of their disability. The president emphasized the need for attitudinal change towards PWDs by the society to encourage them to actively participate in socio-economic activities. He recalled that he had been urging private schools to admit children with disabilities and take measures to promote inclusive education in mainstream educational institutions. Secretary FPSC briefed the meeting about the steps taken by them for the facilitation of PWDs. He informed that PWDs were eligible to appear in CSS exams against all occupational

groups and FPSC was especially facilitating them by providing them additional time and writing assistants during the exams. It was also appraised that PWDs were being given two-year relaxation in the upper age limit under the CSS Competitive Examination Rules. The Establishment Division informed that they were vigorously pursuing the implementation of 2% job quota with all ministries, divisions and departments. The president asked the participants to identify roadblocks and difficulties in the implementation and fulfilment of job quotas for PWDs in the government sector. He appreciated the ministries for their cooperation towards the cause of PWDs.

Solangi grieved over demise of DG Radio

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday expressed deep grief over the death of the mother of Radio Pakistan's Director General Saeed Ahmed Sheikh. In a condolence message, the minister expressed heartfelt sympathies to Saeed Ahmed Sheikh and his family over this loss. Sharing the grief with the bereaved family, the minister said the mother's loss was a great tragedy for the children. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude. Meanwhile, Managing Director of Pakistan Television Mubashar Tauqeer Shah on Tuesday expressed deep grief over the death of the mother of Director General of Radio Pakistan Saeed Ahmed Sheikh. In a condolence message, the MD PTV expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to DG Radio Saeed Ahmed Sheikh and his family. Terming the death of the mother a great shock and an irreparable loss for the family, Mubashar Tauqeer said he equally shared the grief of the bereaved family. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.—DNA

CDNS achieves Rs 960 billion targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 960 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to January 9th 2023-24. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Tuesday. The senior official said this was a Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. "The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said. In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. "At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. Replying to a question, he said the CDNS had collected an investment of Rs 52 billion by January 9, 2023-24, through Islamic investment bonds. The official added that the directorate had set a target of Rs 75 billion for the new financial year 2023-24 for Islamic finance bonds. Replying to a question, he said the CDNS aimed to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector. He informed the directorate that it had reviewed and set a target of Rs 60 billion in the fiscal year (2022-23) for Islamic investment to introduce new products in the market. "Islamic finance has a very important role in the global financial sector at this time, and a large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," he added.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Mir Shai Mazar Baloch, Director General (Coord/Pdu), Senate in a meeting with team members of the Mustehkam Parlmaan/Ip5 project at Parliament House.—DNA

Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan increase by 9.10%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's export of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 9.10 per cent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$232.697 million during July-November (2023-24) against exports of US \$213.282 million during July-November (2022-23), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Afghanistan also surged by 39.30 per cent from \$37.263 million in November 2022, against the exports of \$51.911 million in November 2023. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Afghanistan however witnessed a nominal decline of 0.50 per cent during November 2023 as compared to the exports of \$52.177 million in October 2023, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 4.99 per cent in the first five months, from US \$11.915 billion to US \$12.510 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from Afghanistan into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$3.187 million against US \$11.523 million last year, showing a decline of 72.34 per cent in July-November (2023-24). On a year-to-year basis, the imports from Afghanistan witnessed a decrease of 6.11 per cent from US \$1.373 million in November 2022, against the imports of US \$1.289 million in November 2023. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from Afghanistan into the country increased by 52.72 per cent during November 2023, as compared to the imports of US \$0.844 million during October 2023, according to the data. The overall imports into the country witnessed a decrease of 16.02 per cent, from \$25.341 billion to US \$21.281 billion, according to the data.—DNA

Pakistan startup fund launched

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday launched the Pakistan Startup Fund (PSF) which will invest up to Rs 2 Billion every year in Pakistani startups. The fund is structured as an equity-free capital to help close a VC round for a startup. PSF is designed to help a startup raise its first external investment. If you are a startup in Pakistan and a foreign VC is evaluating your startup for a \$1 million investment, the VC only needs to invest \$700k — the Pakistan Startup Fund will give you a grant of \$300k to help close the round. Dr. Umar Said said "We won't take any equity/shares in your startup or a board position etc. PSF is designed to lower the risk for international investors to invest in Pakistani startups; once we have written you a cheque, we won't hassle you at all... betting on you and your VC investors to drive your success. With PSF we hope to create a value of at least Rs 50 Billion per year in the startup ecosystem in Pakistan".

28th death anniversary of film actor Sultan Rahi observed

ISLAMABAD: The 28th death anniversary of legendary film actor Sultan Rahi was observed on Tuesday. Sultan Rahi began his film career in 1959 as a guest actor in the film 'Baghi'. He rose to tremendous stardom with the release of the film 'Maula Jatt' in 1979. During his career, he acted in more than 800 Punjabi and Urdu-language movies and was also named in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most prolific actor. Sultan Rahi earned two Nigar Awards for his work in 'Babul' (1971) and 'Basheera' (1972). Sultan Rahi was shot dead near Gujranwala on January 9 1996.—APP

900 negligent drivers fined during last week

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have launched special crackdown against reckless drivers and imposed heavy penalties on 900 drivers besides impounding 40 vehicles and motorcycles in different police stations. According to details, Islamabad Capital Police has initiated a comprehensive crackdown on negligent drivers and motorcyclists. Over the past week, the Special Traffic Education and Enforcement Campaign has seen more than 900 drivers facing heavy penalties, and over 40 vehicles and motorcycles impounded in various police stations across the city. Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, emphasized the paramount importance of prioritizing the safety of citizens and eliminating accidents in the capital. The initiative aims not only to enforce strict traffic regulations but also to instill a positive and responsible attitude among duty officers during their shifts. Under the special directives of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and CPO Safe City, the capital police are undertaking day and night measures to ensure the protection of lives and property of the residents. A particular focus is placed on drivers who operate their vehicles with negligence and recklessness. Special squads have been deployed to different zones, with each squad actively enforcing traffic rules and regulations. Chief Traffic Officer Sarfraz Virk reiterated that their primary objective is to make Islamabad free from accidents, and every citizen's safety is their foremost responsibility.—APP

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Japan, ROK warned against asylum takeover

IN the joint statement they released after their Trilateral "Indo-Pacific" Dialogue, the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea expressed concerns over what they alleged was China's "dangerous and escalatory behavior" supporting its "unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea". While pointing accusatory fingers at China for attempts to change the status quo by force and coercion – including implying that it is China rather than the US that is responsible for jeopardizing peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait – they rather tellingly offered testimony that this is a charge that should be laid at their doors. By reiterating their shared commitment to "maritime security and law enforcement cooperation" including the freedom of navigation and overflight operations which are nothing more than an excuse for their provocative military posturing in the waters, they made it crystal clear that it is they that are guilty of trying to use coercion to impose the US' notion of what the regional status quo should be – one in which China's development over the past 40-plus years never happened. The US has constantly sought to exploit the maritime disputes in the South China Sea, which are bilateral issues between China and a few Southeast Asian countries, as a means to consolidate its various alliances and cliques, including the one with Japan and the ROK, in order to sow the seeds of division between China and its neighbors. Its aim is to make regional countries part of the armored ring fence it is trying to build around China in order to contain it. It is not China that is guilty of so-called escalatory behavior, but the US.

At present, the greatest challenge to peace and stability in the South China Sea comes from Washington's encouragement of Manila's provocations regarding Ren'ai Reef and its collusion with pro-independence forces on Taiwan island. With the island holding its local leadership election later this month, the US apparently wants to send a supportive message with its allies to disruptive-minded, pro-independence candidates. It is the US' continuous flexing of the muscles of its alliance system and its inciting of cross-Strait tensions that are disturbing the peace and stability fostered through the concerted efforts of countries in the region. As Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said of the trilateral statement, it exposes the US' attempts to cobble together exclusionary groupings in the name of cooperation, its gross interference in China's internal affairs, and its smearing of China with the aim of stoking confrontation and antagonism. As she said, the Asia-Pacific region should not be a chessboard for geopolitical contests. The US' regional allies should recognize the dangers inherent in the Cold War dry rot that has damaged mental faculties in Washington, and cease to fuel tensions in the region by following its demented lead.



Tariff extension sign of squabble to come

ON Sept 5, 2023, the Office of the United States Trade Representative posted a notice in the Federal Register stating that it was extending previously reinstated exclusions to the Section 301 tariffs till Dec 31. Days before that extension was due to expire, the USTR's office on Dec 26 announced another extension, this time to May 31, 2024, to allow for comments on a review of the exclusions and alignment with the four-year review. As part of the trade war it launched against China, the previous administration imposed punitive tariffs on Chinese products under Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974 beginning 2018. But 352 Chinese import and 77 COVID-19 related categories were exempted to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on US businesses and consumers. That the Joe Biden administration remains undecided as to how to deal with the Donald Trump legacy in a presidential election year, with a rematch with his predecessor on the cards, underscores the matter's nature as a political hot potato. Leaving the Trump tariffs untouched may be perceived as tacit endorsement of his core policies. Going too far in that direction, however, may backfire for that would inflict greater pains on US businesses and consumers. Therefore, when Biden seeks to "put his stamp on Trump's tariffs", as the US news website Axios put it, and look "smarter" and "more strategic", or at least not "soft", as Trump has accused him of being, he has a delicate balance to strike. The idea so far, appears to be keeping much of the Trump tariffs in place, pairing higher duties on electric vehicles, solar panels and such critical minerals as cobalt and lithium with lower tariffs on some consumer goods. For the former and present US presidents, getting reelected in November is no doubt their top priority. The tariffs, like any other issues, may just be a political card in their game. Certainly, as in previous presidential campaigns, China is again likely to be front and foremost as the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates compete on the public stage with displays of toughness. It will be particularly so given the unprecedented bipartisan consensus on a tougher approach to China. The far-reaching damage to the US' image as a preacher of free trade notwithstanding, such a contest will end up harming the US as much as it hurts China. A 2023 study released by major US industry groups found that the tariffs resulted in "many hundreds of millions of dollars a year in costs on apparel, footwear and travel products, with financial burdens falling disproportionately on lower-income consumers". Yet with the Democrats and Republicans scuffling and squabbling for an advantage in the run-up to the election, there seems little hope of the Biden administration scrapping the tariffs and fostering a fair and nondiscriminatory trade environment.

Global warming is devastating Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Ikram Zaheer



Pakistan is a country that has done little to combat global warming and now it is being worsen much due to Global Warming and the Monsoon. The South Asian summer monsoon is part of the regional climate pattern.

Mainly from June to September, winds blow from the south-west. This terrestrial wind brings the rainy season. In general, this is usually a good thing for the agricultural activities

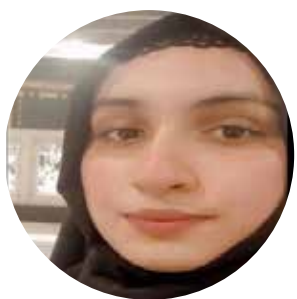
SUMMER flood killed more than 1,500 people in Pakistan. Since June rain swept away buildings, flooded homes and destroyed roads. One third of the country was under water. Scientists still can't say exactly how climate change contributed to the disaster, but they do know that global warming is dramatically increasing the likelihood of extreme rains in South Asia, a quarter of humanity's area. This global warming has made the monsoon season worse this year for the region particularly Pakistan. Pakistan is a country that has done little to combat global warming and now it is being worsen much due to Global Warming and the Monsoon. The South Asian summer monsoon is part of the regional climate pattern. Mainly from June to September, winds blow from the south-west. This terrestrial wind brings the rainy season. In general, this is usually a good thing for the agricultural activities. Farmers across the region depend on monsoon rains for their crops. But this is not a normal time anymore. Due to global warming, the

water in the oceans is evaporating very fast. And warmer environments can hold more moisture. Hence, heavy rains can occur during monsoon. It will take time for researchers to examine the attribution to determine what happened this summer, but Steven Clemens, professor of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences at Brown University, said Pakistan's plains have caused significant flooding. The country's disaster management agency says that rains have been three times higher this monsoon season in Pakistan. Sindh province, which borders the Arabian Sea to the south, receives five times the average rainfall. The ongoing political instability in Pakistan complicates the task of preparing for heavy rains. In Pakistan, no prime minister has completed his term. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan was also forced to resign in April. He was indicted this month under anti-terrorism laws amid a power struggle with incumbent leaders. The country's difficult economic situation also means that there are not enough resources for adaptation projects. At one point this month, the annual inflation rate

was 42.3 percent. Madiha Afzal, an analyst at the Brookings Institution in Washington, says the heavy rains damaged much due to late response by the government that was already facing economic and political crisis in the country. He further said that the government did not pay attention and not took it serious. "So things that should happen in a disaster, like the message to evacuate people from flood areas, didn't happen." Economic difficulties are also affecting the government's ability to help the house displaced people and rebuild damaged properties, he added. There is a risk of damage to agriculture as well. According to the World Bank, more than 40 percent of Pakistanis are employed in agricultural sector. The United States this month announced almost 1 million dollars for Pakistan to deal with natural disasters. And in September, the country has secured a \$1.3 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund to avoid default. But government officials in Pakistan believe that the damage was caused by a natural disaster that is the result of public sins.

The threat to Pakistan's economic and social fabric

Tayyaba Ishaq



Anti-corruption measures, such as establishing independent watchdog agencies and improving transparency in government operations, are crucial. Additionally, efforts to enhance the rule of law, enforce anti-corruption laws, protect whistleblowers, and prosecute corrupt practices are essential. Civil society can contribute by raising awareness, advocating for reforms, and monitoring government activities. The private sector can promote ethics and integrity, supporting anti-corruption initiatives

PAKISTAN, renowned for its rich cultural heritage, confronts numerous challenges on its path to becoming a developed nation. One of the most pervasive and entrenched issues the country grapples with is corruption. Corruption in Pakistan has escalated to a point where it not only hampers the nation's economic growth but also erodes the social and political fabric. Corruption, broadly defined as the misuse of power or position for personal gain, manifests in various forms, including bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and fraud. In Pakistan, corruption has infiltrated all societal levels, becoming so prevalent that it is now considered a norm. The government institutions in Pakistan lack the strength to curb corruption, characterized by a deficiency in accountability and transparency, allowing corrupt officials to operate with impunity. The historical backdrop of political instability in Pakistan has further fueled widespread corruption. When political leaders prioritize retaining power over combating corruption, the latter tends to thrive. Poverty and income inequality also contribute to corruption, as individuals, struggling to make ends meet, may resort to corrupt activities for additional income. The weak rule of law in Pakistan exacerbates the corruption problem. In the absence of stringent enforcement and an accountable justice system, corruption finds fertile ground to flourish. The consequences of corruption in Pakistan extend far and wide. Corruption significantly impacts the country's economy, undermining investment and creating an unfriendly business environment. This result in lower economic growth, reduced job creation, and diminished prosperity for the people. Moreover, corruption erodes pub-

lic trust in government institutions, paving the way for extremist ideologies. It diverts resources from essential areas, hindering the development of schools, hospitals, and public services. Corruption also discourages foreign investment, depriving the country of potential economic benefits. Addressing corruption requires decisive action from the government, involving the strengthening of institutions, increased accountability, and transparency. Anti-corruption measures, such as establishing independent watchdog agencies and improving transparency in government operations, are crucial. Additionally, efforts to enhance the rule of law, enforce anti-corruption laws, protect whistleblowers, and prosecute corrupt practices are essential. Civil society can contribute by raising awareness, advocating for reforms, and monitoring government activities. The private sector can promote ethics and integrity, supporting anti-corruption initiatives. Educational initiatives, awareness campaigns, and fostering civic responsibility are vital for achieving a cultural shift towards accountability and ethical behavior. International cooperation is indispensable in combating corruption on a global scale. Collaborative efforts with other countries, international organizations, and non-governmental entities can enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption initiatives, particularly in addressing cross-border corruption and money laundering. One crucial strategy for preventing corruption is to provide better salaries for government jobs. Many government employees currently receive low salaries, leading some to resort to bribery to cover their expenses. By offering higher salaries, the motivation and inclination

to engage in bribery would decrease. Another effective approach to curb corruption is to increase the number of workers in government offices. Many offices face a high workload, creating opportunities for employees to slow down work and engage in bribery for faster service. Bringing in more employees would reduce this temptation and help eliminate such corrupt practices. Strict laws play a vital role in combating corruption. It is essential to impose severe punishments on individuals found guilty, coupled with efficient and swift implementation of these strict laws. Implementing surveillance cameras in workplaces is an excellent method to deter corruption. The fear of being caught would discourage many individuals from engaging in corrupt activities that they might have otherwise considered. The government should prioritize keeping inflation low to address the issue of corruption. Rising prices often lead people to perceive their incomes as insufficient, fostering corruption among the masses. Businessmen may exploit this situation by increasing prices, with support from politicians seeking personal gains. The corruption is a significant societal issue that requires prompt elimination. It has become a pervasive problem affecting the minds of many individuals. With consistent political and social efforts, we can strive to eradicate corruption and create a more transparent and accountable society. I thank full to Sir Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer for his invaluable assistance in helping me to write an article. His expertise, guidance and unwavering support throughout the entire process have been instrumental in shaping the article into its final form.

– Student of BS BBIT University of Okara,
Email: ashir8171a@gmail.com

Briefs

Kakar calls for boosting ties with...

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The Prime Minister also expressed deep appreciation for Pakistan's historic ties with South East Asian countries, particularly Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia. He said Pakistan was keen to expand bilateral trade ties with these key countries and sought their assistance in strengthening Pakistan's engagement with ASEAN. Referring to the ongoing situation in Gaza, the Prime Minister stressed the need for dialogue among nations and for intensifying collective efforts to end the violence and bring lasting peace in Palestine. The Prime Minister praised the diplomatic envoys for their efforts to build stronger ties with Pakistan and their respective countries. The diplomats thanked the Prime Minister for sparing time to interact with them and said they would continue to work closely with Pakistan to enhance bilateral relations.

Commission submits 'revealing'...

FROM PAGE 01
The apex court had also asked the federal government to give in writing that there would be no more enforced disappearances in the country. The development came as a three-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilihi, heard the petitions of Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan and others on the unlawful practice of enforced disappearances, praying for declaring it as violative of various articles of the Constitution. In its report, the inquiry commission said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported 3,485 cases of missing persons, making it the highest number in the country. Causalities in drone attacks and the spike in militancy were the key reasons behind the disappearances, read the report.

Pak, KSA, Turkiye discuss...

FROM PAGE 01
collaboration in pursuit of common goals, the military's media wing said. The three sides, as per the ISPR, agreed to convene next meeting on Trilateral Defence Industrial Collaboration during World Defence Show in Riyadh in February. Meanwhile, the third meeting of the Pakistan-KSA Defence Collaboration was also held at the GHQ, Rawalpindi a day earlier. The ISPR said the forum underscored the significance of historical relations between the two brotherly states. Participants discussed issues of bilateral interest and the evolving security environment, it added. The two sides deliberated upon rapid advancements in military technologies and the need for defence industrial cooperation between the two states towards the fulfilment of shared objectives, the media wing said.

Court indicts Imran, Bushra

FROM PAGE 01
comprising Justice Shams Mehmood, Justice Shahid Karim, Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry and Justice Jawad Hassan will take up the petitions on January 12 (Friday). Under the rules governing Toshakhana — a Persian word meaning "treasure house" — government officials can keep gifts if they have a low worth, while they must pay a dramatically reduced fee to the government for extravagant items. The Toshakhana has been under a microscope ever since the emergence of the allegations that Imran Khan purchased the gifts he received as prime minister at throwaway rates and sold them off in the open market for staggering profits. The 70-year-old cricketer-turned-politician was accused of misusing his 2018 to 2022 premiership to buy and sell gifts in state possession that were received during visits abroad and worth more than Rs140 million (\$635,000).



LAHORE: Punjab CM Mohsin Naqvi, along with provincial ministers SM Tanveer, Aamir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, and senior officials, is formally launching the Bhal Safai campaign across Punjab via the Malika Lahore canal. — DNA

Pakistan, Egypt agrees to focus on collaboration

Both parties recognized the mutual benefits that can arise from expanding economic and trade ties between Pakistan and Egypt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Egypt on Tuesday agreed to focus on fostering collaboration in key economic sectors, including agriculture, textiles, engineering, and services. Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries and Investments, engaged in discussions with Ahmed Samir, the Minister of Commerce of Egypt and Chief Guest of the 4th Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference (PATDC) and Single Country Exhibition (SCE), said a press release issued here on Tuesday. Both parties recognized the mutual benefits that can arise from expanding economic and trade ties between Pakistan and Egypt. The meeting, held in the presence of policymakers and business leaders from various countries, facilitated a convergence of diverse ideas and opinions, creating an enriching environment for meaningful discussions. This event serves as a crucial platform aimed at fostering economic ties and exploring investment opportunities

between Pakistan and Egypt. The discussions underscored the commitment of both nations to deepening economic cooperation and leveraging each other's strengths in key sectors. Dr. Gohar Ejaz reiterated Pakistan's commitment to making Pakistani markets accessible to the MENA region. The focus is on achieving this goal by strengthening economic ties with MENA economies, with discussions centred around the potential for collaboration in agriculture, textiles, engineering, and services. This commitment aligns seamlessly with the Look Africa policy, emphasizing Pakistan's objective to unlock its economic and trade potential. The focus is on facilitating investments and making markets more accessible, contributing to the broader goals of economic growth and cooperation. The 4th PATDC and SCE not only serve as a platform for bilateral discussions but also as a catalyst for the exchange of ideas and strategies to enhance economic ties. The event sets the stage for further collaboration, paving the way for increased cooperation and mutual prosperity.



Salah aims to lead Egypt to African glory

SPORTS DESK

CAROL: Serial goal scorer Mohamed Salah, who has conquered the world, Europe and England with Liverpool, is now dreaming of leading Egypt to African glory. He has come agonizingly close twice with his country, being part of the teams that lost the 2017 and 2022 Africa Cup of Nations finals to Cameroon and Senegal respectively. In between reaching those title deciders, hosts Egypt suffered a humiliating last-16 loss to outsiders South Africa that left a 70,000 Cairo crowd speechless. Egypt are among the favorites for the 2024 title in the Ivory Coast as they seek a record-extending eighth title in the premier African sporting event. Drawn with Ghana, Cape Verde and Mozambique in Group B, it is widely expected that Egypt will finish first and qualify for the round of 16.

ICC terms Newlands Test pitch 'unsatisfactory'

The decision, made under ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process, comes after Newlands hosted the shortest-ever completed Test match, with 642 balls bowled in total

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday, gave its verdict on the Newlands pitch, which saw the second Test between South Africa and India conclude within two days. The apex cricketing body rated the pitch 'unsatisfactory' after the low-scoring ICC World Test Championship clash between South Africa and India. The decision, made under the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process, comes after Newlands hosted the shortest-ever completed Test match, with 642 balls bowled in total. ICC Match Referee Chris Broad submitted his report, which expressed the concerns of the match officials, and following the assessment, the Newlands pitch in Cape Town was deemed "unsatisfactory". "The pitch in Newlands was very difficult to bat on," Broad said. "The ball bounced quickly and sometimes alarmingly throughout the match, making it difficult to play shots. Several batters were hit on the gloves and many wickets also fell due to the awkward bounce." In the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process, if a pitch or outfield is rated as substandard, that venue is allocated certain demerit points. One demerit point is awarded to venues whose pitches and outfields are rated by the match referee as unsatisfactory. If a venue reaches six demerit points, it is suspended from hosting any international cricket for 12 months. The penalty is 24 months in case of 12 demerit points.



ISLAMABAD: Mufti Fazal ur Rehman won the second position in Al-Pakistan Allama Iqbal Society Speech Competition held at Iwan Quaid F Nine Park Islamabad. While the first position was taken by Shakirullah, a student of Jamia Arabia Islamia Batal. I pay tribute to the hard work of their teachers. — DNA

Sports vital to control crime in societies: Usman Anwar

Dr Usman Anwer said that Khawaja Junaid Academy would provide free coaching and hockey kits to the children of police personnel, adding that sports camps will be organized for the selection and training of hockey players

DNA

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar has said that sports and constructive social activities were vital to control crime in the society besides improving public service delivery. Speaking at the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony for promotion of hockey at the Central Police Office (CPO) here on Tuesday, he said Punjab Police were playing its role for the promotion of sports and constructive activities in the province, adding the police will play its due role in the promotion of sports culture especially revival of national sport hockey. Punjab Police signed the MoU with Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy (KJHA) for promotion of hockey among children of police employees. IGP Dr Usman Anwar and Olympian Khawaja Junaid signed the MoU. Under the MoU, Punjab Police and KJHA will take joint



measures for the promotion of hockey. Dr Usman Anwar said that Khawaja Junaid Academy would provide free coaching and hockey kits to the children of police personnel, adding that sports camps will be organized for the selection and training of hockey players. The IGP said that Punjab police had been paying due attention on the physical fitness of its personnel, adding Punjab Police won 14 medals in the recent National Games. Olympian Khawaja Junaid said the MoU with Punjab Police would go a long way in revival of hockey and unearthing new talent from within the police department. He said KJHA will organize hockey competitions, workshops and training programmes in collaboration with Punjab Police. DIG Welfare Ghazi Mohammad Salahuddin, AIG Admin Sahibzada Bilal Umar, AIG Operations Dr. Asad Ijaz Mahi, SDPO Gulberg ASP Syedah Shahrbanu, CEO KJHA Junaid Chatta and other officers were present during the ceremony.

PML-N refuses seat adjustment with PPP

FROM PAGE 01
the next government will be a coalition [regime]. In November last year, his father, PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, had also predicted the formation of a "national unity government" after the polls. He was of the view that no single party would be able to secure a two-thirds majority in the upcoming elections. In the presser, Latif said that the party's office-bearers were holding corner meetings in their respective constituencies, adding that the former ruling party's central leadership would kick-start electioneering in a day or two. "I [also] think we should go solo in upcoming Punjab polls." Lauding courts, the PML-N leader sought punishments for those involved in the May 9 riots ahead of the upcoming elections in the country. The May 9 riots were triggered almost across the country after the deposed prime minister's arrest in the £190 million settlement case. Hundreds of PTI workers and senior leaders were put behind bars for their involvement in violence and attacks on military installations. During the protests, the miscreants targeted the civil and military installations including — Jinnah House and the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. The military termed May 9 "Black Day" and decided to try the protesters under the Army Act.

US, UK say Bangladesh polls were...

FROM PAGE 01
elections day. The United States shares the view with other observers that these elections were not free or fair and we regret that not all parties participated," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said from Washington. He urged Bangladesh's government to credibly investigate reports of violence and hold those responsible accountable. The U.K. said the democratic standards were not met consistently in the lead-up to the election. "Democratic elections depend on credible, open, and fair competition. Respect for human rights, rule of law and due process are essential elements of the democratic process. These standards were not consistently met during the election period. We are concerned at the significant number of arrests of opposition party members before polling day," the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said in the statement. The U.S. statement said it remains "committed to partnering with Bangladesh to advance our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, to supporting human rights and civil society in Bangladesh, and to deepening our people-to-people and economic ties." Bangladesh is an important partner of the U.S. interest in the Indo-Pacific region along with neighboring India amid growing influence of China.

Pak 'hopeful' of \$2bln...

FROM PAGE 01
caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has written a letter to UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for the rollover. Two separate deposits will mature during the ongoing month, the sources said, one on January 17 and the other on January 20. They added that the loans were taken on 3% and 6.5% interest. The total amount of loans that the oil-rich Gulf state has deposited with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is \$3 billion, the sources noted. "Hopefully, the UAE will soon roll over the \$2 billion deposits. The Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance are working on the issue," the sources added. The foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank were recorded at a more than five-month high of \$8.221 billion as of December 29, with the government hopeful of a further boost after a loan approval from IMF. IMF has also confirmed its Executive Board would consider Pakistan's request for completion of the first review and release of the second tranche worth \$700 million on January 11 in Washington.

Briefs

Protesters interrupt Biden's speech, demand Gaza ceasefire

CHARLESTON: US President Joe Biden was briefly interrupted on Monday during a speech when several people upset over by his staunch support for Israel in its war against Hamas called out that if he really cared about lives lost. They chanted and shouted, calling for ceasefire in Gaza to help innocent Palestinians who are being killed under Israel's bombardment. The chants of "ceasefire now" were drowned out by audience members chanting "four more years." Biden responded by saying he was working with the Israeli government to reduce its operations in Gaza. Biden was speaking at the Mother Emanuel AME Church, where in 2015 nine black parishioners were shot to death by the white stranger they had invited to join their Bible study. Also on Monday, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman received US Secretary of State Antony Blinken at the Winter Tent in AIUla on Monday. They discussed regional and international developments and efforts being made toward them in order to achieve security and stability, especially the latest developments in the situation in Gaza.—APP

China congratulates BD ruling party on 'successful' election

Beijing : China on Tuesday congratulated Bangladesh's ruling party for its victory in recent elections, after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina secured a fifth term. "China congratulates Bangladesh on successfully holding its national election as scheduled and congratulates the Awami League on winning the election," foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a regular briefing. China "firmly supports Bangladesh in advancing all post-election political agenda items in accordance with the law", Mao said. Beijing was also willing to work with the Bangladeshi government "to further carry forward our traditional friendship on the basis of mutual respect, equality, common benefit, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs", she added.—APP

Kim Jong Un believed to have turned 40

POYANGONG : North Korea's Kim Jong Un has hit the big 4-0 - or at least, that is what people suspect. The leader of the secretive state has never actually revealed his birthday, leaving North Korea watchers to puzzle out when it actually takes place. If they are right, he hit the milestone age on Monday, the same day official pictures were released of him and his daughter visiting a chicken farm. The low-key day stands in stark contrast to those of his predecessors. In fact, the birthdays of his father Kim Jong Il and grandfather Kim Il Sung - large, national celebrations during their time in power - are still marked by holidays to this day. Exactly why the date, suggested to be 8 January, remains a secret is not known. It has been hinted at previously, with North Korean officials thanking then US President Donald Trump for his birthday wishes back in January 2020 - although they did not specify which day. Further evidence of the date had emerged six years earlier, when US basketball player Dennis Rodman sang happy birthday to Kim Jong Un in front of a crowd of thousands. Gilsup Kwak, head of One Korea Center, a website specialising in North Korean affairs, suggests a number of reasons for the silence - not least, his mother Ko Yong Hui, and the fact she was reportedly born in Japan. There is still widespread distrust of Japan - which colonised the region between 1910 and 1945 - in North Korean society, and the link could undermine Kim Jong Un's bloodline claims.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Sign boards installed along the Metro bus route have been mutilated due to which the information mentioned on these boards is no longer readable. The general public has urged the Capital Development Authority (CDA) authorities to take necessary actions to address this issue and improve the situation.—Photo Mudassar Raja

Occupation failed to achieve the goals of war: Haniyeh

Haniyeh stressed that the only way for the Zionist prisoners to leave Gaza alive is to release all our prisoners in the Nazi Israeli occupation prisons

FOREIGN DESK

DOHA: Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau (Palestinian resistance movement), confirmed that the Israeli occupation failed to achieve any of its declared goals of the war on Gaza, whether in eliminating the Hamas movement, recovering prisoners by force, or implementing displacement plans, indicating that these goals came about with American and Western planning and alliance. This is not an Israeli-American aggression, but an American-Israeli aggression. The leader of the movement said during his speech at the conference "Al-Aqsa Flood and the Role of the

Ummah," which was organized by the International Union of Muslim Scholars in the Qatari capital, Doha, that the Al-Aqsa Flood came after three dangerous developments, the first of which was: the marginalization of the Palestine issue locally and internationally, and the second development: the advent of an extremist Zionist government placed at the helm. Its priorities are displacing our people and imposing sovereignty over Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the third development: normalization processes, integrating the occupation into the region, and dealing with it at the expense of our people and our cause. He pointed out that the resistance factions and the Palestinian people, faced



with these developments, decided to confront them with unconventional means, so the Al-Aqsa flood was a glorious day not only in the history of our people, but in the history of the Islamic nation and humanity. Haniyeh stressed that the only way for the Zionist

prisoners to leave Gaza alive is to release all our prisoners in the occupation prisons, and that the Hamas movement exists in Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem and the diaspora and cannot be eliminated, and that the goals of displacement fell before the steadfastness of our Palestinian people. The head of the movement denounced what is happening in the West Bank, pointing out the extent of the seriousness of the enemy's abuse, arrests, and assassinations of our people in the West Bank and the occupied interior. He praised the steadfastness of the resistance factions in Gaza, led by the Al-Qassam Brigades, who inflict daily losses on the ranks of the occupation army, noting that after nearly 100 days of aggression, the

enemy media is still talking about difficult days, because there are men who were true to what they promised God, some of whom died and some of whom are waiting. The head of the movement called on the nation's scholars to form teams and delegations, visit officials in their countries, lead the masses, and talk about Palestine and Jerusalem, the necessity of stopping the aggression against Gaza, and calling for jihad with money. Haniyeh also called on the International Union of Muslim Scholars to issue a special message to the people of Gaza, healing their wounds, supporting their mujahideen, and assuring them of the obligations of the nation's scholars towards them.

China launch triggers air raid alert in Taiwan ahead of election

TAIPEI: Taiwan issued an islandwide air raid alert after a Chinese satellite flew over its southern airspace days before a crucial presidential election. Mobile phone users across the self-ruled island received a message warning them to "be aware for your safety". The "presidential alert" underlined jitters ahead of pivotal presidential and legislative elections on Saturday. China has long claimed Taiwan as part of its own territory and has been accused of interfering in the vote. The self-governing island of 23 million people, is a key flashpoint in the tussle between China and the US for supremacy in Asia. Analysts say the elections will shape the trajectory of ties between Beijing and Washington. The satellite was launched off the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in China's Sichuan province at 15:03 local time, Taiwan's defence ministry said. At about the same time as the alert, China's CCTV announced that a satellite named Einstein Probe had been launched with "complete success". Taiwan's foreign minister Joseph Wu said the launch of a satellite over Taiwanese airspace so close to the election is a "greyzone" activity, Reuters news agency reported.—DNA

Frenchman arrested in Azerbaijan for 'espionage'

Baku has accused France of supporting Azerbaijan's arch-enemy Armenia, both diplomatically and militarily, and of seeking to fuel tensions in the South Caucasus

NEWS DESK

PARIS : Azerbaijan authorities arrested a Frenchman on espionage charges in December, the Azerbaijani ambassador to France told AFP on Tuesday, amid rising tensions and tit-for-tat expulsions of diplomats. Baku has accused France of supporting Azerbaijan's arch-enemy Armenia, both diplomatically and militarily, and of seeking to fuel tensions in the South Caucasus. "Suspected of having committed acts of espionage, Martin Ryan, a French national, was arrested on December 4, 2023,"

said Azerbaijan's ambassador Leyla Abdullayeva. She said judicial authorities had ordered that he be detained for four months. The French embassy in Baku was notified, she added. Ryan's father Richard said the family had spoken to him. "We spoke to him four times, each time for two minutes," he told AFP. "He says he's being treated well and is getting on well with his lawyer." According to his father, Ryan believes his detention is linked to the tensions between the two countries. "Once he told me: 'They wanted to use me as a pawn'," Richard Ryan said. On Tuesday, the Frenchman's court-appointed lawyer, Nizami Aliyev, told AFP that Ryan could face up to 15 years in prison, if convicted. He said he could not share any information and stressed it was "risky to talk about the case." Aliyev also claimed that Ryan had been in contact with French people who he later learned were "agents" of French intelligence. "Martin is not an agent, he is a citizen," the lawyer said. The French embassy in Azerbaijan and the French foreign ministry did not immediately comment. Diplomatic tensions

between Paris and Baku escalated at the end of December, when Azerbaijan ordered two French diplomats to leave the country. France declared two Azerbaijani diplomats "persona non grata" as a reciprocal measure. In November, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev accused France of inciting conflict in the Caucasus by arming Armenia. Azerbaijan and Armenia have in the last three decades fought three wars over the Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was seized by Armenian forces when the Soviet Union fell apart.

Dr. Shamshad leads ECC meeting on economic affairs

ECC was presented with five agenda items of which first summary was from Intelligence Bureau for provision of additional funds of Rs. 250 Million

DNA

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 Privatization and Inter Provincial Coordination Mr. Fawad Hasan Fawad, Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Mr. Sami Saeed, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Dr. Muhammad Jehanzaeb Khan, Minister for Law and Justice, Water Resources and Climate Change Mr. Ahmed Irfan Aslam, Advisor to PM on Finance Dr. Waqar Masood, Federal Secretaries, and other senior government officers of the relevant ministries. ECC was presented with five agenda items of which first summary was from Intelligence Bureau for provision of additional funds of Rs. 250 Million during the current financial year 2023-24. The Intelligence Bureau briefed the committee about recent surge of terrorism which needed effective

counter measures to thwart nefarious designs of terrorists. The Economic Coordination Committee approved the funds as Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) for up gradation, technical enhancement and field activities of Intelligence Bureau with releases on need basis. The summary of Ministry of Industries and Production for approval of mechanism for sale of imported urea at a basket price along with locally manufactured urea was discussed at length. The ECC approved the mechanism for weighted average price with the direction to NFML for ensuring reasonable price for urea and Ministry of Industries & Production to provide oversight to the whole process. The Economic Coordination committee considered and approved the summary of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination for provision of Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) amounting to Rs. 3,568.719 Million in favour of Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI), and urged the provinces to clear their pending liabilities. ECC also considered the summary of Finance Division for signing the addendum to the Subsidiary Grant Agreement

(SGA) regarding financial inclusion & infrastructure project and exemption from re-lending policy of release of funds to State Bank of Pakistan and accorded its approval. A summary from Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination

was also tabled for approval of release of grant for participation of Pakistan's Hockey team in international events and other sports promotion activities. This grant, ECC was told would also be utilised for Davis Cup (Ten-

nis) with India and other mind games like scrabble and chess. The Committee approved provision of additional funds amounting Rs. 100 Million as Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) for FY 2023-24.



ISLAMABAD : Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar chairing a meeting of Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet.

South Africa to win ICJ case against Israel

CAPE TOWN : A seasoned lawyer renowned for his success in genocide cases at the UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) sees a high possibility of South Africa winning its case against Israel, an outcome he believes will entail serious consequences. The ICJ, the UN's top court also known as the World Court, will start hearings this Thursday in The Hague on a case filed by South Africa accusing Israel of genocide, in violation of the 1948 Genocide Convention. The convention defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group." The 84-page suit also asks the ICJ for urgent steps to stop Israel from committing more crimes in Gaza, where its relentless bombardment since Oct. 7 has now killed more than 23,000 civilians, an overwhelming majority of them women and children. Boyle was referring to UN Resolution 377 A (V), called Uniting for Peace, passed in 1950 with the aim of addressing situations where the UN "fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security" because of a Security Council deadlock.—Agencies

Ethiopia, Somaliland discuss military coop post-port deal

ADDIS ABABA : The military commanders of Ethiopia and Somalia's breakaway region of Somaliland have met in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa. The two men discussed military cooperation amid an escalation in tensions between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa after landlocked Ethiopia signed an initial agreement with Somaliland earlier this month that will give it access to the sea through the Red Sea port of Berbera. A statement issued on Monday by the Ethiopian military on Facebook said Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) Chief of Staff Birhanu Jula and General Nuh Ismail Tani, leader of the Somaliland forces, "discussed possible ways to work together on military cooperation." Somalia has rejected Ethiopia's Red Sea port deal with Somaliland, calling it "illegitimate," a threat to good neighbourliness and a violation of its sovereignty. It also recalled its ambassador to Ethiopia after the deal was announced. The Ethiopian government has defended its decision to sign the deal without Mogadishu's approval, saying the agreement with Somaliland "will affect no party or country." Efforts to access to the Red Sea.—APP

Sierra Leone charges 27 soldiers for Mutiny

DNA

FREETOWN : Twenty-seven soldiers were charged with mutiny before a court-martial in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown in connection with their alleged role in a failed coup attempt last year. The soldiers are accused of taking part in a botched coup on Nov. 26, Information Minister Cherno Bah said on Monday. The move came days after former President Ernest Bai Koroma was last week charged with four counts including "treason, misprison of treason and two counts of harbouring" in connection with the incident. On Nov. 26, deadly violence broke out in Freetown, leaving 19 people dead, including security personnel and a civilian. The assailants attacked military barracks and prisons, freeing around 2,000 inmates. The government described the clashes as an attempted coup. The military said several of the attackers were Koroma's former bodyguards. Around 80 suspects were arrested following the incident, including serving military officers and police officers.

Briefs

Macron picks Attal, as France's youngest PM

AGENCIES

PARIS: Gabriel Attal has been named France's next prime minister, as Emmanuel Macron aims to revive his presidency with a new government. At 34, he is the youngest PM in modern French history, outranking even Socialist Laurent Fabius who was 37 when he was appointed by François Mitterrand in 1984. Mr Attal replaces Elisabeth Borne, who resigned after 20 months in office. Throughout that time she struggled with a lack of a majority in parliament. Gabriel Attal, who is currently education minister, certainly makes an eye-catching appointment. He will now have the task of leading the French government into important European Parliament elections in June. His rise has been rapid. Ten years ago he was an obscure adviser in the health ministry, and a card-carrying member of the Socialists. He will also be the first openly gay occupant of Hôtel Matignon. He has a civil partnership with another Macron whizz-kid, the MEP Stéphane Sejourne. But even the difficulties of the president's second term - and the growing challenge from the nationalist right - is "eye-catching" alone going to cut it? Handsome, youthful, charming, popular, cogent, Mr Attal certainly comes to office trailing clouds of glory - much, let it be said, like his mentor and role-model the president himself.

Tribunals reject Fawad, Murad's appeal

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The appellate election tribunals dismissed on Tuesday the appeals of former and serving Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Fawad Chaudhry and Murad Saeed respectively, challenging the rejection of their nomination papers for contesting the upcoming elections. The appellate tribunal of the Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi bench dismissed Fawad's appeal against the decision taken by the returning officer, rejecting his nomination papers from NA 60 and NA 61, Jehlum. The rejection is a significant political setback for the former federal information minister. Tribunal Judge Justice Chaudhary Abdul Aziz, in announcing the decision, sustained all objections against Fawad and upheld the returning officer's verdict. The court revealed that Fawad concealed his wife's bank accounts and foreign trips, failed to submit an affidavit, and also obscured details about his movable and immovable assets.

MQM-P to back Shehbaz in Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Removing all possible hurdles, the MQM-P on Tuesday decided to withdraw its candidate Mustafa Kamal from NA-242 and back the junior Sharif in the February 8 elections, sources say, as the two parties have fine-tuned the complex seat adjustment details in an attempt to stage upset in Sindh - the PPP stronghold. With PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif contesting from the said constituency, the decision was expected after the two sides developed a consensus on the sensitive issue of empowering local governments in Pakistan - the main demand pursued by MQM-P which has remained the main representative of urban population in Sindh since late 1980s. However, the PPP has been resisting the suggestion for the fear of losing political leverage in the politics of Sindh - a stance producing a complete split with the MQM-P after years of close liaison.

Israel intensifies South Gaza genocidal attacks

The US secretary of state has told the Israeli prime minister that his forces must avoid inflicting further harm on civilians in Gaza, the State Department said

NEWS DESK

GAZA: As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 95 on Tuesday, massive aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound neighborhoods and homes and massacre more civilians, mostly children and women. Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to attack different areas of Gaza last night and on Tuesday morning, killing and injuring a number of citizens. According to local sources, a citizen was shot dead by an Israeli sniper in the north of al-Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, while casualties were reported when the Israeli army bombed a house in the same camp. The Israeli army also carried out a spate of overnight aerial and artillery attacks on homes in different areas of Gaza, killing and injuring a number of civilians. Meanwhile, the al-Qassam Brigades says its fighters destroyed an Israeli Merkava tank with an Al-Yassin 105 shell,

south of the city of Khan Younis. Merkava tanks are classified as among the most fortified in the world and the most powerful on the battlefield. East of the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, fighters from the al-Qassam Brigades killed four Israeli soldiers with a locally manufactured rifle called "Ghoul". Meanwhile, King Salman presided over the Saudi cabinet session on Tuesday in Riyadh during which the council of ministers rejected Israel's statements concerning the displacement of Palestinians, the reoccupation of the Gaza Strip, and the construction of settlements. The cabinet underscored the significance of international community efforts to activate accountability mechanisms against Israel's violations of international humanitarian law. Additionally, the council of ministers engaged in discussions regarding initiatives aimed at securing the stability of the oil market. The cabinet expressed commendation for the dedication demonstrated by oil-producing countries (OPEC) in their commitment to stabilizing the market.

Israeli occupation forces (IOF) carried out 12 massacres against families in the Gaza Strip, claiming the lives of 126 civilians and wounding 241 others, over the past 24 hours, the Health Ministry in Gaza revealed on Tuesday. The Ministry of Health said, in a press statement, "The death toll of the Israeli aggression has risen to 23,210 martyrs and 59,167 wounded since the seventh of October." Since then, the Israeli occupation forces have been waging a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, targeting civilians and their homes, destroying large areas of the Gaza Strip, and displacing 90% of its population. Meanwhile, Since October 7, 514 Israeli troops have been killed, 180 of whom died at the hands of the Palestinian Resistance during the Gaza invasion, Israeli media reported. Out of the 1,042 injured Israeli troops in the ground invasion of Gaza, 228 are in critical condition, and 45 have been getting continuous treatment but are also still in critical condition. The numbers come as the Palestinian Resistance defends Gaza from Israeli incur-

sions, resulting in four deaths and six severe injuries in Israeli ranks in the South and Center of the Gaza Strip on Tuesday morning. Israeli media: Over 100 soldiers dead since ground invasion of Gaza. Some others bite the dust. In a related context, Israeli media described Monday as one of the toughest days for the Israeli army in the ongoing war. They reported that nine Israeli officers and soldiers were killed, and others were injured in two attacks during the past 24 hours amid the battles in the Gaza Strip, and that one of the attacks was carried out by detonating an Israeli military truck, resulting in the death and injury of the officers and soldiers. Israeli media also reported that 103 soldiers of the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) have been wounded in confrontations with the Resistance. Of the 103, it was reported that only 19 were wounded in confrontations with the Palestinian Resistance in the Gaza Strip, Haaretz reported. This would leave 84 occupation soldiers wounded outside of the Gaza Strip, meaning either in the West Bank or at the front with the Lebanese Resistance.

Era of dynastic rule must come to end

DNA

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq expressed on Tuesday his resolve to eradicate the interest-based system and corruption from the country. Expressing his thoughts in Lahore, Haq said, "The era of dynastic rule must come to an end. The country cannot afford discrimination." The JI emir highlighted the lack of justice in the courts, stating that no powerful institution can carry out accountability. Taking a jibe at the political opponents, underscoring February 8 as a day of accountability for landlords, feudals, and capitalists. Haq said on Thursday that his party was the "best option" for the masses to cast votes in the forthcoming elections. Expressing his thoughts in Lahore, Haq took a jibe at the political opponents, saying, "The former ruling parties had embraced the politics revolving around the foul language. The rule in this country merely revolves around staging dynastic politics." "The corrupt rulers cannot be bearable in democratic countries. It has been a long time since the politics of the country revolved around the NRO. The politics could have been cleansed if Articles 62 and 63 had been followed," Haq lamented. Earlier, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has issued list of Provincial and National assembly candidates for the upcoming elections on Tuesday. The JI has released the list of national and provincial candidates and issued tickets to 85 percent candidates in national constituencies. JI has announced a list of candidates for 231 national assembly seats.



ISLAMABAD: UNICEF's representative in Pakistan, Abdullah Fadil calls on Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar along with delegation. - DNA

Usman Dar's mother to contest polls from NA-71

LAHORE: The mother of former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Usman Dar, Rehana Imtiaz Dar, will be up against Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Khawaja Muhammad Asif - her son's longtime rival - in the NA-71 Sialkot-2 after her nomination papers were approved by the election tribunal on Tuesday. Following the approval of her nomination papers, Rehana will now be contesting for a seat in the National Assembly during the upcoming general elections, scheduled to take place on February 8. Her papers were earlier rejected by the returning officer (RO) on grounds of grabbing 40-marla land by forgery. The election tribunal, however, heard her appeal against the decision and annulled the RO's decision after which her papers were cleared. Meanwhile, nomination papers of Dar's sister-in-law, Ruba Dar, wife of his brother Umer Dar, were also rejected from the same constituency. It was also stated that the papers of both women were rejected mainly due to the alleged non-payment of Punjab Social Security dues. In December last year, Dar said he would strongly stand by his mother if she was intending to contest the general elections. The politician's comment came after his house was claimed to have been "attacked" by Sialkot Police. - DNA

PTI conducted intra-party polls as per Constitution, PHC told ECP just a 'record keeper', does not have power to revoke electoral symbol, PTI lawyer tells PHC

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) counsel Barrister Ali Zafar Tuesday told the Peshawar High Court (PHC) his party's elections were conducted according to the Constitution. Barrister Zafar's argument came during the hearing of PTI's writ petition challenging the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision declaring the intra-party election as null and void and revoking their symbol 'bat' - a sign that depicts party's founder, Imran Khan's former life of cricket. In a major blow to the former ruling party, the electoral watchdog had last month stripped it of its iconic electoral symbol and declared its intra-party elections unlawful in the decision over a former PTI member, Akbar S Babar's petition, claiming that the party did not stage the elections in line with the rules. The party challenged the decision and subsequently acquired a stay against the ECP order, in a major relief that saw restoration of the party's bat symbol - till a final decision on the petition. The court served ECP a notice and directed the body to upload certificates containing PTI intra-party elections on its website, while scheduling the hearing of the petition by double bench for today (January 9). However, the election watchdog on December 30 filed a review petition in the high court, upon which the court restored the ECP's December 22 order and withdrew the interim relief granted

to the PTI. This prompted the party to moved the Supreme Court against the restoration of the ECP ruling, which has been fixed for hearing on January 11. A two-member bench, comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Arshad Ali, conducted the hearing today in PHC. "We conducted party elections according to the Constitution," Barrister Zafar told the bench. The ECP, he added, declared the party's elections null and void and asked to hold the election again in 20 days. The lawyer maintained that the party abided by the electoral body's decision and also provided Form 65. "The Election Commission said that 14 objections have been received. We said that the objectors want re-election but they are not party members," he added, further highlighting that the party was given 30 questions pertaining to the matter. At the outset of the hearing, the judges expressed displeasure over the absence of PTI counsels Barrister Gohar Khan and Barrister Zafar as they arrived late for the hearing due to fog. Justice Ijaz also pointed out the absence of other parties in the case. However, Barrister Gohar said that the parties have nothing to do with the case. Earlier during the hearing today, the court asked why the PTI was insisting on securing the bat as its electoral symbol for the upcoming elections on February 8. "Why are you insisting on getting bat as an election symbol?" the judge questioned the party's counsel. Responding to the judge's question, the lawyer said that the electoral symbol issued to a certain party will not be given to others.

Court orders freezing properties of Shahzad, Zulfi

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court in Islamabad ordered freezing properties and bank accounts of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Shahzad Akbar, Zulfi Bukhari and other accused in the £190 million case. Accountability court Judge Muhammad Bashir also ordered to confiscate the vehicles registered in the names of accused including former first lady Bushra Bibi's close aide Farah Gogi. Last month, the accountability court had declared the aforementioned accused as proclaimed offender over their failure to join the probe. In today's hearing, the court also issued perpetual arrest warrants for the absconding accused. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on December 1, 2023, filed a reference against PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi and others in the case of £190 million National Crime Agency (NCA), the UK. The other accused named in the reference are Farhat Shezadi (Farah Gogi), Akbar, Bukhari and others. - Agencies

US court hears landmark Trump impunity case

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: A landmark legal case about whether Donald Trump should be immune from criminal prosecution will be heard in Washington on Tuesday. The Republican former president's lawyers will argue that the office of the White House shields him from his 2020 election fraud charges. Mr Trump, who says he will attend, is accused by a special counsel of trying to overturn Joe Biden's victory. The outcome of this hearing could have a huge impact on Mr Trump's future. His lawyers are using the same defence in another set of election charges he faces in Georgia. The issue is likely to end up in the US Supreme Court in the heat of a 2024 election campaign in which Mr Trump is favourite to win the Republican nomination. Prolonged legal wrangles over immunity could delay his criminal trials beyond November's election where he is expected to face Democratic President Joe Biden. The former president has for years cited presidential immunity in his efforts to thwart civil and criminal cases brought against him. The US Constitution makes no mention of presidential immunity, although courts have generally supported the notion that government officials be protected from lawsuits. There is no legal precedent, however, about the criminal prosecution of sitting or former presidents. In legal filings ahead of this hearing, the special counsel prosecuting him, Jack Smith, warned the court that a failure to allow Mr Trump to be prosecuted "threatens to license presidents to commit crimes to remain in office". The immunity defence was rejected by US District Court Judge Tanya Chutkan in December, who ruled

that having served as president does not entitle him to a "life-long 'get-out-of-jail-free' pass". In a social media post on Monday Mr Trump argued that he "wasn't campaigning" when he challenged his election loss by Mr Biden and was acting in his capacity as president in identifying voter fraud. The three-judge panel in Washington DC will hear the oral arguments at the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit but then rule at a later date. The courtroom is just blocks away from the US Capitol, where his supporters rioted to stop Joe Biden from being certified as president in January 2021. To bolster their case, Mr Trump's lawyers will point to his acquittal by the Senate at his impeachment for his actions leading up to that violence. "Nor may a president face criminal prosecution based on conduct for which he was acquitted by the US Senate," says his appellate brief. "The indictment against President Trump is unlawful and unconstitutional. It must be dismissed." A poll by CBS News suggests most Americans believe Mr Trump should not be protected from prosecution for actions he took while president. The criminal trial in this election fraud case is scheduled for 4 March, but is on hold pending the ruling by the appeals court, which has two judges appointed by Democratic presidents and one by a Republican. Whichever way the judges rule, the case is widely expected to end up in the US Supreme Court, where conservatives hold a 6-3 majority. Last month, the top court dismissed a request by Mr Smith to expedite a ruling on Mr Trump's immunity claim. The Supreme Court also ruled last month that it would hear an appeal by Mr Trump against the state of Colorado for barring him from the ballot due to a rarely cited insurrectionist clause of the US constitution.

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