



Islamabad POST

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Palestinian state essential for ME peace: Norwegian FM

Detailed News On Page-07

Jahangir Tareen vows to work under Nawaz

Detailed News On Page-08



Abbott stars as Australia crushes WI

Detailed News On Page-06



No let up in Gaza carnage

Massive Israeli airstrikes kill more Palestinians

At least 27,365 people in Palestine's Gaza have been killed, mostly women and children, since October 7 as Israel launched its brutal war on Gaza, according to the enclave's Health Ministry

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 121 on Sunday, massive aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound neighborhoods, homes and shelter centers and massacre more civilians, mostly children and women. A reporter for the Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to attack different areas of Gaza last night and on Sunday morning, killing and injuring dozens of citizens. According to the health ministry in Gaza, a number of citizens were injured during an Israeli aerial attack on them near Khazindar gas station in the northwest of Gaza. One citizen was reportedly killed by Israeli sniper fire near Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. Several wounded citizens were also evacuated to the Ahli Hospital in Gaza City after they came under Israeli fire at al-Tayaran junction and near the industrial area. Two civilian martyrs were evacuated by other citizens from al-Sabra area in Gaza City after being shot by Israeli forces. Bodies of three civilians were reportedly transported to the Nasser Hospital during the morning hours a result of the ongoing Israeli bombardment in Khan Yunis, south of Gaza. Casualties were also reported after the Israeli army bombed a house belonging to the family of Abu Safar in Hekr al-Jami area in Deir al-Balah City, central Gaza. Two girl children were killed and others were wounded after the Israeli army bombed a kindergarten housing displaced people in the southeast of Rafah. The Israeli army also bombed a house belonging to the family of Masran in al-Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, wounding a number of citizens.

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US-UK assaults 'won't go unanswered': Yemen

FOREIGN DESK

SANA'A: Yemen's Army says the latest wave of airstrikes by the United States and Britain on the Arab country will not go unanswered. Speaking on Sunday, Yemeni Army spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Saree said that the aggressor countries conducted 48 air raids on the Yemeni provinces of Sana'a, Hudaydah, Sa'ada, al-Bayda, Ta'izz and Lahij. "Such attacks will not deter the Yemeni forces and nation from keeping up their support for Palestinians in the face of the Zionists' occupation and crimes," he added. "The raids by the aggressors will not go unanswered." Late on Saturday, the US and UK carried out fresh strikes on Yemen from air and surface platforms, including fighter jets, with the support of Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, and New Zealand.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Humanitarian assistance was dispatched on Sunday for Gaza. Pakistani officials dispatched the consignment in C 130 aircraft from Nur Khan Air Base. - DNA

Pakistan's aid to Gaza continues

The tranche, transported by a Pakistan Airforce C-130 aircraft, marks Pakistan's ongoing commitment

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD, Feb 04 (AP-P): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), following the government's directive, in co-ordination with Al-Khidmat Foundation dispatched fifth tranche of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. The tranche, transported by a Pakistan Airforce C-130 aircraft, marks Pakistan's ongoing commitment to supporting the people of Gaza, a news release said. The officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), NDMA, Pakistan Air Force and representatives of Al Khidmat Foundation attended the send-off ceremony at Nur Khan Airbase on Sunday.

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Electioneering continues

Will bury politics of hate if voted to power: Bilawal

With 'arrows' aimed at all, Bilawal wants voters to back PPP on Feb 8

NAZIR SIYAL

HYDERABAD: With the electioneering reaching its peak just days before the February 8 general elections, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari Sunday fired salvos at all the political parties. Addressing a public rally in Hyderabad, Bilawal urged people to vote for "arrow" - the PPP's election symbol - if they wanted to stop the lion, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) electoral symbol. Stressing the need for hard work, the ex-foreign minister asked the participants: "You just get PPP won [elections]. I will handle this lion." Taking a dig at the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) in the city, once considered the stronghold of the party, the PPP chairman advised the people that if you were asked to vote for "kite" then tell them: "[We] will not vote for those who raise anti-Pakistan slogans". You should say that you would rip apart the kite, he added.

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ANP, MQM join hands against PPP

DNA

KARACHI: In an important electoral alliance ahead of the upcoming general elections, the Awami National Party (ANP) asked their party workers to support the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) in Karachi. Two hostile parties in the port city of Karachi joined hands ahead of general elections. The arch-rivals in the constituency of PS-88 now joined hands as both sides agreed to support each other. As per the sources, the MQM-P delegation visited Mardaan House in Karachi while Mustafa Kamal represented MQM-P, who was welcomed by the delegation and given a warm reception from the ANP. ANP Sindh leadership Shahi Syed and Younas Banuri welcomed

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Qureshi disqualified for 5 years

ECP issues notice in this regard

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The ECP disqualified PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi from contesting elections for five years under Article 63 (1)(h) of the Constitution. In a notice issued by the electoral body, the veteran politician has been disqualified to contest the upcoming general elections set to take place on February 8 next week and subsequent elections. The notification states that the special court established under the Official Secrets Act found Qureshi guilty in the cipher case and for this, he has been sentenced to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and was disqualified under Article 63 (1) (h) of the Constitution.

Siraj urges masses to vote for JI

Jamat-e-Islami to rid country of crises

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq has urged the people to support his party in the upcoming elections on February 8 to end the prevalent corruption in society. He made this remark while addressing an electoral rally in Rawalpindi. The JI chief said the candidates of the party have talked about the problems faced by people. He added that the day of February 8 would bring a sense of hope for the people. He urged the people to give votes to their real representatives so that they resolve the complex problems.

'Battle-hardened' Security forces fully prepared for polls

Police, paramilitary forces, and army will ensure security in first, second, and third tiers, respectively: Solangi

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: With the February 8 elections a few days away amid the prevailing terror wave that has gripped the country in recent months, caretaker Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi Sunday reaffirmed armed forces' readiness to provide security and maintain law and order ahead of the polls. "Our battle-hardened security forces are fully prepared for the elections," Solangi said while briefing the foreign observers and media persons - who have arrived to monitor the elections - in Islamabad. The minister's remarks come as last month, the caretaker federal cabinet, in response to the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) request, approved the deployment of the Pakistan Army and troops of civil armed forces to help the civil institutions in holding free, fair and peaceful general elections. Meanwhile, the military, in its 262nd Corps

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PPP faces backlash amidst Karachi's heavy rain woes

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), led by Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, is facing intense backlash from political opponents as Karachi, the capital of Sindh, witnessed severe traffic jams and multiple power outages during the unprecedented winter rains over the last two days. For the past 15 years, the PPP has been in control of Sindh, including Karachi, but the recent challenges brought forth by the heavy downpour have triggered criticism from rival political leaders. Major thoroughfares in the port city

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Pakistan grieved over demise of Namibia President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government and the people of Pakistan are deeply saddened at the passing of President Hage G. Geingob of Namibia. President Geingob was a visionary statesman, a leading icon of the liberation struggle of Namibia and the chief architect of the Constitution of Namibia. President Geingob will always be remembered for his services to the Namibian nation and his distinguished legacy as a leader of the Global South.

Continued on Page 06

India's Aug 5 actions on IIOJK violate int'l laws

Says Pakistan had consistently maintained that a lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in IIOJK were a blatant violation of international law including the UN Charter, 4th Geneva Convention and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. "India has since been engaged in efforts to further entrench these illegal measures through a series of steps aimed at altering the demographic structure and political landscape of IIOJK," the prime minister said in a message on the observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5. He said that the 'Kashmir Solidarity Day' was annually observed on the 5th February to express Pakistan's unwavering support to the Kashmiri people's just struggle for realization of their right to self-determination. It was also an occasion to pay rich tribute to the sacrifices made by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters during the last seventy-six years,

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Mushaal calls for early settlement of Kashmir dispute

Says under the Modi regime's policy of changing demography of the territory, almost 50 lakh domiciles have been issued to RSS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick has called for resolving the Kashmir dispute at the earliest as situation in the occupied

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FREE ACCOMMODATION

Economy BUSINESS

Business Community announces to support PML-N in elections

President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, announced their support for the PML-N in the coming election

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : The business community of Islamabad during an election meeting organized by Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, announced their support for the PML-N in the coming election. They said that Nawaz Sharif always played a role in the development of the country and provided many facilities to the business community during his regime. They hoped that this time too, he would make the people prosperous and the country developed and solve all the problems of the business community on a priority basis. Speaking on the occasion, PML-N candidate from NA-46 Anjum Aqeel Khan thanked the business community for declaring their support for him and said that his party recognizes the role of the busi-

ness community in the development of the country and always works for their welfare. He said that the business community is the backbone of the country's economy, and assured that the PML-N will address their key issues and will take them along in the decision-making process. He said that Islamabad would be made an IT, medical, and education city. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce said that the business community would work with the PML-N government to make Islamabad a business-friendly, beautiful, and green city. He stressed that PML-N should consult with the business community on important matters of the economy before finalizing policy decisions. He said that the business community would cooperate with the PML-N government to revive the economy and promote trade and exports. Zafar Bakhtawari Former

President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that after the support of the business community, the victory of Anjum Aqeel Khan in the election is certain. He said that the entire business community will vote for PML-N on February 8 to give Pakistan competent and honest leadership. Raja Javed Iqbal President G-9 Markaz, Akhlaq Abbasi President G-10 Markaz, Ahmed Khan President F-10 Markaz, Naem Akhtar Awan President G-11 Markaz, Sardar Tahir Mehmood President Islamabad Estate Agents Association, and Ch. Zahid Rafique Secretary General, Muhammad Nauman President D-12 Markaz, Ms. Afraz Sial, Syeda Aeliya Kazmi others also extended their support. While announcing that the future of the country is related to PML-N and Nawaz Sharif, there is full hope that PML-N will make the country an economic power again and lead it on the path of development.



RAWALPINDI : RCCI President Saqib Rafiq presenting memento to CM Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at the inauguration of Business Facilitation Center.—DNA

Governor emphasizes development of gemstones sector

Significant development can be made possible in this sector

PESHAWAR: With the development of natural resources like minerals, tourism, gemstones, the province can be taken out of the backwardness and made a major contributor to the country's economy, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said during his visit to All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA) in the city of Namak Mandi.

The Governor, during his visit met with the business community dealing in precious stones, representatives of APSIA, the people of the area and urged upon of making a comprehensive planning and police for this valuable sector development that could play a key role in Pakistan economy in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said that economic stability can be brought only by the provision of facilities to all the business community of the province, including those associated with the gemstone sector, and the promotion of business and industry in the province. Significant development can be made possible in this sector, he added. He said, in this context, the business community associated with the Gemstones sector should get the support of students who have graduated from universities who are familiar with modern technology, so that the youth can get employment with the precious stones of the province. — APP

BFC will turn Rawalpindi into a business hub: RCCI

President RCCI said that the establishment of BFC was a long-standing demand of Rawalpindi Chamber which was fulfilled

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has termed that the establishment of Business Facilitation Center (BFC) will transform Rawalpindi into a business hub. It is a key initiative towards ease of doing business (EODB) which will provide seamless interaction between the business community and 36 different departments. Saqib Rafiq, President RCCI, while addressing the opening ceremony of the Business Facilitation Center in Rawalpindi, said that the establishment of BFC was a long-standing de-

mand of Rawalpindi Chamber which was fulfilled, a dream that was fulfilled by the efforts of Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi. Saqib Rafiq further said that the Punjab Chamber of Commerce Coordination Committee established by the Chief Minister had suggested that we should have a one-window facility where there is no red tape but a warm welcome for the investor. Provincial Minister SM Tanveer, Secretary Industries Ehsan Bhatta worked proactively and made the Chief Minister's vision a reality. The joint efforts of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce, Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chata and DGRDA Saif Anwar Jhapa went successful for the establishment of the business center and completed it within the stipulated time frame. He said that this is an important step to facilitate investment and industrialization in the region. This will increase business activities. He thanked the provincial government for the upgradation of and the initiation of other projects including the link road of Rawat Industrial Estate. Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi was the chief guest of the opening ceremony. On this occasion, provincial cabinet members and officials of district administration, officials of Chamber of Commerce, former presidents, president of Small Chamber, Women Chamber.

Khanzada pledges technical college, health facilities

BUREAU REPORT

ATTOCK: Former provincial minister Jehangir Khanzada vows to establish technical college and state of the art facilities for the dwellers of Hazro, if he is selected from the provincial assembly seat PP-1 Hazro. Addressing big public gathering, Khanzada, he said that he would execute a mega development plan for Hazro focusing on the education and health sector. He said that he would try to establish a technical and vocational college besides college for women to equip the youth with the market demanding skill to overcome the menace of unemployment.

Turkish songwriter Turgay Evren debuts "Where is Mercy"

SPAIN : Renowned Turkish songwriter Turgay Evren unveiled his latest composition, "Where is Mercy," at a compelling event hosted by the Kashmir Council Spain. The song, which passionately addresses the struggles faced by the people of Gaza and Kashmir, is a testament to Evren's commitment to raising awareness through evocative lyrics. Turgay Evren has previously penned impactful songs on Kashmir, including "Kashmir Is My Name," "Daimi Bahar" (Turkish, Urdu, Kashmiri), "We Will Never Regret" (Arabic, Urdu, Kashmiri), "I Am Kashmiri," "Only One Man" (Syed Ali Geelani), and

"Jails of Kashmir." Each composition serves as a testament to his unwavering support for the Kashmiri cause and his dedication to shedding light on human rights violations and the plight of those in Kashmir. The event featured distinguished speakers who lauded Turgay Evren for his continuous efforts in advocating for the Kashmir and Palestine causes through his powerful lyrics. Altaf Ahmed Bhat, Chairman of Jammu Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM), expressed deep appreciation and dedication to Turgay Evren for his tireless work in addressing the Kashmir cause, human rights violations,

and the issues faced by the incarcerated in Kashmir through his soul-stirring songs. He highlighted the release of "I Am Kashmir" at an event organized by JKSM in Turkey last year and announced the upcoming release of a new song on 5th August 2024, the lyrics of which are being penned by Turgay Evren. Fahim Kayani, President of Tehreek e Kashmir UK, commended Turgay Evren's valuable contribution to creating awareness about the Kashmir cause globally and acknowledged the profound impact of his songs on mobilizing support for the people of Kashmir.—APP

"Kashmiris' self-determination struggle unstoppable"

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here Sunday said that on Kashmir Solidarity Day, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the provincial government express complete Solidarity with Kashmiri people. He reiterated their resolve to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to them in their struggle to get the right to self-determination. In a statement issued on Kashmir Solidarity Day, Syed Arshad Hussain Shah said

that the right to self-determination was the fundamental right of the people of Kashmir, and their struggle for the same could not be suppressed through oppression by the Indian government, adding that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand side by side their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their just struggle, and will continue to do so until they get their right to self-determination. The caretaker Chief Minister urged upon international community and the human rights organizations to take notice of the Indian government brutalities in occupied Kashmir, and play their due role in giving Kashmiri people their inalienable right to self-determination by getting implemented the resolutions of United Nations in letter and spirit. He maintained that the decades-long struggle of Kashmir people for their freedom is unprecedented all over the world, and hoped that people of Kashmir would soon be able to get their right to self-determination. He condemned the unilateral decision of Indian government of revoking the special status of occupied Kashmir provided in Indian Constitution followed by the locked down imposed by Indian army.

PIAF founders alliance prioritizes LCCI members

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The PIAF Founders Alliance, the ruling group of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI), has reiterated its pledge of continuing to serve the business community with full vigor and passion like in the past, saying the Alliance is a symbol of the unity of the business community. Alliance is fully united and there are no differences in the premier business community group of the provincial capital. It would win the forthcoming election with a thumping majority, as its manifesto stands for services to LCCI members, who want their businesses to grow; opening up LCCI doors to all. These views were expressed in the meeting of the PIAF Founders Alliance held here today with its Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar in the chair. The meeting was attended by all the prominent leaders of the 'PIAF' and 'Founders', including former presidents of LCCI Sheikh Mohammad Asif, Muhammad Ali Mian, Shahzad Ali Malik, Mian Abuzar Shad, Shahid Hasan Sheikh, Tariq Misbahur Rahman, Abdul Basit and acting chairman of PIAF Nasrullah Mughal. The PIAF Founders Alliance Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that the 22-year long Alliance is as strong as a rock and no one can make a rift in this group whose sole aim is to serve the businessmen of all sectors without any biases. The Alliance, like in the previous years, has been working day and night to solve the problems of the business community. The Alliance has always shown action and not just talks. The purpose of the PIAF Founders Alliance is not to criticize for the sake of criticism, but to show its performance by action. The problems of the industrialists and businessmen are the problems of the PIAF Founders Alliance. Senior Member Steering Committee PIAF Founders Alliance Sheikh Muhammad Asif said that there is an ideal unity and agreement in PIAF Founders Alliance, thanks to which the members of Lahore Chamber get passport, identity card, driving license and other numerous facilities. The senior leader of PIAF Founders Alliance Muhammad Ali Mian said that the Alliance has been achieving clean sweep for the last 22 years due to its excellent performance and it will be successful in the upcoming elections this year too with a huge margin. The participants of the meeting expressed full confidence in the leadership of Alliance Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar and Chairman Steering Committee Mian Muhammad Ashraf and the future activities of the Alliance and the country's economic situation were also discussed.

پُر امن عام انتخابات

پوری ذمہ داری کے ساتھ

صوبہ بھر میں پُر امن عام انتخابات کا انعقاد ممکن بنانے کے لئے

حکومت پنجاب کی جانب سے

دفعہ 144 کا انعقاد

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- ہوائی فائرنگ
- الیکشن کمیشن آف پاکستان کے ضابطہ اخلاق کی خلاف ورزی پر مکمل پابندی عائد

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY

Feb 04/Sri Lanka	National Day
Feb 06/N. Zealand	National Day
Feb 06/Uganda	Army Day
Feb 11//Iran	Revolution day
Feb 16/DPR Korea	National Day
Feb 16/Lithuania	National Day
Feb 18/Gambia	National Day
Feb 19/Nepal	Democracy Day
Feb 23/Uzbekistan	National Day
Feb 23/Brunei	National Day
Feb 23/Guyana	National Day
Feb 23/Russia	National Army Day
Feb 23/Tajikistan	Armed Forces Day
Feb 25/Kuwait	National Day

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RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
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Shifa International 4603666

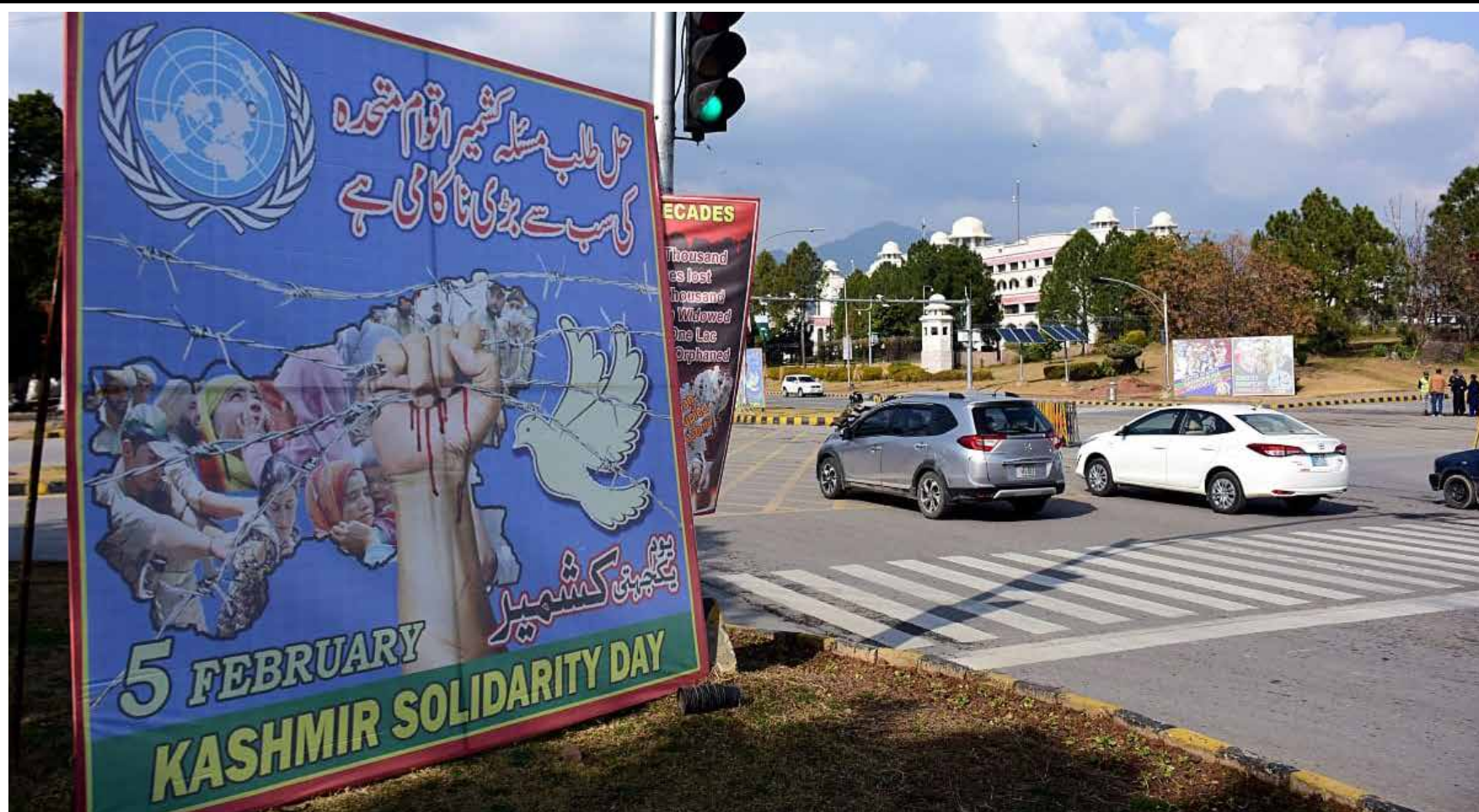


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Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: A view of banners displayed alongside Constitution Avenue in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day in Federal Capital.— ONLINE

Another power tariff hike to put addl burden of Rs 40bn

The Discos have sought the increase to finance the additional financial impact of capacity charges arising out of currency devaluation and the interest rate hike besides the market operator fee, the impact of transmission and distribution losses on fuel cost adjustments, the cost of incremental consumption and variable operation and maintenance charges for the second quarter of the current fiscal year

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: While criticizing the government's decision to make another raise in electricity tariff, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has urged the NEPRA to reverse the decision of hike in power charges, as it has increased tariff of power Distribution Companies by Rs4.56 per unit as part of the December fuel adjustment to recover Rs76 billion from trade and industry. FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that this change in tariff will cause an additional burden of Rs40 billion on consumers. He added that it is unfortunate that during last two months, electricity prices have gone up by Rs8.69 due to fuel price adjustment. In November alone, the electricity tariff was raised by Rs4.13. In just two months, the power tariff raise has put an additional burden of Rs76 billion on consumers. Mian Anjum Nisar said that the requests from these firms have come amid a prevailing inflation rate of 30 percent, suggesting that official estimates of declining inflationary trends might be less forthcoming because electricity and gas rates have a major contribution

to the price baskets. Besides, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has kept its policy rate unchanged at a record 22pc, citing frequent energy price hikes that keep inflation at elevated levels. In their separate tariff petitions, the Discos have sought to rise about Rs81.5bn from their consumers in three coming months under the quarterly tariff adjustment for the October-December 2023 period. This is also on top of about a Rs6.5 per unit monthly fuel cost increase for the billing month of February that currently awaits a decision by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra). The regulator has accepted the respective tariff petitions and has called public hearings on Feb 14 to see if the proposed increase in tariff is justified in line with the quarterly tariff adjustment mechanism. The quarterly adjustments for Discos now also apply to K-Electric consumers as well under recent government and regulator decisions. The Discos have sought the increase to finance the additional financial impact of capacity charges arising out of currency devaluation and the interest rate hike besides the market operator fee, the impact of transmission and distribution losses on fuel cost adjustments, the cost of incremental consumption and variable operation and maintenance charges for the second quarter of the current fiscal year. At present,

the consumers are paying about Rs3.28 per unit QTA for the fourth quarter of the last fiscal year that would remain applicable for six months – from October 2023 to March 2024 – to mop up more than Rs200bn from power consumers across the country, including those of K-Electric. Another QTA for July-September 2023 is also being charged to consumers at the rate of Rs1.15 per unit for the billing period of January to March 2024 to raise another Rs22.3bn. Under the petitions, the Disco from Lahore has demanded the highest claim of Rs15.1bn, followed by Rs14.9bn by Multan Electric, Rs11.6bn by Peshawar Electric and Rs11bn by Quetta Electric. These are followed by a Rs9.45bn claim filed by Faisalabad Electric, Rs6.92bn by Islamabad Electric, Rs3.5bn by Hyderabad Electric, Rs3.5bn by Tribal Electric, Rs2.9bn by Sukkur Electric and Rs2.7bn by Gujranwala Electric. The biggest chunk of additional cumulative burden on account of capacity charges has been claimed by Discos at Rs75bn for the quarter, followed by Rs10.8bn on account of the uncovered impact of transmission and distribution losses and Rs6.6bn on account of the use of service charges and market operator fee. On the other hand, Discos have offered Rs8.7bn worth of negative variable

operation and maintenance charges and Rs2.34bn worth of impact of incremental sales, thus working out a cumulative net additional demand of Rs81.5bn. On approval, the adjustment would be recovered on a uniform basis from all consumers except for lifeline users. The BMP chairman said the government's decision to increase the electricity tariff is anti-industry, and the BMP strongly condemns the government's move and calls on it to rescind it. He urged the power ministry to identify system constraints and communicate targets to all concerned departments in order to launch a wartime effort to upgrade the transmission system. It is to be noted that the authority conducted the hearing in the matter on November 29, 2023, wherein the data submitted by the CPPA-G came under scrutiny. According to reports, the NEPRA reviewed the request by CPPA-G seeking monthly FCA and due diligence was done accordingly. From perusal of the information so provided by CPPA-G, the actual pool fuel cost for the month of October 2023, as claimed by CPPA-G, is Rs11.4277/kWh, against the reference fuel cost component of Rs7.8938/kWh. The actual fuel charges, as claimed by CPPA-G, for the month of October 2023 increased by Rs3.5339/kWh as compared to the reference fuel charges.

All set to observe Kashmir solidarity day in befitting manner on Monday

RAWALPINDI: All is set to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day here on Monday in a befitting manner, said a district administration spokesman. He said that Kashmir Solidarity Day would be observed on Feb 5 to express wholehearted support of the Pakistani nation to the just struggle of Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination. He informed that like other parts of the country, all arrangements had been finalized to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day here to reiterate complete solidarity with the brethren of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K). India was keeping a major part of the internationally acknowledged disputed Himalayan Jammu Kashmir state in her illegal and forced occupation at the night of her occupational military power since October 27, 1947, against the aspirations of the people of the State. The spokesman said that it would be a public holiday and preparations were in full swing to observe the Day to highlight the plight of the oppressed Kashmiri people and remind the world community of its obligations towards the resolution of the long-standing dispute. He informed that rallies, public meetings, and seminars would be held on Monday to draw attention of the world community towards grave human rights violations and brutalities against innocent Kashmiris by the Indian security forces. The banners highlighting the plight of innocent Kashmiris had been put on display at all important points and roads, he said adding that the Education Department was also organizing special programmes in educational institutions to draw attention towards the Kashmir issue which could not be settled down despite the clear-cut resolutions in favour of innocent people of the IIOJK. Like other parts of Pakistan, the preparations had begun in Rawalpindi city to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 to reiterate complete solidarity with the brethren of IIOJ&K state.—APP

Traffic plan being implemented to facilitate tourists in Murree

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Murree, Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, has said that the traffic management plan is being implemented to facilitate tourists and avoid gridlock on the roads of Murree. He said that 13 tourist facilitation centers were established at different places in Murree, and a control room had also been made fully functional. The DC said that the district administration had made excellent arrangements to promote tourism in the region besides helping and assisting the tourists. A large number of tourists visit 'Queen of Hills', Murree, to enjoy the snowfall in winter, he said, adding that solid steps were taken by the district administration to provide assistance and guidance to the tourists. He informed me that on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta, the administration was ensuring strict implementation of the Murree Contingency Plan to facilitate the tourists. All the machinery, along with the drivers, was available around the clock during the snowfall season, he said. According to the Murree Contingency Plan, additional staff has been provided to traffic police and related departments. He said that the role of traffic police is most important to regulating the traffic in Murree. Entry of the vehicles would be allowed according to the parking capacity in Murree, he informed. The management had completed all its arrangements for the snowfall season, and the staff and officers would not be allowed to remain absent from their duties, he warned. Facilitation centers at various locations in Murree, including Satara Meel, Lower Topa, Jika Galli, GPO, Kashmir Point, Kuldana, Kali Mitti, Masiyari, Sindhan, Sunny Bank, Bhorban, Thanda Jungle, and Saharbagla, had been set up to guide and assist the tourists, the DC said. Public service messages were being displayed on SMDs to spread awareness among tourists, he informed. The DC further said that a 24/7 helpline is available to guide tourists and keep them updated about the weather and traffic conditions. The vehicles entering the city would be monitored through digital counting at the 17-Meel Toll Plaza. 26 CCTV cameras had also been installed to monitor traffic and other administrative matters, he added.—APP

How to become a successful person

GHAZALA ANBREEN

The experiences of life are in fact a great lesson to make one understand about many things. Among one of such is the success factor. As a human being advances in age, he gets to come cross the true facet of life and the reality of life unfolds telling him what to avoid and what to accept and adopt in order to live a better quality life. A life full of serenity and contentment and above all a successful one. There is also no doubt that a suitable level of finances everybody would be needing to live a decent life no matter how much saintly qualities may be found in him. In today's world of post information, it would be indeed a hard bargain to

live like a stoic. We as social beings cannot but desist from being influenced by all that is happening around us. As Aristotle said, "But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god" Hence all of us ought to know about the qualities befitting a successful person. Successful people do not complain. They do not grumble. They do not shift blames on others. They are punctual. They are industrious and devoted to a cause, a cause to make this world a better place for living in. They do not backbite or speak ill of others. They would rather take it as equal to wasting away their positive energies. They are also not curious about knowing what the other people are up to.



This 5th February, we renew our steadfast support for the Kashmiri people in their struggle against the unjust Indian occupation. Our solidarity knows no bounds; it echoes through our hearts, ethical principles and political dedication.



PID(I)4710-D/23 Government of Pakistan

Briefs

Information ministry launches media helpline

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday said the information ministry had launched an exclusive helpline for local and international media to cover the general election scheduled for February 8. "Ministry of Information and Broadcasting launched 'Media Helpline-MoIB' mediahelpline.moib.gov.pk," said the minister in a post on X formerly Twitter. According to him, it was a dedicated online platform exclusively developed for local and international journalists and media persons to cover the General Election of Pakistan 2024. "It will help in lodging online complaints while covering election activities through mobiles, laptops, and other devices," the minister added.

Death anniversary of famous novelist

ISLAMABAD: The seventh death anniversary of famous Pakistani novelist, playwright, short story writer and spiritualist Bano Qudsia was observed on Sunday. Born on November 28, 1928, in Ferozpur, Bano Qudsia was married to one of Pakistan's finest writers Ashfaq Ahmed. Qudsia's novel "Raja Gidh" is considered a modern Urdu classic. Among her more prominent writings are "Aatish-i-zeri-paa", "Aik Din, Asay Pasay", "Chahar Chaman", "Chhotaa Sheher Baray Log", "Footpath ki Ghaas", "Haasil Ghaat" and "Hawa Kay Naam". The most well-known plays she wrote include "Aadhi Baat", "Tamasil", "Hawa ke Naam", "Seharay and Khaleej". She was honoured with Sitara-i-Imtiaz by the Government of Pakistan in 1983. Bano Qudsia died on February 4, 2017, in Lahore, at the age of 88. —APP

Election campaign in full swing in Rawalpindi division

RAWALPINDI: The election campaign is in full swing in Rawalpindi division, five districts, Rawalpindi, Murree, Attock, Jhelum and Chakwal for upcoming general elections scheduled to be held on February 8, while the political parties and the independent candidates are struggling, eyeing their share in the future power arrangements that would emerge after Feb 8 elections. 934 candidates of different political parties and independent contenders are in the run and all the candidates have also started popping up hangers and posters with their election symbols in all streets and roads of the division. In the upcoming general elections, a total of 934 candidates are contesting for 13 National Assembly and 26 Punjab Assembly seats of the division. Approximately 729,617 voters will use their right to franchise in electing 93 representatives for both national and provincial assemblies. Several prominent political figures, including Speaker National Assembly and former Prime Minister, Raja Pervez Ashraf, former Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, Ghulam Sarwar Khan, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, and Hanif Abbasi, are among the seasoned politicians contesting for seats in the assemblies. A total of 284 candidates from various political parties, including independents, are contesting for the 13 seats in the National Assembly. Meanwhile, for the 26 Constituencies of the Punjab Assembly, 650 candidates are competing to represent these constituents in the assembly. The corner meetings, hoardings, banners and door-to-door visits are the traditional ways for convincing the citizens before elections and all these activities have gained momentum in Rawalpindi division before the general elections. —APP

Pakistan urged to swiftly develop maritime policy

The session was addressed by Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Ambassador (r) Nadeem Riyaz, president, IRS, Dr Qamar Cheema, executive director, Sanobar Institute, Dr Nazir Hussain, former dean, School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR), Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: It is high time that Pakistan takes decisive steps towards developing its maritime policy to respond proactively to increasing Indo-Pacific geopolitical complexities and harness the potential of its coastlines. Along with this, Pakistan must prioritize its internal coherence, align its national priorities, and create awareness among the masses about the maritime domain.

This was highlighted by speakers at the book launch ceremony of 'Maritime Security: Challenges & Responses in a Changing World,' authored by Vice Admiral Iftekhar Ahmed Rao (retd), Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Maritime Affairs, and published by IPS Press, the publishing arm of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The event was organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad. The

session was addressed by Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Ambassador (r) Nadeem Riyaz, president, IRS, Dr Qamar Cheema, executive director, Sanobar Institute, Dr Nazir Hussain, former dean, School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR), Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Rear Admiral (r) Syed Faisal Ali Shah, and moderated by Dr Salma Malik, associate professor, QAU. The event brought together a distinguished group of speakers and scholars. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz commended the book's comprehensive examination of the vast maritime domain, emphasizing its potential to shape Pakistan's future maritime policy, the significance of which is increasing vastly. Nazir Hussain lauded Vice Admiral Rao for turning a practitioner's knowledge into theoretical form. He highlighted the practicality of the book's insights, suggesting its inclusion as a textbook

in undergraduate programs. He discussed that unlocking and safeguarding the inherent potential of Pakistan's maritime domain and coastlines necessitates a cohesive national endeavor, which requires education and awareness. Qamar Cheema said that the global discourse extensively focuses on the Indo-Pacific, and the major countries have even developed their Indo-Pacific policies, while Pakistan is yet to take strides in this direction. He stressed that the current international dynamics in the Indo-Pacific demand a more proactive response from Pakistan, given its strategic coastline. It is imperative to explore new strategies and harness the potential of this coastline effectively. He highlighted that media can be pivotal in positively educating the public. Faisal Ali Shah said although Pakistan is committed to collective maritime security, sea blindness prevails. This necessitates creating awareness about the maritime

assets of both the Sindh and the Makran coasts. Moreover, as no country can mitigate such challenges alone, Pakistan needs to maintain its engagement, cooperative arrangements, and openness to new alliances. A comprehensive government approach to leverage maritime opportunities is also imperative, he added. Introducing his book, Vice Admiral Rao highlighted the intricate geopolitical complexities evident in recent maritime developments in the Indo-Pacific. Specifically, India is viewed as a net security provider, while its actions in the region are critiqued as potentially problematic. He emphasized that Pakistan must take a step ahead, and for that, developing a maritime policy, maintaining internal coherence, and rightly setting national priorities are important. In his concluding remarks, Khalid Rahman said that the global significance of the sea as a common resource is underscored by its

role in maritime security, which revolves around four key factors: the marine environment, economic development, national security, and human security. This book has significantly acknowledged the interconnectedness of these factors. He said that almost all the conflicts between nations throughout history and even in the current period are manifestations of seeking supremacy on the seas. The book provides a comprehensive look at the multifaceted domain of maritime security. It defines the sector's historical background while navigating the evolution of the concept of maritime security, challenges, and solutions that define this evolving landscape. Furthermore, the book explores the maritime security strategies of various regions and countries. It also discusses Pakistan's maritime aspects and the contours of its economic and military security strategies.

Foggy and misty weather in the Capital

ISLAMABAD: After playing havoc with people of plains, this foggy and misty weather also engulfed the iconic federal capital and mesmerizing mountain ranges with treasures of history and primeval civilizations. The rain fed region of Pothohar Plateau this season witnessed an unprecedented spell of perpetuated foggy days since the onset of winters that is being attributed to a complex mechanism of multiple atmospheric dynamics and large-scale inversions in the weather patterns. The intricate problem requires a lucid explanation to grasp the gist of matter as 'Fog' is formed when air cools to dew point, the temperature at which water vapor condenses into tiny droplets. This cooling of air is influenced by radiative balance, wind speed, humidity and topography of the land. The air pollution, consisting of aerosols and particulate matter from various sources like biomass burning, industrial emissions and vehicular exhaust, acts as nuclei for condensation of water vapor and reduces visibility by scattering.—APP



ISLAMABAD: PM Adviser on Human Rights Mashal Malik addressing a seminar held in connection with Kashmir Day. Photo Mudassar Raja

High fuel prices push inflation to over 38%: DFPA

ISLAMABAD: The Disposable Food Packaging Association (DFPA) has warned the record inflation and high cost of doing business continued to hurt economic growth, demanding a careful policy to keep it in control, as weekly inflation has surged to new highs for the third consecutive week. Quoting the data, the DFPA President Ahsan Shahid revealed a year-on-year increase of 38.66 percent in short-term inflation for this, marking an alarming trend in rising prices. The ongoing depreciation of the Pakistani rupee, coupled with soaring petrol prices, sales tax burdens, and mounting electricity bills are identified as the primary contributors to the persistent inflationary trend. But the most important factor contributing to inflation is the steep increase in petroleum products. These price hikes have led to elevated transport costs and have subsequently driven up the cost of moving goods, affecting consumers across the country. Ahsan Shahid said that to meet local demand, Pakistan has become increasingly reliant on imports of essential vegetables, including tomatoes, onions, and potatoes, primarily sourced from neighboring Afghanistan. The SPI basket, comprising 51 essential items, demonstrated notable fluctuations. Prices of 22 goods soared, 11 experienced price drops, and 18 remained unchanged compared to the previous week. Key items that witnessed substantial price increases compared to the same week the previous year include electricity charges, gas charges, rice, sugar, wheat flour, and more.—DNA

Chinese and Pak varsities to establish Civil Aviation school

The collaboration extends beyond establishing the school, with plans for faculty and student exchange programs, joint research

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The University of Sargodha (UoS) and the Civil Aviation University China (CAUC) have agreed to explore cooperation av-



enues and establish a Civil Aviation School at UoS in Punjab. During his visit to China to attend the First Forum on Asian Development at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, UoS Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas, met with the President of CAUC. The meeting aimed to foster international collaboration and educational advancement in aviation. An official statement revealed that Dr. Abbas's proposal received enthusiastic support from the CAUC President, initiating a significant partnership in aviation education. The collaboration extends beyond establishing the school, with plans for faculty and student exchange programs, joint research, and organizing conferences, seminars, and workshops. Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas expressed gratitude for the warm reception and the mutual commitment to enhancing aviation education and research, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

Power suspension schedule

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 06th February 2024, From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Diplomatic Enclave, Orchard Scheme, CDA Pump, G-8 Markaz, Marvi, F-6 Blue Area, Zia Masjid, Highway, Karpa, Chhata Bakhtawar, F-10, G-9/3, I-8/3, I-10/2, Mira Jaffar, SCHS Services, Rahra, CM Pak Zong, Isolation Hospital, PHA-1, Pindi Point, Kurri, Gharidal, MCM, Kotli Satian, Balawara, Treat Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Ghousia Colony, PTCL, Hydari Chowk, Etfendi Colony, Sadiqabad, Kurry Road, Nora Road, Muslim Town, Sector 4, Tamasma. Abad, Liaquat Bagh, Gulshanabad, Sarafa Bazar, Jinnah Road, Westridge, Gulzar Shaheed, Bani, Tench Bhata, New Race Course, Kamalabad, Bhadana, Pandhoo.—APP

China funds three projects in Turbat for education and health

ISLAMABAD: Funded by the Chinese government, three significant initiatives in education and health were unveiled in Turbat, the historical capital of Makran and the second-largest city in Balochistan. Commissioner Makran, Saeed Ahmed Umrani, officially inaugurated three projects under the Government of Balochistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. The first initiative, valued at Rs 5 million, includes providing solar panels and computer systems to the Government Girls Model High School in Turbat. A library equipped with solar panels and a computer lab was also established at Turbat University, alongside the construction of parking sheds for school buses and vehicles. At the event, Zumurd Wahid, the Principal of Government Girls Model High School in Turbat, Director of Education Abdul Ghafoor Dashti, and various staff members expressed their gratitude towards the Chinese government. —DNA

Income disparity in Pakistan

ALI ASHIF SINDHU

In the heart of Pakistan, a silent storm brews, caused by economic inequalities rather than natural forces. This land, rich in culture and history, is today seeing a deepening divide, an income disparity that not only defines the lives of its people but also dictates their destiny. This story of inequality is more than just a statistic; it is a narrative of conflicting reality. Imagine walking through the centre of Lahore, where dazzling malls and fancy cars reflect the affluence of a few people. Beyond these magnificent emblems lies a different reality. In the narrow and shadowed passageways, families struggle with poverty, their hopes diminishing beneath the weight of economic inequity. The streets

of Karachi, bustling with energy, hide beneath them the shadows of disparity. This disparity is not a coincidence; it reflects a severely impaired system. The situation is significantly worse in rural areas. The core of Pakistan's agricultural industry, small farmers, confront constant obstacles like outdated technology, poor infrastructure, and restricted market access. Their suffering is routinely disregarded, and the roar of urban expansion muffles their voices. The figures are dismal and instructive. According to current figures, Pakistan's richest 10% own about 40% of the total wealth, while the bottom 40% live on a meagre 17%. This gap is more than simply numbers on a page; it represents millions of people trapped in a cycle of poverty,

denied basic human rights and opportunities. This discrepancy has multiple causes, including decades of political unrest, uneven economic policies, and a poor educational system. The children of the wealthy receive world-class education in top schools, preparing them for prominent universities and high-paying employment. In stark contrast, millions of children from low-income households are denied even basic schooling, stifling their potential from the beginning. This inequity is further aggravated by the shadow of corruption. The wealth gap grows as a result of opportunities and resources that are frequently misdirected or diverted by unethical behaviour. Resources intended for development and reducing poverty seldom

reach those in need owing to a lack of democratic oversight and accountability. The pressing issue of income disparity in Pakistan raises a profound question of accountability: Whose responsibility is it to bridge these huge economic divides? This is not only a matter for policymakers and government officials; it is a communal call to action for all members of society. This dilemma weighs heavily on all of us, from business executives and academics to civil society and individual citizens. How we answer this topic, via our actions and pledges, will shape our country's destiny. It is a responsibility that we must accept with urgency and dedication in order to ensure a more equal and prosperous Pakistan for future generations.

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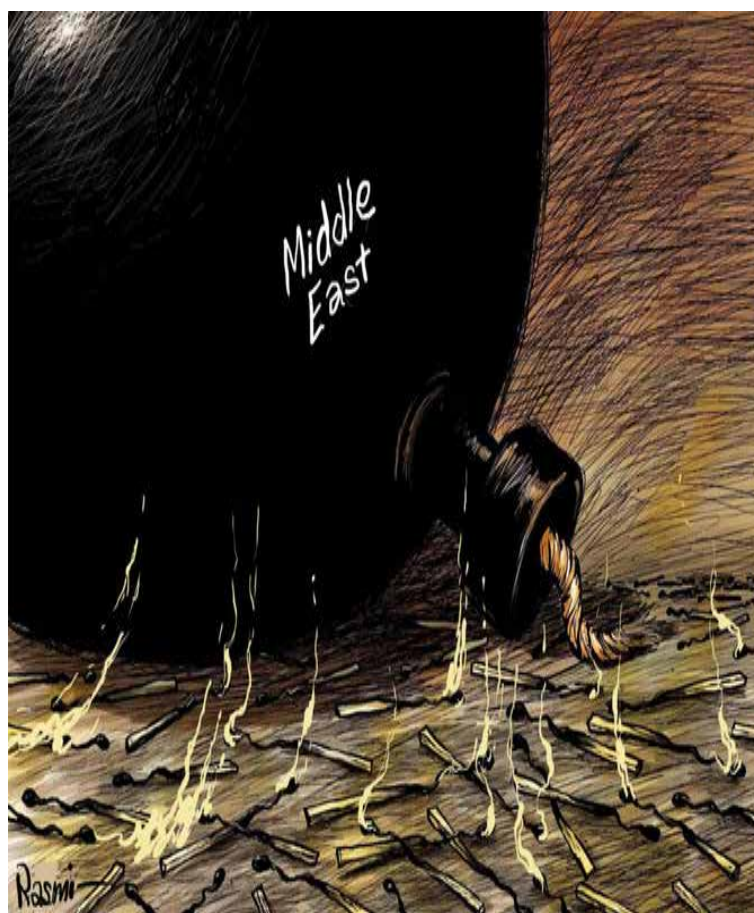
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The view on Labour's £28bn green deal

Sir Keir Starmer promised that his green prosperity plan would be a manifesto commitment ahead of the next election. Labour's proposal was to be the centrepiece of its economic offer to generate growth, create well-paid, secure jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It was striking, exciting and popular. In mid-January, the party leader told the media Laura Kuenssberg that spending £28bn by the end of the next parliament would make the UK secure in energy and lower household bills. If a week is a long time in politics, then a fortnight might be called an era. Sir Keir's plan appears to have gone up in smoke. If so, that's bad news for the environment and the economy. Inadequate public and private spending is holding back growth while there is a crying need for investment to decarbonise the UK. Other countries are already eyeing up the opportunities. New green industries could be worth \$10tn to the global economy by 2050. Britain risks being left behind. At the turn of the year, on Sky News, Sir Keir said that "if the [Tories] want that fight on borrow to invest, I'm absolutely up for that". To his credit, the Labour leader has turned up at the crease to face bouncers delivered by the Conservatives. But he's cut a lonely figure on the field. The gap between the Labour leader and his Treasury team was laid bare on Friday by Darren Jones, whom Sir Keir appointed to control the party's public spending. Mr Jones conspicuously didn't mention the £28bn figure. He said the party's green policy was not going to drive economic growth, but instead would be dependent on it. This was not just a change of policy, but a change of thinking. Green measures, on this argument, would be funded not by borrowing, but by an expanding financial services sector. This fits with shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves' embrace of the City. This week she ruled out wealth and windfall taxes and said there would be no Labour cap on bankers' bonuses. By championing a light touch regulatory regime for the Square Mile and refusing to raise benefits, Ms Reeves risks stoking a banking bubble while poverty rates are rising. Labour won't get Britain growing by sticking to failed Tory policies. Rather, dropping the £28bn pledge would irritate the party base and prove Tory attacks right. It would also erase a key dividing line. The Tories would continue to assail Labour, asking where the money will come from to pay for its £6bn commitment to insulate 19m homes. The government wants to contrast its tax cuts in a forthcoming budget with specious claims that Labour spending will mean higher taxes. Ministers won't desist because Sir Keir has conceded the headline policy. The opposition's fiscal rules are self-imposed restraints meant to suggest Labour is responsible. But what is more irresponsible than ditching a green industrial plan in the middle of a climate emergency? Labour will look pusillanimous if it simply accepts the Tory argument that its spending is unaffordable. Public investment can boost the economy by more than it increases public debt. Labour will not finalise its manifesto until next Friday. Sir Keir has a bold plan which requires the radical in him to triumph over the calculating politician. That demands courage. But voters want to know that Labour will change the country for the better rather than just muddling on.



The list of Brexit wins is in. It's short and feeble

In the run-up to the 2016 referendum, Conservative campaigners sold Brexit as the answer to all of the country's problems. Leaving the EU would transform the UK's economic prospects, making us all richer. It would free up money to spend on the country's public services, most notably the NHS. It would restore control over the country's immigration system, helping to reduce migration levels. Four years after Britain left the EU, and this Brexit manna is still yet to transpire. Little surprise: the campaign for Brexit remains perhaps the most dishonest political movement this country has ever seen. It is true that the referendum result itself did not push the UK into recession as then-chancellor George Osborne predicted. But none of the false promises has materialised. Brexit has left the UK poorer in the long term, and the deal negotiated by Boris Johnson pushed Northern Ireland into a damaging political stasis. Of course that has not stopped the government claiming it has been an unrivalled success. Last week, the Department for Business and Trade published what can only be described as political propaganda, consisting of cherry-picked statistics to create the illusion that four years on, Brexit has delivered nothing but benefits. This document reflects the depressing reality that today's Conservative party is very much the political successor of the official campaign to Vote Leave, which lied to voters that Brexit would not involve painful trade-offs, engaged in a "clear misuse of official statistics" for deploying the false claim that leaving the EU would free up £350m a week for the NHS and which implausibly suggested that staying in the EU would mean sharing a border with Syria and Iraq. We are to believe that the UK's economy has been re-engineered for the better because of a collection of free trade deals, the vast majority of which simply replace those the UK had access to via the EU anyway: the UK's accession to the trans-Pacific partnership, estimated by the government to be worth only 0.06% of GDP by 2040; and a handful of "global trade wins" that include greater access to the Mexico market for pork producers, and improved access to the Chinese beauty market, which has nothing to do with Brexit according to the British Beauty Council, and is far outweighed by the £850m it says the beauty industry has lost as a result of leaving the EU. In presenting such an incomplete picture, this official government document is highly misleading. It is the most basic of economics that you cannot evaluate the impact of a policy like Brexit on a country's economy without looking at both its costs and its benefits; to list only one side of the balance sheet is worse than useless. The overall impact of Brexit on the economy has been to make us much poorer. Analysis from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research estimates that at the end of last year, GDP was between 2% and 3% lower than it would have been had the UK not left the EU; the equivalent of an £850 per person loss in national income, rising to £2,300 per capita by 2035. Erecting trade barriers with our biggest and closest trading partner to chase free trade deals with smaller economies on the other side of the world could never pay off. Moreover, levels of business investment are down 30% compared with its pre-referendum trend.

2024 is one of the most important years in Azerbaijan

Adil Aliyev



The integration into the world market. The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is a prominent and modern statesman recognized throughout the world, he made great efforts for Azerbaijan and the people of our country. Today, as a result, Azerbaijan flourishes day by day. He continues to build upon Heydar Aliyev's strategies actively and creates others. President Ilham Aliyev has had success in implementing different policies on the world stage. He took part in the implementation of economic reforms in the

In 2023 Azerbaijan hosted the main conference of SPECA which celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. And President Ilham Aliyev unveiled Azerbaijan's potential and investment strategic plan. Now more than ever, our country has a strategic role from the East to the West and is located on the Silk Route. Obviously, it requires highways and other infrastructure, and Azerbaijan has constructed them, and today these policies play an important role in attracting investment to Azerbaijan.

The integration into the world market. The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is a prominent and modern statesman recognized throughout the world, he made great efforts for Azerbaijan and the people of our country. Today, as a result, Azerbaijan flourishes day by day. He continues to build upon Heydar Aliyev's strategies actively and creates others. President Ilham Aliyev has had success in implementing different policies on the world stage. He took part in the implementation of economic reforms in the country, and the expansion of economic and cultural ties of independent Azerbaijan with foreign countries. President Ilham Aliyev played an important role in the integration of the Republic of Azerbaijan into the world market. Many fields of our economy are attractive to foreign investors from different countries, and this business friendly environment encourages them to invest in Azerbaijan. Moreover, today Azerbaijan is the guarantor of Europe's energy security and provides some parts of Europe with gas. Climate Change Conference Azerbaijan regularly hosts various forums, organizations, events every year. Our country hosted Eurovision Song Contest, the First European Games, the 4th Islamic Olympic Games, and other events. This year Azerbaijan will host COP29 by securing the votes of countries and it is an example of the high trust shown to Azerbaijan. It is a big responsibility to host

such kind of event, which is globally important and each country attaches great importance to this event. There is no doubt that our country will host COP29 at the highest level. COVAX and other initiatives President Ilham Aliyev is the main guarantor of our country's success and his policies focus on the development of Azerbaijan. Also, Ilham Aliyev has many diplomatic tasks and he is well-known in the world as an intellectual, noble leader. Azerbaijan has constantly raised the issue of fair distribution of vaccines among the countries of the world in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. President Ilham Aliyev focused on this problem during his speech at the thematic discussions of the UN General Assembly. He expressed his support and welcome the COVAX Facility, the COVAX Advance Market Commitment Forum, and other related constructive initiatives that serve to ensure affordable, equitable, universal, and timely access. In this context, it should also be noted that President Ilham Aliyev effectively represented the Non-Aligned Movement in the UN General Assembly. The NAM is the second largest organization in the world after the UN and has 120 member states. Azerbaijan's membership and presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement is an indicator of the increasing international reputation of our country, and the initiatives and activities showcased during Azerbaijan's presidency have in turn contributed to the revival and increasing relevance of the organization. Patriotic War One of his main powers is related to his management skills. He commanded the Azerbaijani Army in the war against Armenian occupation. Armenia's latest military attack on the 27th of September 2020 caused a war between the two countries. The Iron Fist has been the symbol of our journey to victory. Under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev Azerbaijani Army defeated Armenia on the battlefield and liberated its ancient and eternal lands, which was under

occupation for more than 30 years. Azerbaijan implemented United Nations Security Council resolutions which demanded immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Armenia was defeated by Azerbaijan on the battlefield. On 10th November 2020, the Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation was signed to end the war. During the occupation, Armenia destroyed many areas, monuments, and culturally and historically significant places. Our Government started large scale restoration and reconstruction works in Karabakh right after the war and even these restored territories such as Shusha, Aghdam, Zangilan became a venue for the international events. The Great Return After the war, Azerbaijan started recovering destroyed areas from all damage and started building new cities and villages. Today we've been building new buildings, roads, and other infrastructure in Karabakh. Already, two International Airports - Fuzuli and Zangilan have been built in and used in Karabakh, and a new one is being built right now in Lachin. After the war, Azerbaijan commenced Great Return program and started to relocate the former IDPs to their homeland after 3 decades. They have been provided with all the necessary things to live comfortably. The 7th of February marks the snap presidential election in Azerbaijan and I am quite certain that the nation will support the current President yet again and our country will become even more successful under his leadership. President Ilham Aliyev said "We are stronger together!" Thanks to Mr. President's foreign and domestic policies, Azerbaijan has great power, and we protect our unity! The writer is the Deputy Chairman of Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chair of The Sports and Youth Committee

Tensions between Lebanon and Israel

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



I recommend checking the latest news sources or reliable news websites for the most up-to-date information on any developments related to Lebanon-Israel clashes. However, historically, tensions have existed between Lebanon and Israel, primarily related to territorial disputes, the presence of militant groups, and broader regional conflicts. The border area between

The ongoing clashes between Lebanon and Israel mean that there are continuous fights or conflicts happening between the two countries. These clashes involve ongoing, or continuous, instances of violence or disagreement. It could be in the form of military actions, disputes, or other confrontations between Lebanon and Israel. The situation is still unfolding, and tensions persist between the two nations. As of my last knowledge update in January 2022, I do not have specific information about any recent Lebanon-Israel clashes that may have occurred after that date. I recommend checking the latest news sources or reliable news websites for the most up-to-date information on any developments related to Lebanon-Israel clashes. However, historically, tensions have existed between Lebanon and Israel, primarily related to territorial disputes, the presence of militant groups, and broader regional conflicts. The border area between Lebanon and Israel, particularly along the Blue Line (established by the United Nations in 2000), has been a source of periodic tensions. Issues such as the presence of the militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon, cross-border attacks, and disputed territories have contributed to sporadic clashes between the two countries. The situation in the region is complex, involving political, religious, and ge-

opolitical factors. There have been ongoing conflicts between Lebanon and Israel along their border since October 8, 2023. These clashes are related to the war in Gaza, but they are not a new occurrence. While they may differ in scale and intensity compared to previous border clashes, they follow a pattern of measured retaliation. Israeli officials are increasingly warning that these border clashes could lead to a full-scale war with Lebanon. In response, Hezbollah officials argue that such a war would be equally costly for Israel. Both sides express a commitment to finding a diplomatic solution to the border tensions. Hezbollah conditions any negotiations on this issue on the end of the war in Gaza. The leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, has stated that the primary goals of the border escalation are to support Hamas and bring an end to the Gaza conflict. Historically, Lebanon and Israel have a record of border clashes, with the most recent ones occurring in June, when Israel claimed that Hezbollah had set up tents near the disputed village of Ghajar. In July, exchanges of fire wounded three Hezbollah members, and Israeli tear gas targeted Lebanese journalists and parliament members along the border. Notably, there is no internationally recognized land border between Lebanon and Israel, as both parties have not agreed to delineate it. The United Nations established a 120-km "line of

withdrawal," known as the Blue Line, in June 2000 after Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. This line helps determine compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426. The United States recently helped Lebanon and Israel agree on their maritime borders. Now, the U.S. is trying to prevent a big war between the two countries by calming tensions along their land borders. There are 13 disputed points on this land border, and the U.S. had already helped settle 7 of them in the past. The remaining 6 are causing issues, especially two points called B1 and the "Wazzani reservation." Last August, the U.S. envoy, Amos Hochstein, mentioned that the U.S. might help in solving the land border disputes. This idea gained importance recently due to increased military activity along the border. During a visit to Lebanon, Hochstein said the U.S. wants a diplomatic solution to the border conflict. He suggested temporary measures to ease tensions while acknowledging the difficulty of finding a long-term solution. Hezbollah, a group in Lebanon, changed its usual stance by expressing openness to indirect talks with the U.S. and Israel about the land borders. However, they set a condition that these talks should only happen if the conflict in Gaza ends. This is a significant shift from Hezbollah's previous refusal to negotiate about Lebanon's southern land border.

Briefs

Massive Israeli airstrikes...

FROM PAGE 01
Other casualties were reported in different areas of Gaza following Israeli aerial, artillery and shooting attacks last night and today. The Israeli army also bombed and detonated several blocks and private and public buildings during its incursions throughout the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, the health ministry in Gaza said on Sunday that the Israeli occupation army committed, over the past 24 hours, 14 massacres in the Gaza Strip, which resulted in the martyrdom of at least 127 civilians and the injury of 178 others.

US-UK assaults 'won't go...

FROM PAGE 01
In a statement, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) claimed that the aerial assaults had targeted "multiple underground storage facilities, command and control, missile systems, UAV storage and operations sites, radars, and helicopters." It also alleged that the strikes are intended to "degrade" Yemen's capabilities to conduct naval pro-Palestine operations. Israel waged a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip on October 7 following a historic operation by Palestinian Hamas resistance group against the occupying regime.

India's Aug 5 actions on IIOJK...

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he added. The prime minister said that Pakistan had consistently maintained that a lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people. "Pakistan will continue to extend its unstinting moral, diplomatic and political support for this just cause," Prime Minister Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

Mushaal calls for early...

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territory has reached crucial point. She was addressing a news conference in Islamabad today alongside Hurriyat leaders Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter. The Special Assistant said the Hurriyat leadership in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is facing fabricated charges under draconian laws. She said India is trying its best to execute Hurriyat leaders and then build some farcical narrative on it ahead of general elections.

Will bury politics of hate if...

FROM PAGE 01
The PPP leader urged the people not to waste their vote by casting for any independent candidate – an apparent reference to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidates. It is pertinent to mention here that the PTI candidates are contesting elections as independent candidates as the Supreme Court last month upheld the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to strip of PTI's 'bat' symbol after finding irregularities in the party's intra-party elections. Addressing the public rally, Bilawal also did not spare even Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUIF), the party which was an ally of the PPP in previous Pakistan Democratic Movement's government.

Pakistan grieved over demise of...

FROM PAGE 01
Our heartfelt condolences to President Geingob's family and the people of Namibia.

National athletes compete in Nayza Armwrestling C'ship

After successful completion of round 1, now round 2 will be held in the same categories on February 10, 2024

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The season 2 of Nayza Armwrestling Championship 2024 witnessed a thrilling display of strength and skill as the nation's elite armwrestlers, alongside emerging talents from both youth and senior categories, battled it out for the title of Mr. Power Arm at Nayza Store, Bahria Town Lahore. After successful completion of round 1, now round 2 will be held in the same categories on February 10, 2024, and the grand finale will follow the round 2, where the winners from each round will compete for the title of Mr. Power Arm in their respective weight categories.

In the -85 kg youth category, standout athletes including Qasim, Abdul Aziz, Mehrab Khan, and Rehan made their mark. Abdul Aziz, the esteemed Major Armwrestling President, shared his excitement about reaching the final. "After



clinging the Mr. Power Arm title in the -80 kg category last season, I'm determined

to secure another victory this year. Nayza's commitment to nurturing armwrestling and other

sports is creating valuable opportunities for young athletes to shine and progress," he stated.

The -80 kg senior category saw impressive performances from Hamid, Haroon Khokhar, Mateen Asif, and Mukarram. Mateen Asif, a celebrated armwrestler with international accolades, praised Nayza's efforts in elevating the sport. "This season, Nayza has outdone itself, attracting top-tier competitors and offering better rewards. The level of competition has significantly intensified, challenging me to push my limits to reach the final. It's clear that Nayza's initiatives are instrumental in advancing armwrestling on a national scale," he remarked.

The -60 kg youth category's initial elimination round winners included Maaz, Arham, Huzaifa, Shehryar, and Wahid, while the 85+ kg youth category saw Ali Hamza, Hassan Butt, Rana Akbar, Mubashir, and Huzaifa Amjad advance. In the -75 kg youth category, the first round of eliminations was conquered by Atif, Adil Pappu, Naem Sultan, and Ameer Hamza. Adil Pappu, after securing his spot in the final.

Abbott stars as Australia crushes West Indies

West Indies while chasing lost three wickets in nine overs with only 34 runs on the board as Hardie, Hazlewood and Abbott collected one each

DNA

SYDNEY: Sean Abbott exhibited his all-round skills, scoring a half-century and taking three wickets to power Australia to a crushing 83-run victory over West Indies in the second ODI at Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) on Sunday. This victory gave Australia an unassailable 2-0 lead over West Indies in the three-match ODI series. West Indies reduced Australia to 50-3 inside eight overs after opting

to field as Alzarri Joseph dismissed openers while Matthew Forde castled Steve Smith. Cameron Green looked comfortable against West Indies pacers, but he miscued one to Oshane Thomas which was caught by Forde. Green played an anchoring 33-run knock from 41 balls, featuring five boundaries and one six. Marnus Labuschagne (26) also departed in the next over, leaving Australia reeling at 91-5, before Matthew Short (41) and Aaron Hardie (26) knitted a 51-run stand to help the hosts stabilize. However, Gudakesh Motie sent both batters back to the pavilion in quick succession to halt Australia's comeback. Abbott then played a counter-attacking knock, scoring his maiden half-century in international cricket to help lift his side's total to 251.

He constructed a 57-run one-sided partnership with debutant Will Sutherland (18) before Romario Shepherd got the breakthrough. Shepherd also ended Abbott's 69-run knock, which conceded 63 balls featuring one boundary and four sixes. Adam Zampa (8) and Josh Hazlewood

(4) remained unbeaten to see Australia score 258/9 in their allocated 50 overs. Motie led the bowling charts for the visitors with figures of 3-28, while Shepherd and Joseph picked two wickets each.

West Indies while chasing lost three wickets in nine overs with only 34 runs on the board as Hardie, Hazlewood and Abbott collected one each. Captain Shai Hope (29) and Keacy Carty knitted a partnership of 53 runs to help their side get out of jail but Hazlewood struck again to pull things back. Meanwhile, Carty top-scored with 40 off 51, laced with two boundaries and one six before he was caught behind off Abbott.

West Indies failed to recover from there and kept losing wickets at an alarming rate, adding a meagre 77 runs for the last five wickets. Except for Roston Chase (25) and Joseph (19, none of the lower-order batters managed to reach double figures as their innings was wrapped up at 175 in 43.3 overs. Hazlewood and Abbott picked three wickets each for Australia.

Kohli could miss third England Test: report

NEW DELHI: Virat Kohli could miss the third Test against England which will be played at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Rajkot, from February 15 to 19, reported ANI News on Saturday. Kohli withdrew from the first two Tests and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) still do not know about the availability of the talisman. Although BCCI didn't reveal any reason behind the 35-year-old's absence, it was speculated that Kohli ruled himself out from the first two Tests due to family reasons. However, Former South Africa captain AB de Villiers, on Saturday, unveiled the real reason behind Kohli's absence from the first two Test matches against England.

The 39-year-old disclosed that the star Indian cricketer and his wife Anushka Sharma are expecting their second child. De Villiers made this significant revelation during a Q&A session on his YouTube channel. One of his fans inquired whether he had checked with Kohli after his withdrawal from the first two Tests against England and if he would be returning for the final three matches. "All I know is he is fine. He is spending a bit of time with his family, that is the reason he is missing the first two Test matches. I am not going to confirm anything else. I cannot wait to see him back. He is fine, he is doing well," the former Royal Challengers Bangalore batter said. While providing further clarity regarding his disclosure, De Villiers commenced reading his text message exchange with Kohli. It was during this moment that he affirmed the news that the former India captain and his wife Anushka are anticipating their second child. - Agencies

Security forces fully prepared for polls

FROM PAGE 01

Commanders' Conference (CCC), has also expressed its resolve not to allow anyone to indulge in violence in the name of political activity and sabotage the quintessential democratic exercise of conduct of free and fair elections. "The Pakistan Army will perform assigned duties as per the constitutional mandate, under the guidelines of ECP. No one would be allowed to indulge in violence in the name of political activity and sabotage the quintessential democratic exercise of conduct of free and fair elections," the army's top brass had said. Elections in Pakistan have often been marred with incidents of political violence as well as terror-related incidents – and it seems the upcoming elections are no different. There has been a rise in terrorist attacks as well with several independent candidates as well as those from parties, have been targeted by miscreants in the run-up to the polls. Addressing the recent surge in terror attacks, Solangi said that law and order and terrorism were not new issues in Pakistan, as it has been battling the scourge of terrorism for the past few decades. "Since 2021, with the change of guard in Kabul, terrorist groups of various hues and colours having safe sanctuaries in a neighbouring country have become more active. [However] Pakistan was taking action against terrorists and that peaceful elections would be ensured at all costs," he noted.

PPP faces backlash amidst...

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were inundated, leaving motorists stranded for hours, and the situation prompted strong remarks from political figures. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif expressed his concern, stating that Karachi had "turned into an ocean" during the rains. He urged Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to engage in a comparison rather than a debate, emphasizing that if Lahore faced a similar situation, he would withdraw from the election and invite Bilawal to contest from his constituency. Sharif made these remarks during a media interaction in Lahore on Sunday. Mutahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui accused the PPP of neglecting Karachi's welfare, asserting that the city was under the rule of 'enemies' after the rain.

ANP, MQM join hands...

FROM PAGE 01

the MQM-P leadership. Mustafa Kamal and Shahi Syed both stated both parties have the same narrative regarding elections and vowed both parties supported each other and also MQM-P will support ANP in the constituency of PS-88. Shahi Syed further said that they asked their field workers and political supporters to support MQM-P need of the hour. He also said that he is glad to see that at least a big political party accepted their importance. Furthermore, both sides agreed to enhance their relationship and also committed to continue their efforts for the betterment of Karachi city.

Pakistan's aid to Gaza...

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The humanitarian assistance flight destined for Gaza will land in Al-Arish, Egypt, where the Pakistan's Ambassador will take charge of the supplies and oversee their transportation to the Palestinian people. This fifth relief consignment comprises family tents, tarpaulins, and blankets. NDMA has also coordinated a sixth flight scheduled to depart from Karachi on 06 February 2024 with 100 tons of load. Pakistan's unwavering support continues with fifth aid delivery for Gaza, totaling 230 tons of essential supplies. More assistance is also planned, demonstrating Pakistan's commitment to solidarity and seeking a peaceful resolution.

PSL 9: Tickets to go on sale from Feb 6

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has confirmed that the tickets for Pakistan Super League (PSL) season nine will go on sale from Tuesday, February 6, 2024. As per the press release, the fans can pre-book their tickets online on pcb.tcs.com.pk from 5:00 pm. On the other hand, physical tickets have been made mandatory for all PSL 9 matches. E-tickets (self-printed or digital copies) will not be accepted for entry across the four venues throughout the tournament. Physical tickets will go on sale at designated TCS express centres from February 12 2024 onwards. Tickets booked online can also be collected from designated pick-up centres or can be home-delivered by the courier. The opening ceremony and first match of the ninth edition of the PSL is scheduled to take place on February 17 at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore. The tickets have been set at PKR 6,000 (VIP), PKR 3,000 (Premium), PKR 2,000 (First class) and PKR 1,000 (General). The tickets for the final, to be played on March 18 at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi, have been set at PKR 8,000 (VIP), PKR 4,000 (Premium), PKR 2,500 (First class) and PKR 1,000 (General). The tickets for the qualifier will be sold for PKR 5,000 (VIP), PKR 2,500 (Premium), PKR 1500 (First class) and PKR 750 (General) while tickets for the two eliminators have been priced at PKR 5,000 (VIP), PKR 3,000 (Premium), PKR 1500 (First class) and PKR 750 (General). Throughout PSL 9, Karachi will host 11 matches including the final leg of the tournament, Rawalpindi and Lahore will host nine matches each while Multan will host five matches. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Participants take part during a cycle rally in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day, outside National Press Club in the Federal Capital. - Online

India dominate Pakistan to win Davis Cup tie

The visitors continued impeccable display throughout the tie

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: India dominated Pakistan to win the Davis Cup 3-0 after beating the home side 6-2, 6(7)-6(5) in the doubles in the ongoing Davis Cup World Group I playoff tie in Islamabad. The Indian duo of Saketh Myneni and Yuki Myneni prevailed their nation into the World Cup I as Pakistan's Aqeel Khan and Muzammil failed to pose any considerable threat to the visiting nation. India continued their winning streak against the arch-rivals in Davis Cup history by recording their eighth win. Earlier on Saturday in the singles, Aqeel lost in straight sets, 7-5 6-3, against Sriram Balaji while Ramkumar Ramanathan defeated Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi 6-7(3) 7-6(4) 6-0 to provide his side with a

bright start. "This will go down as a special win for me given we are in Pakistan. It is not easy to win away. Aisam slowed down the game while serving. It was not easy but I was all pumped up," Ramanathan

stated after a win over Aisam. The last tie between the two countries took place in neutral Kazakhstan in 2014 with India winning 4-0. "The Indian team just reaching Pakistan is already a win for me," Qureshi had

said earlier. "I'm happy and proud to be a part of it – that tennis might play a role in mending the ties with India." Indian captain Zeeshan Ali, whose father was part of the 1964 team, described coming to Pakistan as "emo-

tional". "The last time India played against Pakistan 60 years ago my father was on the team and he played three of the matches which he won," Ali said. "For me to be back here in Pakistan as captain of the Indian team

is an emotional moment." Ali added that he hoped the tie would prove positive for tennis. "If we can help in any way to spread good friendship and the game of tennis then we would have achieved our goal."



Briefs

Tunisians head to polls for 2nd round of local elections

TUNIS : Voting polls began in Tunisia's second local elections on Sunday amid a boycott by opposition political parties. Polling stations in 785 electoral districts across the country opened at 8.00 a.m. local time (0700GMT) and will close at 6.00 p.m., according to the country's electoral commission. More than 4 million voters are eligible to cast their ballot in Sunday's polls to choose local representatives, according to data from the election commission. Voter turnout in the first round of the election, held on Dec. 24, was 11.84% three hours before the polling stations closed, according to electoral commission chief Farouk Bouasker. Parties across the political spectrum vowed to boycott the election, an Anadolu correspondent reported. Tunisia has been in the throes of deep political crisis that has aggravated the country's economic conditions since 2021 when President Kais Saied ousted the government and dissolved parliament.—DNA

Senegal opposition rejects election postponement

DAKAR : West Africa's regional bloc has called for dialogue to resolve the political crisis in Senegal as opposition leaders rejected the decision by the country's leader to postpone the Feb. 25 presidential election over an electoral dispute between parliament and the judiciary. Senegalese politicians must "prioritise dialogue and collaboration for transparent, inclusive and credible elections," the regional bloc known as ECOWAS said in a statement that called on authorities to "expedite the various processes to set a new date for the elections" after Saturday's postponement. Analysts say the crisis is putting one of Africa's most stable democracies to the test at a time when the region is struggling with a recent surge in coups. Senegal has been embroiled in political tensions as a result of deadly clashes involving opposition supporters and the disqualification of two opposition leaders ahead of the crucial vote. Several opposition figures rejected President Macky Sall's decision to postpone the election, with at least two of the 20 presidential candidates saying they would proceed with their campaign scheduled to kick off on Sunday.—APP

41 Rohingya refugees nabbed fleeing Malaysian detention

KUALA LUMPUR : More than 40 exhausted and hungry Rohingya refugees have been recaptured by Malaysian police following a detention centre breakout by 131 migrants from Myanmar, a senior police official said Sunday. On Thursday, a total of 115 Rohingya migrants and 16 others — all of them men — rioted in their detention building before escaping the Bidar temporary immigration centre in northern Perak state. The Rohingya experience persecution in their predominantly Buddhist homeland of Myanmar, with many fleeing to affluent, Muslim-majority Malaysia or to refugee camps in Bangladesh. They often endure harrowing, months-long sea journeys to arrive in Malaysia by boat or sneak into the country via its porous border with Thailand. If caught, they are usually sent to detention centres that rights groups say are typically overcrowded and filthy. One Rohingya man was confirmed killed on Thursday in a road accident as he tried crossing a highway in darkness. The 41 Rohingya men were rearrested at a palm oil estate and in the forest surrounding the nearby towns of Taphah and Bidar after a public tip-off. Perak police chief Mohamad Yusri Hassan Basri told AFP.—APP

Israeli strikes against Gaza 'ugliest form of terrorism'

Libyan PM Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh demands immediate halt to attacks against Gaza

NEWS DESK

TRIPOLI : Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip are "the ugliest form of terrorism," Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh said. Dbeibeh said the attacks will have serious consequences for global stability when he addressed the 42-member meeting of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) in the Saudi Arabian capital, Riyadh. He demanded an immediate halt to the attacks in Gaza and crimes against the Palestinian people. After the meeting, Dbeibeh met Saudi Arabian Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman Al Saud and discussed military cooperation between the two countries and the fight against terrorism. Saudi Arabia announced at the end of 2015 that the IMCTC was established with the participation of 34 countries with its headquarters in Riyadh. With the increase in new participation in the coalition, the number of members reached 42. Israel launched a deadly offensive



on the Gaza Strip on Oct. 7 that has killed at least 27,238 Palestinians and injured 66,452 following a surprise attack by the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas. Nearly 1,200 Israelis are believed to have been killed in the Hamas attack. The Israeli offensive has left 85% of Gaza's population internally displaced amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine, while 60% of

Palestinian state essential for ME peace: FM Barth

OSLO : Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide discusses Norway's peace efforts in the Israel-Palestine conflict — from Oslo Accords to advocating Gaza truce. Tracing Norway's diplomatic journey from Trygve Lie's pivotal role as the first United Nations secretary-general to its instrumental part in the Oslo Accords, a landmark agreement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Norway has long been a beacon of international peace and neutrality. Its commitment to these principles faces new tests with the current war on Gaza, raising questions about its arms export policies and the indirect implications for regions in turmoil. Amid these complexities, Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide talks to media reporters. Mean while , Norway FM criticises countries exporting weapons to Israel. Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide yesterday called on countries that export weapons to Israel to assess their actions or risk prosecution for participating in Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. "States exporting weapons to Israel should reassess whether they are effective partners in the genocide in Gaza Strip or not," he said. Eide also announced that Oslo will continue funding the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA) in spite of the US, UK, Canada and other Western countries cutting donations following Israeli allegations that 12 UNRWA staff took part in the 7 October attack on Israel. Tel Aviv has issued intelligence documents that it claims are evidence that staff working for the UN agency were connected with Hamas in Gaza.—APP

the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN. South Africa filed a genocide case in December

against Israel at the International Court of Justice. The court on Jan. 26 found South Africa's claim that Israel is committing genocide plausible. It issued an interim order urging Israel to stop obstructing aid deliveries into Gaza and to improve the humanitarian situation.

Erdogan vows recovery as Turkey marks quake anniversary

WEB DESK

ANKARA : Two days before Türkiye will mark the first anniversary of deadly earthquakes dubbed the 'disaster of the century,' President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited the southeastern province of Gaziantep on Sunday. Erdogan inaugurated a massive hospital complex there, before the delivery of housing units to survivors of the earthquakes. The Turkish leader said in a speech at the hospital opening ceremony that they would not rest until earthquake-hit cities are fully recovered, "from infrastructure and superstructure, to rebuilding of city centers and villages." Erdogan stated that they were rapidly fulfilling their promises to heal the wounds in those cities before the anniversary of the disaster of the century that affected some 14 million people. The president was expected to attend a ceremony for the delivery of houses for earthquake survivors in Gaziantep's Islahiye district but he said that he would instead attend it via videolink due

to adverse weather delaying his visit. More than 53,000 people died in two earthquakes on Feb. 6, 2023, and more than 3,900 among them were in Gaziantep. Erdogan was in Hatay, one of the worst-hit provinces, on Saturday where he attended the opening of another hospital and handed keys to new houses for earthquake survivors. He is scheduled to visit Kahramanmaraş, at the epicenter of the earthquakes, on Tuesday. Next, he will travel to Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman and Elazığ on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, respectively. There, he will meet earthquake survivors and attend ceremonies for the delivery of their new homes. Within the week of the anniversary, some 75,000 houses will be delivered to earthquake victims in the region. In Gaziantep, authorities delivered nearly 11,000 houses and 6,000 more people will be accommodated in newly-built housing units soon in the province. Addressing the delivery ceremony via a video message, Erdogan said they would overcome this challenge through unity. "Türkiye joined together to

heal the wounds of the disaster of the century," while acknowledging some problems along the way. "No country, neither in Europe, nor the United States, can overcome the impact of such disasters. But Türkiye managed to overcome them," he said, pointing out to resilience of people. He said Türkiye successfully overcame critical phases in the aftermath of the disaster, from debris removal to rebuilding. He said they worked both on reconstruction and continuing the investments in the region. The president said Türkiye was also working on urban transformation for cities resilient to disasters. He said more than 255,000 people applied to replace their houses as part of the government-run project, with new, sturdy ones. Around 38,901 buildings were destroyed by the first 7.8 magnitude tremor and initial aftershocks, which included one with a 7.5 magnitude later that day. Türkiye has set up 215,224 metal containers to house 691,000 survivors who have lost their homes and been unable to find new accommodation on their own. As Türkiye marks the first anniversary of the disaster, people living

in the hardest-hit regions are grieving deceased family and friends, struggling to rebuild livelihoods and grasping for closure in cases where loved ones are still missing. A massive rebuilding effort is underway in areas devastated by the quake. The Turkish government is rushing to build more than 300,000 homes for displaced families. Government officials say the new homes being built are designed to withstand strong earthquakes. On Saturday, authorities handed over keys to 7,275 newly completed homes in Hatay. Erdogan said in Hatay that they would gradually deliver 40,000 houses throughout the region as soon as their construction was completed. Some 75,000 houses will be delivered over the next two months, Erdogan said, adding that the government planned to deliver a total of 200,000 houses this year. Around 680,000 homes were destroyed in the earthquake region, Environment, Urban Planning and Climate Change Minister Mehmet Özhaseki told reporters on Friday, adding that 390,000 families are registered to receive houses to be built there.

14 Myanmar border police flee to BD as junta fights rebels

DHAKA : Fourteen members of the Myanmar border guard police fled to Bangladesh in escalating clashes between the Southeast Asian nation's military and the rebel Arakan Army along its western border, officials confirmed Sunday. Myanmar's junta government has been fighting armed rebel groups for months within its borders, including along the border with hilly Bandarban district in southeastern Bangladesh. "They fled and their weapons and ammunition have been deposited," a Bangladeshi border security official confirmed to Anadolu, asking not to be named due to restrictions on speaking to the media. Separately, Bandarban's Deputy Commissioner Shah Mujahid Uddin told Anadolu that he was aware of reports about the incident but had no official confirmation. Meanwhile, at least one Bangladeshi national was injured by stray bullets fired from Myanmar. Artillery fire also fell within Bangladesh from Myanmar's western Ghumdhum region late on Saturday, with the sound of shelling continuing until Sunday. With primary schools along the border already closed, the shelling caused panic among residents of border villages, the district official also confirmed. "But the situation is under control. Border residents have been asked to stay on alert and in safe shelter. BGB (Border Guard Bangladesh), police and security forces are all on alert to deal with any situation at the border," he continued. Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud told reporters recently in Dhaka that border forces are on alert to prevent a fresh influx of refugees from neighboring Myanmar from crossing the border. About 1.2 million refugees, members of Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya Muslim community, are currently taking shelter in the Cox's Bazar region of southeastern Bangladesh. The majority of Rohingya living in Bangladesh fled a brutal military crackdown in Rakhine, Myanmar in 2017.—DNA

Death toll rises to 51 in Chile forest fires

ANKARA : The death toll from forest fires affecting central and southern Chile has risen to 51, according to media reports on Sunday. "Given the conditions of the tragedy, the number of victims will surely increase in the coming hours," CNN cited Chilean President Gabriel Boric as saying in a televised statement. Boric added that the Defense Ministry would deploy more military units to affected areas, with all necessary resources made available. "About 92 active fires are burning in various parts of the country and have so far affected roughly 43,000 hectares," CNN quoted Interior Minister Carolina Toha as saying. "Firefighters have controlled 40 fires and are still battling 29," she added. Chilean authorities reported that forest fires are ongoing in the Valparaíso and Marga Marga regions. The wildfires in Valparaíso have damaged an estimated 1,100 homes, authorities said. Declaring a state of emergency, President Boric said on X: "We have directed all our crews to the central and southern regions of the country to intervene in the fires." In February 2023, some 13 people in Chile lost their lives in forest fires.—APP

Germany sees massive anti-far-right protests

BERLIN : Tens of thousands of people attended rallies across Germany against the far-right AfD party on Saturday, the latest wave of such protests over the past three weeks. Nearly 150,000 people turned out in Berlin according to police, some forming a human chain in front of parliament. Organizers put the figure at 300,000. Similar protests took place in around 200 other cities. The wave of mobilization against Alternative for Germany (AfD) was sparked by a January 10 report by investigative outlet Correctiv revealing that AfD members had discussed the expulsion of immigrants and "non-assimilated citizens" at a meeting with extremists. The report sent shock waves across Germany at a time when the AfD is soaring in opinion polls, months ahead of three major regional elections in eastern Germany where their support is strongest. "All together against racism," the crowd in Berlin shouted. Some held posters that said "Heart instead of hate" or "Racism is not an alternative." Many people hoping to attend the Berlin rally found the site already packed, and were directed to a nearby park or the riverbanks along the Spree River, AFP journalists saw. "I don't know if these demonstrations will influence AfD voters," Margret Hurth, a 53-year-old childcare worker, told AFP. "But it's important to send a signal, because we need more humanity and respect for our differences." "I came to set an example," said Martin Raue, a university professor who had come from Sweden to attend the rally.—APP

Nigerian students freed; driver killed by gunmen

ABUJA : Six Nigerian students and three teachers kidnapped by gunmen while returning from a school trip last week were freed but their driver had been killed, the state government has said. The Ekiti state government did not say whether a ransom was paid or share details of the students' release. Kidnapping for ransom by armed gangs, which is common in the north-west, has been spreading across Nigeria as gunmen target villagers, motorists and students. The state government's statement said the kidnapped students from a private primary school were released in the early hours of Sunday. "However, the driver of the school bus was killed, reportedly, by the kidnapers," the statement said, adding that the students would be taken to a local hospital for medical treatment and post-trauma therapy.—APP

Namibia's President dies in hospital

WINDHOEK : Namibia's President Hage Geingob died early Sunday in a hospital in Windhoek, the presidential office said in a statement. He was 82. Geingob, who was serving his second term as president, revealed last month that he was receiving treatment for cancer. "It is with utmost sadness and regret that I inform you that our beloved Dr. Hage G. Geingob, the President of the Republic of Namibia has passed on today," read the statement on X, formerly Twitter, signed by acting president Nangolo Mbumba. "At his side, was his dear wife Madame Monica Geingob and his children." A biopsy following a routine medical check-up in January had revealed "cancerous cells", Geingob's office said at the time. First elected president in 2014, Geingob was Namibia's longest serving prime minister and third president. In 2013, Geingob underwent brain surgery, and last year he underwent an aortic operation in neighbouring South Africa. Up until his death, he had been receiving treatment at Lady Pohamba Hospital in Windhoek. "The Namibian nation has lost a distinguished servant of the people, a liberation struggle icon, the chief architect of our constitution and the pillar of the Namibian house," said Mbumba. "At this moment of deepest sorrow, I appeal to the nation to remain calm and collected while the Government attends to all necessary state arrangements, preparations and other protocols." US, Saudi Arabia in talks to secure metals in Africa: WSJ He said the Cabinet would convene immediately to make the necessary state arrangements. Born in a village in northern Namibia in 1941, Geingob was the southern African country's first president outside of the Ovambo ethnic group, which makes up more than half the country's population.—APP



LAHORE : Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi is inaugurating the upgradation project of Punjab Dental Hospital which has been dilapidated for many years.—DNA

Moscow: EU taxes fund terrorist organizations

Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova, has expressed concerns regarding the utilization of Ukrainian military weaponry

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW : EU citizens' taxes are spent on financing terrorist organizations, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said after a Ukrainian attack on a bakery in Lysychansk on killed at least 28 civilians including one child. Maria Zakharova said in a statement on that the West is "complicit" in the Ukrainian military's killing of civilians in Lysychansk - a city in the Moscow-controlled Luhansk located in eastern Ukraine's Donbass region. "According to preliminary information, the strike was conducted using Western weaponry," said. She said the "terrorist attack" meant to convey Kiev's "gratefulness for the 'generous' financial support by EU countries." She said EU nations' citizens should know what their taxes

are being spent on, like "deadly weapons systems" used by the Ukrainian military to "kill civilians." "We suggest that Parisians imagine how they go in the morning for a baguette, and Rome's residents - to have a cup of coffee with cornetto - but instead of freshly-baked pastry return home with relatives wounded or killed by Ukrainian terrorists," Zakharova said. According to Zakharova, the deadly incident is "further proof of the criminal nature of the Kiev regime." Moscow will inform "international organizations of yet another terrorist attack on the part of Zelensky's gang," she said, adding that Russia expects a swift and unequivocal condemnation of Kiev's actions. According to the Luhansk Information Center, Ukraine shelled the bakery in Lysychansk using the US-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket

System. The governor of Lugansk, Leonid Pasechnik, said the Ukrainian military deliberately targeted the building on a weekend to maximize civilian casualties. UN condemns Ukraine's deadly attack on Donetsk market UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemns Ukraine's shelling of a market on the outskirts of Donetsk which has killed at least 27 people. On Friday, Russian President Vladimir Putin described the Kiev forces as a "terrorist organization that attacks ambulances." Putin was referring to several attacks on paramedics working in Donbas last month. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned Kiev attacks against civilian targets last month. "Attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international humanitarian law, are unacceptable, and must

stop immediately," he asserted. On Jan. 21, a Donetsk marketplace came under Kiev forces' deadly artillery fire. According to the Head of the Russian-administered areas of the Donetsk region, Denis Pushilin, Ukrainian troops used 152mm and 155mm artillery systems in the deadly attack. Meanwhile, Russia requests UN Security Council meeting over US strikes on Iraq, Syria Russia on Saturday condemned the US strikes on Iraq and Syria, and requested a UN Security Council meeting to discuss the issue. The US has "once again demonstrated its aggressive essence and disregard for international law," said Maria Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson. According to her, the attack led to the destruction of civilian infrastructure and casualties among ordinary people. "The obedient participation of the

British Royal Air Force in the US attacks should not create the illusion of some kind of 'international coalition' for anyone. London has yet to answer for its diligence in supporting the purely provocative actions of its superiors in Washington," she said. Zakharova accused the US of intentionally aggravating the situation in the Middle East, saying: "Washington, believing in its impunity, continues to sow destruction and chaos in the Middle East. The largest US air raid in the region since 2003, led by Joe Biden's 'act of retaliation' for the unidentified drone attack on the American base in Jordan has no justification." "We strongly condemn the new blatant act of American-British aggression against sovereign states. We are seeking urgent consideration of the current situation through the UN Security Council," she said.

Briefs

Dozens killed in Chile as forest fires

DNA

LONDON: President Gabriel Boric warned that the death toll could worsen as four large fires burn in the region of Valparaiso, where firefighters have struggled to reach the most threatened neighbourhoods. At least 46 people have been killed, and more than a thousand homes destroyed in forest fires burning around a densely populated area of central Chile, the country's president said late Saturday. In a nationally televised address, President Gabriel Boric warned that the death toll could worsen as four large fires burn in the region of Valparaiso, where firefighters have struggled to reach the most threatened neighbourhoods. Boric urged Chileans to cooperate with rescue workers. "If you are told to evacuate don't hesitate to do it," he said. "The fires are advancing fast and climatic conditions have made them difficult to control. There are high temperatures, strong winds and low humidity." Interior Minister Carolina Tohá said earlier Saturday that 92 forest fires were burning in the centre and south of the country, where temperatures have been unusually high this week. The deadliest of the fires were in the Valparaiso region, where authorities urged thousands of people to evacuate their homes.

ECP dispels doubts about efficiency of EMS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has refuted the reports circulated by certain private news channels, intending to mislead the public about the capability and utility of the Election Management System (EMS), a programme designed to compile results of the Feb 8 general elections. The ECP through its spokesperson on Saturday declared that certain private news channels were spreading false propaganda regarding glitches in EMS. He affirmed that the functionality of EMS had undergone multiple tests, leaving no doubt about its efficiency. The ECP had in a previous statement mentioned that it had smoothly conducted a mock test of the programme. The evaluation had concluded that the software system performed satisfactorily in all aspects.

ECP completes printing of ballot papers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has successfully completed the printing of 260 million ballot papers for all constituencies in the country ahead of the 2024 elections. According to ECP spokesman, "National Assembly ballots are identifiable by green paper, whereas Provincial Assembly ballots are printed on white paper. Except for 31 districts, the distribution of printed ballot papers has been finalized across the nation." Printing, which commenced on January 14, concluded by February 3. In compliance with a Supreme Court directive, ballot papers for 11 National Assembly and five Provincial Assembly constituencies underwent reprinting, with the original ones set for destruction as per the court order. ECP officials disclosed that this time, a total of 260 million ballot papers were printed, reflecting a 54.74% rise in candidates compared to the 2018 elections. Despite a 195% surge in demand for special paper, effective management led to a reduction from 2400 tonnes to 2177 tonnes. The distribution of printed ballot papers comprises 5% single-column, 50% double-column, 30% three-column, 11.15% four-column, and 2.4% five-column formats, gearing up for the scheduled February 8 polls.

Islamabad Diplomatic Hockey League

Diplomats praise youngsters interest in game of hockey

The diplomats were unequivocal in their support for the continuation of such initiatives, recognizing the pivotal role they play in nurturing talent and fostering a sense of empowerment among aspiring athletes



SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Rising Stars Hockey Club organized Islamabad Hockey League 2024. High Commissioner of Australia Neil Hawkins, High Commissioner of Malaysia Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Brunei Kamal Ahmed, Ambassador of

Kyrgyzstan Ulanbek Toutiaev and Charge D Affaires of Romania Eduard Preda also participated in the League matches. The diplomats, as they addressed the gathering, expressed sincere appreciation for the commendable efforts of the Club in hosting an inclusive hockey league. They lauded the initiative for providing an equal platform for both genders, enabling girls to

showcase their prowess in the game. The diplomats conveyed their optimism that such impactful events would continue to be organized in the days ahead, fostering a culture of inclusivity and sportsmanship. Notably, the diplomats praised the evident enthusiasm and dedication exhibited by the younger participants and the girls, emphasizing the remarkable skill and stamina

required to excel in the sport. Their admiration extended to the broader significance of encouraging the youth and promoting gender equality within the realm of sports. The diplomats were unequivocal in their support for the continuation of such initiatives, recognizing the pivotal role they play in nurturing talent and fostering a sense of empowerment among aspiring athletes.

Noted US journalist questions whether Modi's India is still a democracy

NEW YORK: After "blurring" the lines between Hinduism and the state, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now on track to become the first Indian prime minister since Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to win three consecutive terms, Bob Drogin, a prominent American journalist, wrote in The Los Angeles Times. "When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the consecration of a vast new Hindu temple atop the ruins of a demolished Muslim mosque in the town of Ayodhya in northern India last week, it showed how far he will go to secure his reelection this year," said Drogin, who was LA Times' correspondent in New Delhi in the 90s. In his opinion piece, Drogin said that he witnessed the destruction of the mosque in Ayodhya and was "clubbed" by police as they dispersed foreign journalists covering the event. The article said: "Not that stoking religious strife is a new tactic for the 73-year-old Modi. He rode to power, and clings to it now, on the back of militant Hindu nationalism and the menace of anti-Muslim violence. In 2005, Modi, then the top official in the Indian state of Gujarat, became the first and only person ever barred from entering the United States under a little-known immigration law that makes foreign officials ineligible for visas if they are

responsible for 'particularly severe violations of religious freedom.' "U.S. officials had determined that Modi stood by during Hindu riots that killed more than 1,000 Muslims in Gujarat state in 2002. The visa ban was lifted only when he became prime minister in 2014. Today Modi's brand of militant Hindu supremacy has replaced political pluralism as India's dominant ideology, threatening the nation's status as a secular republic. As a foreign correspondent for the Los Angeles Times, I saw the beginnings of India's anti-democratic slide on a sunny day in December 1992, on the contested ground in Ayodhya. "Thousands of Hindu pilgrims, white-bearded priests, dhoti-clad holy men and other devotees who had gathered for a political rally suddenly stormed the historic Babri mosque, built in the 16th century by Babur, the first Mughal emperor, on the site of the supposed birthplace of the Hindu deity Ram. The Hindu mob tore the mosque apart, brick by brick, with pikes, pickaxes and their bare hands. They pulled down guard towers with grappling hooks and climbed barefoot over barbed wire barricades. Foreign journalists were chased and clubbed. I was whacked with bamboo and hit with a brick.

Row over NK comments: Russian Dy FM visits Seoul

MOSCOW: Russia's deputy foreign minister Andrey Rudenko visited South Korea to discuss the Ukrainian war and bilateral ties, Seoul's foreign ministry said on Sunday, as the two countries trade increasingly heated rhetoric over the nuclear-armed North. Rudenko, Russia's deputy foreign minister handling Asia-Pacific affairs, met his South Korean counterpart Chung Byung-won on Friday, Seoul's foreign ministry said in a statement. Chung expressed Seoul's "grave position" on Moscow's growing military cooperation with Pyongyang and urged Russia to take "responsible actions", the statement said. His visit came the day after Moscow's foreign ministry spokesperson

Maria Zakharova said that heightened tension on the Korean peninsula was "primarily due to the brazen policy of the United States and its allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan", referring to South Korea by its official name. Zakharova made the remarks when asked about South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's recent description of North Korea as the only country in the world that has legislated the preemptive use of nuclear weapons. Calling Yoon's remarks "blatantly biased", she also said Seoul "doesn't seem to realise that the United States' leading position is irrevocably becoming a thing of the past", and that the South "may turn out to be no more than a small bargaining chip in Washington's geopolitical games". Seoul's foreign ministry summoned Russian Ambassador Georgy Zinoviev on Saturday to protest the "rude, ignorant" comments. Since invading Ukraine in 2022, Russia has forged closer ties with Pyongyang, which South Korea and Washington accuse of shipping weapons to Moscow to help the war effort. North Korea this year declared the South its "principal enemy" and threatened war over "even 0.001 millimetres" of territorial infringement. Analysts have recently warned that North Korea could be testing cruise missiles ahead of sending them to Russia for use in Ukraine. - DNA

UN decries Taliban crackdown on women for dress code violations

AGENCIES

NEW YORK: The UN human rights experts have expressed profound concern over multiple reports detailing arbitrary arrests, detention and ill-treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan. The incidents, which have surged since early January, are purportedly linked to violations of the Taliban's stringent dress code for women. In a joint statement, the UN Human Rights Council-appointed experts called on the Taliban to comply with Afghanistan's human rights obligations, including under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Taliban crackdown initially began in western Kabul, predominantly inhabited by the minority ethnic Hazara community - which has been the target of extremist violence for years - but swiftly expanded to other areas, including Tajik-populated regions and provinces such as Bamian, Baghlan, Balkh, Daykundi, and Kunduz, the UN said.

Women and girls, reportedly accused by the Taliban of wearing "bad hijab", were arrested during the operation in public places, including shopping centres, schools and street markets. Some were forcibly taken to police vehicles, held incommunicado and denied legal representation, according to a news release issued by the UN rights office OHCHR on behalf of the experts. "Women and girls were reportedly held in overcrowded spaces in police stations, received only one meal a day, with some of them being subjected to physical violence, threats and intimidation," they said. In May 2022, the Taliban ordered all women to observe "proper hijab", preferably by wearing a "chadar" in public and made male relatives responsible for enforcing the ban or face punishment. While some detainees were released after a few hours, others reportedly languished in custody for days or weeks. The lack of transparency and access to justice means the current number of detainees potentially held incommunicado is hard to assess.

Their release has been made contingent on male family members and community elders providing assurances, often in writing, that they would comply with the prescribed dress code in the future. "In addition to punishing women for what they wear, assigning responsibility for what women wear to men violates women's agency and perpetuates an institutionalized system of discrimination, control of women and girls, and further diminishes their place in society," the experts said. The experts speaking out are mandated by the Human Rights Council to monitor and report on the rights situation in the country, as well as on violence and discrimination against women and girls. Last month, a UN report found that several hundred Afghan women were forced to quit their jobs or were arrested and denied access to essential services in the last quarter of 2023. Those arrested included female staff of a healthcare facility and women who were not accompanied by a mahram - a male chaperone.

Sanaulah sees inflation country's biggest problem

DNA

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Rana Sanaulah said on Sunday that inflation is one of the biggest problems that the country is facing. Addressing the public gathering in Faisalabad, Sanaulah underscored the potential of the country's youth, saying, "The youth is standing with us." The former interior minister urged the party workers to launch the door-to-door campaign for up to three days ahead of the upcoming elections, slated to happen on February 8. Few days back, Sanaulah said on Thursday that the social media propaganda harmed the country. Speaking to media in Faisalabad, the former interior minister said: "The country is facing no worse situation but a challenge of whopping inflation". Sanaulah expressed optimism that his party will form the government in Punjab and the centre following February 8. He said, "The masses should express confidence in the PML-N, as we will control the inflation."

Tareen vows to work under Nawaz

DNA

MULTAN: As electioneering picks up pace with political parties forming alliances in their bid to strengthen their positions ahead of the February 8 polls, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) chief Jahangir Tareen Sunday said that he looks forward to working with his "leader" Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif, Geo News reported. "I will work with Nawaz Sharif as he will be our leader once the government is formed [after the polls]," Tareen said while addressing a political gathering in Multan - from where he's contesting on the NA-155 constituency. Tareen, a former close aide of former PM Imran Khan and played a major role in the formation of the PTI government in 2018, had parted ways with Khan after a money laundering was registered against him during the PTI government.

MQM-P has become a dead horse: Murad

HYDERABAD: The former chief minister of Sindh, Murad Ali Shah, has taken a dig at the Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), describing it as a "dead horse" which is being revived artificially through spoon feeding. Drawing on personal experiences, he recalled the challenging circumstances of his childhood, paying extortion money during the MQM-P's reign. Shah criticized MQM-P's questionable electoral tactics, accusing the party of resorting to begging and illicit means to secure votes. In a veiled critique aimed at political rivals, Shah dismissed the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), alleging a lack of vision and a preoccupation with the past. Shah expressed confidence that the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) would bag 45 to 50 National Assembly seats from Sindh thanks to the public support his party enjoyed in the upcoming general elections, positioning them as the leading political force in Sindh. Highlighting the appeal for the young party chief, Bilawal Bhutto, Shah underscored the public's eagerness to hear his vision, ideas and future policies, regardless of challenging weather conditions, heavy rains and cold weather. He commended Bilawal's active participation in political campaigns, even in adverse weather, demonstrating a commitment to fulfilling the aspirations of PPP supporters. He emphasized the paramount role of the public in determining electoral outcomes, asserting that true power lied with the people and their votes. Shah urged voters to cast their ballots in favour of the PPP, cautioning against supporting PML-N and MQM-P, which lacked the vision and vitality needed for effective governance. - DNA

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