



Islamabad POST

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Prince William issues emotional plea to end Israel-Hamas war

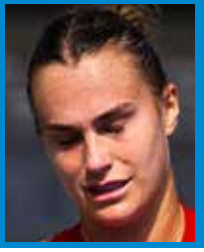
Detailed News On Page-07

'No deadlock' in talks with PML-N: Kaira

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Sabalenka crashes out to Vekic in Dubai opener

Detailed News On Page-06



ECP actions equal to treason

Senators decry alleged rigging in Feb 8 polls

A legal proceeding should be carried out against the CEC under Article 6 of the constitution, Senator Mushtaq demands

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Opposition senators on Tuesday decried alleged rigging in the February 8 elections and berated Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja for his "failure" to ensure transparency in the polls. Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Senator Mushtaq Ahmed demanded CEC Raja to step down from his position over the failure to hold transparent polls on February 8. The JI senator, while addressing a Senate session in Islamabad today, said that the elections were fake and they would procreate a fake government. Levelling serious allegations against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the senator said the electoral body committed treason for which it should seek an apology from the nation. "A legal proceeding should be carried out against the CEC under Article 6 of the constitution, for the ECP was given Rs50 billion from the national exchequer but it failed to hold transparent polls," he alleged. The money wasted in the name of elections should be returned and a case should be lodged against CEC Raja, the JI senator said, demanding the formation of an autonomous judicial commission at the Supreme Court's level. The judicial commission should investigate the matter of Form 45, he maintained. The senator also rebuked the authorities over the suspension of social media platform, X, saying that it inflicted economic and educational damage as well as it was tantamount to robbing people's rights. He demanded the restoration of all the social media platforms avoiding placing restrictions on them. X, formerly known as Twitter, remains intermittently down in

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Gohar demands ECP CEC's resignation

Gohar warns of IMF programme risk

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has intensified the party's stance on the release of election results under Form-45s and demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, alleging systematic rigging in the February 8 elections. Addressing the media after a meeting with PTI founder Imran Khan in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail on Tuesday, Gohar emphasised the significance of transparent and fair elections, stating that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has failed to fulfill its responsibility. Gohar stated, "We have always requested the ECP for a fair and transparent election,

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar witnesses the signing ceremony between Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation and Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc. (USA) for joint venture agreement for the value addition and export of pink salt. - DNA

X still inaccessible for four days

Digital rights activists slam authorities' disruption move

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: Popular social media platform X, formerly Twitter, is still inaccessible to thousands of users across Pakistan, with the government still yet to reveal the reason behind the unannounced shutdown since Saturday. While boasting of being among the top internet user population globally, Pakistan struggles with internet availability, ranking low compared to its peers, while reportedly authorities intermittently disrupt

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Chief Justice says...

ZAB case an opportunity to correct history

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah says Supreme Court cannot examine merit of case since verdict had already announced

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has wondered whether the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto reference is an opportunity for the Supreme Court and armed forces to rectify their past mistakes and restore their reputation. "Isn't this an opportunity for both institutions to get rid of the accusations hurled against them," the top judge remarked on Tuesday during a hearing of a presidential reference related to the death sentence awarded to the former PM Bhutto in 1979. The apex court larger bench - led by CJP Isa and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan,

Continued on Page 06

Bilawal will support PML-N on his own terms

Bhutto's daughter might not have got justice, however his grandson would

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: With the talks between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) dragging on, Bilawal

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

Bhutto-Zardari Tuesday warned that he foresees a "dangerous stalemate"

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SIC approaches ECP for reserved seats

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: After inclusion of PTI-backed Independents, the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) has approached the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for allocation of reserved seats. An application has been submitted in the ECP for this purpose by the SIC. The SIC has taken the stance that at least 50 PTI-backed Independents had joined the SIC. These Independents should now be considered as SIC lawmakers. The SIC pleaded to the ECP that seats reserved for women and minorities should be allotted to the SIC. It may be recalled that on Monday PTI-backed

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

ECP summons Nawaz

Petition was filed by PTI's Yasmin Rashid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday issued a notice to PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif on a petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed candidate Yasmin Rashid, who has challenged election results of NA-130. Rashid's lawyer said she secured a lead of over 20,000 votes after the results of 334 out of 376 polling stations. She stated her results were tempered in the night with the help of police. "Our agents were expelled from the polling stations and over 100,000 votes were casted fraudulently in favour of Nawaz Sharif from the remaining 33 polling stations," she added.

Two more independents join PML-N

Wali Muhammad and Abdul Khaliq meet with Shehbaz

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: In a significant development for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Tuesday, two more independent candidates hailing from Balochistan, Wali Muhammad and Abdul Khaliq, have pledged their allegiance to the party. The duo, victorious in their respective constituencies of Quetta's PB-41 and Chaman's PB-51 during the recently held general elections, met with PML-N President and prime minister nominee Shehbaz Sharif in Lahore to formalise their commitment. Accompanying Shehbaz Sharif in the meeting were the party's provincial president, Jaffar Khan Mandokhel, and party leader Jamal Shah Kakar.

Contempt case

IHC to IGP: arrest DC, produce before court

Court wants Islamabad DC's name to be placed on ECL in contempt case

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday ordered the authorities to place Islamabad Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon's name on the no-fly list for skipping proceedings of a contempt case over the detention of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shehryar Afridi's detention under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance. The ordinance provides the government with vast powers of detention and has been used by authorities to round up and detain PTI leaders following the May 9 riots. Justice Babar Sattar was hearing the case against Islamabad DC and Islamabad Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Malik Jamil Zafar for exceeding their authority by issuing orders under Section 3 of the MPO. During the hearing, SSP Operations Zafar and Superintendent of Police (SP) Farooq Buttar appeared upon being summoned by the court. At the same time,

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Mushahid demands release of all political prisoners

If three political parties don't take decisions, GHQ will decide

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Husain has demanded the release of all political prisoners, including PTI Founder Imran Khan, while expressing concerns over the recent events affecting the political landscape in Pakistan, on the floor of the Upper House of Parliament on Tuesday.

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US again casts veto of UN action in Israel-Hamas war

Thirteen council members voted in favour of the Algerian-drafted text, while Britain abstained. It was the third such US veto since the start of the current fighting on October 7

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The United States again vetoed a draft United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution on the Israel-Hamas war, blocking a demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire as it instead pushes the 15-member body to call for a temporary ceasefire linked to the release of hostages held by Hamas. Thirteen council members voted in favour of the Algerian-drafted text, while Britain abstained. It was the third such US veto since the start of the current fighting on October 7. "A vote in favour of this draft resolution is support to the Palestinians' right to life. Conversely, voting against it implies an endorsement of the brutal violence and collective punishment inflicted upon them," Algeria's UN Ambassador Amar Bendjama told the council before the vote. US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield signalled on Saturday that the US would veto the draft resolution over concerns it could jeopardize talks between the US, Egypt, Israel and Qatar that seek to broker a pause in the war and the release of

Continued on Page 06

Veto power countries behind UNSC's failure: Pakistan

"We are trying to curtail veto power of the permanent members," says the Pakistani envoy to UN

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Munir Akram has held the states having veto power responsible for the UN Security Council (UNSC)'s failure to establish peace in Ukraine and Gaza. Speaking to Geo News, Akram on Monday said there were some advantages

Continued on Page 06

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Collaboration among stakeholders vital for food security

PARC, ICARDA and USDA Jointly Organize Two-Day Stakeholders Meeting on 'Fertilizer Right Pakistan Project' at NARC Islamabad

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), and USDA Jointly Organize Two-Day Stakeholders Meeting on 'Fertilizer Right Pakistan Project' at NARC Islamabad. This project aims to enhance productivity through the efficient use of fertilizers and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The session was inaugurated by Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik, the Federal Minister for the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. The minister emphasized the importance of

integrated nutrient management to increase crop productivity. Dr. Kausar highlighted that the 'Fertilizer Right Pakistan Project' can play a crucial role in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing crop productivity through the implementation of scientifically-backed fertilizer management strategies. Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, reiterated the significance of the Fertilizer Right Pakistan Project in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing crop productivity in Pakistan. Dr. Ali appreciated the continuous support of USDA in grooming the agriculture sector of Pakistan through different projects. The meeting was

graced by the presence of a USDA delegation, comprising five visiting scientists from Washington D.C., who actively participated in the proceedings. Representatives from USAID, Agronomists from ICARDA Morocco, a large number of scientists from International Centers and Pakistan's National and Provincial institutes participated in the meeting. USDA lead scientist and team leader Dr. Abiola Adeyemi and ICARDA Country Manager Dr. Abdul Majid briefed the participants about Fertilize Right Project. The two-day marathon of planning sessions witnessed stakeholders and collaborating institutions presenting their respective workplans, igniting profound discussions and deliberations aimed at devising an effective implementation strategy. This gathering for the 'Fertilizer Right Pakistan Project' not only served as a platform for robust discussions but also fostered collaborations among key players in the agricultural sector. Emphasizing the twin goals of enhancing productivity and promoting sustainable practices, the event underscored the significance of coordinated efforts and partnerships in propelling Pakistan's agricultural landscape forward.



KP Governor for keeping books reading habit alive

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali on Tuesday emphasized on students to keep the book reading habit alive in the age of modern technology and allocate time for reading the books, other than the curriculum. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of "Grand Book Fair" at Khyber Medical College, on the occasion of 50th golden jubilee of the college, he said that knowledge is light which has to be spread in society through books and modern technology. He said that today, youth are getting education based on modern facilities and people have great expectations from them for prosperity and development of the country. Earlier, Deans Khyber Medical College Professor Dr. Mahmood Aurangzeb, Chairman Board of Governors Dr. Umar Ayub, faculty members and students welcomed the governor.

SPSC cancels paper of Secondary School Teacher

KARACHI: Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) has cancelled the paper for the post of Secondary School Teacher (BS-16) scheduled on February 20 over the credible information of the leakage of the question paper. In statements issued by the Secretary and Controller Examination SPSC, the Chairman has ordered an inquiry of the matter. All candidates have been advised to remain calm as Sindh Public Service Commission believes in transparency and no tolerance will be shown on the delinquents, the statement added. The new date of the cancelled paper will be announced in due course of time.—APP

LESCO collects over Rs 12m in 24 hours

LAHORE: Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery) has recovered more than Rs 12 million from 504 dead defaulters in all the five districts—Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara—on the 156th day of its recovery campaign. LESCO spokesman told the media here Tuesday that on the 156th day, Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Nooreez Humayun recovered outstanding dues of Rs 1.96 million from 90 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 4.05 million from 43 defaulters in Eastern Circle, respectively. Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Watto along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Aarsal and Tehsildar Cant. Sajjad Qureshi recovered Rs 1.55 million from 51 defaulters in Central Circle, and Rs

0.94 million from 31 defaulters in South Circle; while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Farooq with the assistance of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhupura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar recovered Rs 0.42 million from 38 defaulters in Nankana Circle and Rs 1.30 million from 65 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle. He added that LESCO Manager E&S (PMU) Engineer Abbas Ali in collaboration with Naib Tehsildar Kasur and Okara Mirza Zahid Baig recovered outstanding dues of Rs 0.52 million from 80 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 1.95 million from 106 defaulters in Kasur Circle. Up till now during the recovery campaign, the LESCO with the help of Tehsildars (Recovery) recovered more than Rs 2.50 billion from 83,394 dead defaulters in its all circles of operation. He elaborated that LESCO recovered outstand-

ing dues of Rs 358.48 million from 11,776 defaulters in Northern Circle; Rs 596.39 million from 10,667 defaulters in Eastern Circle; Rs 335.25 million from 9,461 defaulters in Central Circle; Rs 140.35 million from 4,895 defaulters in South Circle, Rs 205.95 million from 7,319 defaulters in Nankana Circle; Rs 365.13 million from 10,153 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle; Rs 158.15 million from 13,331 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 344.85 million from 15,792 defaulters in Kasur Circle. For the recovery campaign started on September 13, the Lahore Division's Commissioner had assigned additional charge of Tehsildar Recovery (from LESCO defaulters) to relevant Tehsildar, while LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haidar has also designated four senior officers to assist them in the dues recovery from defaulters.—APP

First Lady advocates education, women empowerment

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: First Lady, Samina Alvi on Tuesday underscored the invaluable contributions of teachers and the imperative need for their recognition in shaping the future of nation. Addressing the Teacher's Appreciation Ceremony of Behbud Girls College and Higher Secondary School, she lauded Behbud Association for their dedication to recognising and appreciating the hard work of teachers. She emphasised the vital role, teachers play in shaping the future of their students and commended the organisation for championing the cause of women empowerment through education. The first lady stressed the importance

of teachers focusing on critical thinking, IT skills, and communication skills in children. In a society increasingly reliant on these skills, she underscored the need for character building and instilling values to foster civilised and compassionate citizens. Expressing concern over the educational landscape, the first lady asserted, "Teachers are the backbone of our schools, working tirelessly to mould children into constructive contributors to society." She highlighted the transformative power of education and emphasised that change in society is achievable through effective education. She expressed sorrow over the fact that 10 million children were out of school in the country. Diving deeper into

the education discourse, the first lady drew attention to the critical role of mothers in laying the foundation for a child's education. She stated, "An educated mother is a strong pillar of a strong society," adding half of the population in Pakistan comprised women. She lamented the high illiteracy rates in Pakistan, especially among female children, owing to a male-dominated society, stressing the need for a paradigm shift. In a poignant revelation, the first lady shed light on the challenges faced by women in remote areas, deprived of educational opportunities due to various constraints. She passionately advocated for the empowerment of women, recognising them as indispensable for a progressive society. She referenced

the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report, ranking Pakistan 145 out of 146 countries, underscoring the urgency for change. The first lady concluded her address by sharing her dedication to various social issues, including breast cancer awareness, mental health, and stress management. She highlighted the scarcity of psychiatrists in Pakistan and the stigma surrounding mental health, calling for increased awareness. Additionally, she expressed her commitment to facilitating differently-abled citizens and empowering women and girls in Pakistan. In closing remarks, the first lady expressed gratitude to the media persons for their pivotal role in creating awareness on these crucial issues and educating the masses.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi is inaugurating Mayo Children's Hospital, which has been upgraded in a record time, with children Masooma Fatima and Ibrahim suffering from kidney disorders.—DNA

SMIU VC addresses Orientation Day

KARACHI: The Vice Chancellor Sindh Madressatul Islam University Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai has said that students must keep their minds open and have a vision as to achieve multiple goals in their lives. Addressing the Orientation Day organised by Directorate of Students Affairs and Counselling of SMIU for newly enrolled students in the session of Spring 2024, at the Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto Auditorium, Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai welcomed the students at the Alma-Mater of Founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and said in our country besides other resources there is a youth energy that must be properly used for progress of the country and its people. "There is 60 per cent of youth population in the country, therefore, their services for the country must be according to the demands of the present day. We have to make the country developed with the help of the young generation," the vice chancellor said and added that the newly enrolled students are fortunate that they have succeeded in getting admission at SMIU. Therefore, they pay complete attention to their study here and also participate in co-curricular activities being organised by SMIU's student societies. The vice chancellor stressed that the students benefit from the facilities being provided by the SMIU to them. "SMIU has the most learned and experienced faculty, thus the students shall get quality education over here," Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai concluded.—APP

CM inaugurates upgraded Mayo Children's Hospital

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The upgradation of Mayo Children's Hospital has been completed in record time, showcasing exceptional speed and quality. The hospital's bed capacity has been increased to 360 beds. Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, accompanied by children Masooma Fatima and Ibrahim suffering from kidney disorders, inaugurated the upgraded Mayo Children's Hospital today. Naqvi inspected various wards of the state-of-the-art hospital and commended the high-quality work of the upgradation. The Secretary Communication and Works provided a briefing on the project, while the Secretary Health highlighted the improved Addressing the media after the inauguration, Mohsin Naqvi stated that the first phase of the upgradation, totaling 360 beds, has been completed. The Mayo Children's Hospital is part of the Mayo Hospital Upgra-

ation Plan, which has a total cost of Rs 10 billion. He mentioned that Mayo Hospital currently has 2484 beds and 1763 doctors, and human resource problems have been addressed by Secretary Health Ali Jan. Naqvi praised the hard work of the entire team involved in the upgradation, especially acknowledging the Department of Communication and Works, Secretary Sohail Ashraf, and XEN Maryam for their dedicated efforts. He also applauded the commitment of professors, doctors, and staff at Mayo Children's Hospital. Naqvi highlighted that the malfunctioning CT scan machine at Mayo Hospital, inactive since 2017, has been repaired and made functional. Additionally, necessary machinery and equipment have been provided, including the procurement of elevators for Mayo Children's Hospital and other hospitals. He mentioned the completion of upgradation for 104 hospitals, including 32 teaching hospitals, as well as the construction, repair,

and maintenance of 104 high-ways. Naqvi announced that the detailed performance report of the entire year will be shared with the media in the coming days. Regarding former Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Naqvi expressed respect and acknowledged his vast experience and contributions. He thanked Sharif for appreciating the government's speed of work. Responding to a question about cricket, Naqvi emphasized the need to separate politics from the sport, stating that politics has damaged cricket. He expressed optimism for the improvement of cricket in the future. Regarding the Ameer Balaj murder case, Naqvi assured that the accused has been apprehended, and efforts are underway to identify the mastermind. Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir, Secretaries of Health, Information, Special Secretary Health, Vice Chancellor of King Edward Medical University, DG Nursing, and other officials were also present at the inauguration ceremony.

Minister inaugurates child protection unit at Kohat

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education and Prisons, Justice Retd. Irshad Qaisar on Tuesday inaugurated a child protection unit at Nishtar Special Education Center, Kohat. The function was arranged by the Child Protection and Welfare Commission Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in assistance with UNICEF. The minister on the occasion said the caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was committed to discharge its national and

international responsibility by providing protection to its children and people looking after them. For this purpose, she said all available resources were to be utilized. Likewise, she said in collaboration with UNICEF, the provincial government was making efforts to establish child protection committees at district level and devising a comprehensive policy for child protection units besides, working on constancy of helpline 1121 of child protection. She also praised the efforts

of UNICEF towards this end. She said the children were our future and providing them with best possible opportunities and welfare initiatives was the need of the hour. She said the KP has surpassed other provinces in child protection endeavors. The function was also addressed by the Chief Protection Officer, Ejaz Ahmad, Child Protection Specialist of UNICEF, Suhail Ahmad, Professor of Kohat University, Mehmood Khattak.—APP

PTA, NCRC, UNICEF and Telenor join hands to safeguard children online

Dr. Umar Saif emphasized the critical need to safeguard children online in today's digital age

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), in collaboration with the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Telenor Pakistan, held a launching ceremony for the parental guide titled "Safeguarding your Child in the Digital Age: Guide for Caregivers & Policy Brief on Child Online Protection" at the Telenor 345 Headquarters. Representatives from the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecom (MoIT&T), PTA, Tel-

enor, NCRC, and UNICEF Pakistan also graced the ceremony with their presence. Caretaker Minister for IT & Telecom, Dr. Umar Saif was the chief guest of this occasion. During his address, Dr. Umar Saif emphasized the critical need to safeguard children online in today's digital age. He stressed that it is the collective responsibility of society to not only establish a secure online environment for children but also to proactively educate and support them in navigating the digital landscape safely. While, Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman reiterated PTA's dedication to promoting a

secure online environment, with a particular emphasis on safeguarding the youth and children of the nation. He expressed confidence in the ongoing collaboration of PTA with all stakeholders to ensure children's online safety and promote responsible internet use. Speaking on the occasion, Khurram Ashfaq, CEO of Telenor Pakistan, said, "With a staggering statistic revealing that 1 in 3 internet users worldwide is a child, it's evident that safeguarding their online experience is paramount." "Every child deserves the right to explore the internet safely and securely, free from harm or exploitation. Let us

work together to raise awareness, strengthen legislative frameworks, and empower our children with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate the digital world safely," says Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson, NCRC. The ceremony included an interactive session involving children from schools and their caregivers. This session aimed to equip them with vital knowledge about online threats and promote safe online practices. It exemplified the commitment of the participating organizations to empowering both children and caregivers with the necessary tools for a safer online experience.

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: A Vendor displaying Dry Fruits to attract the customers at Srinagar Highway in the Federal Capital. —APP

'Utilisation of human, mineral resources will lead to a stable Pak'

The prime minister said the practice of exporting raw materials should come to an end as the export of the products after value addition was direly needed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday reassuring the government's all-out support to the investors, said the effective utilisation of human as well as mineral resources would lead to a stable, prosperous and rising Pakistan. "Our human resource is more important than our mineral resource. The human resource coupled with the mineral resource will lead to stable, prosperous and rising Pakistan," he said addressing the signing ceremony of a joint venture agreement between Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) and the US-based Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc for establishing a dedicated facility for crushing and packaging of pink salt for the export purposes. Managing Director of the PMDC Asad Ahmed and President of Mir-

acle Saltworks Collective Inc Ahmed Nadeem Khan signed the agreement that was witnessed by the Prime Minister Kakar, Energy Minister Muhamamd Ali and relevant senior authorities. The prime minister said the practice of exporting raw materials should come to an end as the export of the products after value addition was direly needed. "This is the path for Pakistan. This is the right step. We will be exporting the quality product in the coming days. Pakistan will get rightful branding for its product. This will pave the way for further opportunities," the prime minister remarked who also distributed awards among the individuals who played a key role in the joint venture agreement. Calling the US a "most valued" trading partner of Pakistan, he said the agreement symbolized the investment climate in the country that would further strengthen the friendship between the two countries and the people.

He said the decision of the US-based firm to invest \$200 million in Pakistan was a resounding vote of confidence in the government's economic policies. Prime Minister Kakar said the investment was not just about the pink salt rather it was about trust, partnership and shared prosperity. He told the gathering that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was playing an important role in creating an enabling environment for foreign direct investment. It served as a one-window facility for the investors besides streamlining processes and removing the bureaucratic hurdles to attract investment in the fields mining, energy, IT, agriculture, livestock, industry and tourism, he added. The prime minister lauded the friendship of the American people calling them the "most warm and generous" people on earth with openness and liberal values which was a role

model for a thriving economy. He said Pakistan was not rich for its geostrategic location rather it was a geoeconomic offer as the country sat on the Tethyan Belt of 2800sq km filled with immense mineral resources. Earlier, Energy Minister Muhammad Ali said the agreement was the beginning of a long journey that would boost the investors' confidence. He said Pakistan had tremendous potential in the mineral sector and the government was committed, focused and had prioritized the sector to exploit the potential through more investment in the pink salt sector. PMDC Chairman Shamsuddin lauded the SIFC's role which led to surge in PMDC's profit by three to four times comparing last year. He said the PMDC's geologists were actively moving around for exploration purposes and hoped that the number of mining leases would continue

to grow. Shamsuddin called for further empowerment of the SIFC, strengthening of the Geological Survey of Pakistan besides providing security to miners, and amending the rules to streamline the processes. Managing Director of PMDC Engineer Asad Ahmed said the agreement represented the culmination of excessive collaboration between the partners and thanked the petroleum ministry and SIFC for effective coordination. Chief Communications Officer of the Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc Mubarak Khan called the agreement the beginning of a great journey and a great opportunity for Pakistan as the pink salt would act as an ambassador at millions of homes internationally. Executive VP and Chief Financial Officer Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc said the project would lead to global monetisation of Pakistan's mineral resources which was one of the richest countries with huge mineral resources.

ANF recovers 631 kg drugs in 15 operations

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 15 operations across the country managed to recover 631 kg of drugs and arrested 12 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 1 kg heroin and 4.8 kg Ice drug were recovered from a passenger going to Saudi Arabia at Islamabad Airport. 1 kg Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Sialkot Airport. 69 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a passenger going to Sharjah at Islamabad Airport. 448 grams Ice was recovered from the possession of a Doha-bound passenger netted at Lahore Airport while 216 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested at Dera Ismail Khan bypass. 100 kg opium, 35 kg hashish, and 5 kg morphine were recovered from the Nokundi Chagai area. 129 kg hashish was recovered from RCD Road Lasbela and 24 kg opium, 50 kg heroin, and 5 kg Ice drug were recovered from Winder Hub area. 19 kg hashish and 6 kg opium were recovered from an accused on G.T Road Peshawar. The spokesman informed that 8.4 kg opium and 6 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of an accused held near Mandra Toll Plaza Rawalpindi. In 11th operation, 10 kg hashish was recovered from a drug smuggler arrested near Jamshoro toll plaza and in 12th operation, 6 kg hashish was recovered from Zakhakel Khyber area. 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up in Muzaffargarh, Multan and 3 kg Ice was recovered from the possession of two suspects netted in Vehari Chowk, Multan. In 15th operation, 1 kg heroin and 2 kg hashish were recovered from an accused near Sher Shah Toll Plaza, Multan. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Int'l training workshop on "Electric Mobility"

ISLAMABAD: ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) in collaboration with the National Electric Vehicle Technology Innovation Center, China will arrange an international training workshop on "Electric Mobility for ECO Member Countries" in Beijing, China in the month of April. This workshop, scheduled to be held from April 15-29, will offer a unique opportunity for the relevant professional with sound knowledge of electric mobility to acquire the necessary insights, knowledge, and strategies for scaling up electric mobility in the

ECO Member Countries. According to the ECOSF, the organizing partners will provide local hospitality, including hotel accommodation, meals, and local transportation duration of the training while the participants are required to cover their airfare to Beijing, China. The workshop is aimed at elevating the technical capacity of the participants in Electric Vehicle (EV) development and providing first-hand knowledge of China's EV products and technologies. The key focus areas of the workshop will be Regulations and Inspec-

tion, Development Models, vehicles Design and Technology, Industry Trends and Future Prospects and Technological Advancements and Sustainability. The government officials, entrepreneurs, industrial practitioners and research scholars from ECO member countries in the automotive and transport sectors are expected to attend the workshop. The participants having excellent English communication skills, relevant work experience in industries such as automobiles, transportation, or

clean energy and the ability to provide report on the current development status of their domestic automotive industry will participate in the workshop. This opportunity will enhance international collaboration by providing an opportunity for the participants to have networking with experts from ECO member countries. The training workshop will enable participants to visit cutting-edge enterprises for hands-on learning and help promote industry exchange with China's EV leaders.—APP

ICCI and RIUJ vow to work together

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, visited the Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ) and congratulated the newly elected President Tariq Ali Virk, Secretary General Asif Bashir Chaudhry and other office bearers of the Union. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Bakhtawari, President ICCI said that the journalistic community has an important role in guiding the society and highlighting the economic potential of the country and added that ICCI would work with RIUJ to promote the business and economic interests of Pakistan. He said that the journalistic community should highlight the investment po-

tential in various sectors of Pakistan's economy that would help attract foreign investment to Pakistan. Tariq Ali Virk, President, Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists said that the RIUJ and ICCI will continue to work together to resolve the key issues of the business community and create a conducive business environment in the country. He said that the business community and journalists are facing many common problems and they should work together to get their issues addressed. He thanked Ahsan Bakhtawari and members of his delegation for visiting them to congratulate them on their election. Afzal Butt, President, Federal Union of Journalists said that they enjoy very friendly relations with ICCI which has always supported them in promoting the

cause of their community. He said that the visit of the ICCI delegation to congratulate the new office bearers of RIUJ is a morale booster for them. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that a hospital should be built in Islamabad for the business community and journalists to provide them free medical treatment. He said that the new government should present its economic manifesto and added that ICCI in collaboration with the National Press Club will organize a summit in this regard. Anwar Raza, President, National Press Club Islamabad said that ICCI is maintaining close relations with the journalistic community and hoped that journalists and the business community would work together to promote trade and exports of the country.

Aneeq Ahmed stresses national harmony, positivity

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed stressed the importance of reducing hate and delivering good news to foster trust and belief among the people. Talking to PTV, he urged individuals from all walks of life, including political leaders and bureaucrats, to contribute to the country's development and prosperity. He emphasized the need for a collective effort guided by ethical and religious values. The minister said that the ministry made a significant reduction in the Hajj package for 2024, reducing the financial burden on pilgrims. This reduction, from Rs 11,75,000 to Rs 10,75,000 marked the first time in the country's history that the upcoming Hajj had become cheaper than the previous year's Hajj, he added.—APP



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Briefs

WASA to lodge FIRs against defaulters: MD

RAWALPINDI: Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) would lodge FIRs against the defaulters, said Managing Director (MD) WASA Rawalpindi, Muhammad Saleem Ashraf. Chairing a meeting held here on Tuesday he directed the authorities to accelerate the ongoing campaign to increase revenue recovery and disconnect illegal water connections. Saleem Ashraf while reviewing the revenue recovery ordered action in accordance with the law against the defaulters without any discrimination. Sewage and water connections of the defaulters should be disconnected, he added. Saleem Ashraf also ordered the officers to review the performance of all the revenue inspectors daily. The performance reports of the revenue inspectors should be prepared in the light of the specified targets, he instructed. Strict disciplinary action would be taken against the officials to show negligence in revenue collection, he said. Deputy MD, Finance and Revenue, Amir Ashfaq Qureshi, Director Finance and Revenue, Tahir Bashir Mirza, Deputy Directors Revenue and other officials concerned attended the meeting.—APP

Actress Tamanna Begum remembered

ISLAMABAD: The 12th death anniversary of renowned Pakistani film and drama actress Tamanna Begum was observed on Tuesday. The legend artist was born in Lahore and started her career from Radio Pakistan. She later ventured into theater and films and registered herself as one of the most sought-after actor. Tamanna Begum worked with popular stars, including Talat Iqbal and Waheed Murad, and her films gained much popularity among viewers. She died on this day on 2012 due to kidney disease.—APP

Islamabad Police ICT-15 application introduced

ISLAMABAD: Under the special directions of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police ICT-15 mobile application has been introduced for IOS users, to ensure the safety of citizens. An ICP public relations officer said on Tuesday that the purpose of this mobile app is to enable citizens to inform the police without any hassle or time delay and ensure immediate police assistance. Through this mobile app, citizens can promptly notify the police of any incidents or emergencies by sending audio messages or images. Moreover, to utilize this service the citizens should first download the "ICT 15" mobile application from the App Store. After installation, they need to enter their name, address, and mobile number. In case of an emergency, they can send an alert message along with audio or images.—APP

Alvi for combined efforts to overcome economic issues

Addressing a National Health Summit organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), the president said that during Covid-19 pandemic when the deadly wave was hitting the globe, Pakistan emerged as the third best performing country in the world to avert the damages in health and economic sectors

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that the entire nation had set a precedent in the world with their collective efforts during Covid-19 pandemic and stressed that such a display of unity was critical to address disconcerting issues in education, health and economic sectors. Addressing a National Health Summit organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), the president said that during Covid-19 pandemic when the deadly wave was hitting the globe, Pakistan emerged as the third best performing country in the world to avert the damages in health and economic sectors. He said it was all possible due to the collective efforts and cooperation of the people and all stakeholders who displayed unison in their efforts to ward off the spread of the pandemic. "That precedent has carved a path for the future which can guide us in our endeavours to overcome the contemporary challenges," he opined. Highlighting the importance of physical hygiene, the president said that from the Islamic teachings, it stood proved that personal hygiene was linked with spiritual purity. He said about 90 percent dental cases could be cured if prevention habits were developed by the people including regular brushing of teeth, similar was the case with communicable diseases. The president urged all the stakeholders and the business community to play their parts in creating awareness among



the masses over health-related issues including mental stress and population growth. The serious issue of 26 million out-of-school children required combined efforts and mosques could be utilized to impart education to these children, he added. The president mentioned Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka where the literacy rate among the children was higher than Pakistan. He also cited the precedent of China that lifted about 700 million people out of poverty by focusing on health and education sectors. "The State can show the path but it is the responsibility of all stakeholders of the society to share the responsibility by addressing issues in the education and health sectors," he added. President

Alvi further stressed upon focusing on priorities and continuity of policies which required public involvement. The provincial governments in the country only spent 25 to 30 percent on education out of their allocated budgets which was not suffice to address issues in this sector, he added. Referring to population growth, he stressed "the demographic transition" involving all segments of society to realize the significance of the matter. About 24 percent of the population in the country was suffering from the mental stress due to various reasons which should be addressed comprehensively, he said, adding that awareness about the child sexual crimes and drug abuse should be created through different

mediums. The president also called for morality-based principles in the world which was overwhelmed by the vested interests and reiterated the removal of disparity in distribution of wealth and accumulation of resources in fewer hands. Earlier, speaking on the occasion, RCCI President Saqib Rafique said President Dr Arif Alvi was the first head of state who visited the chamber's building and encouraged the business community for their involvement in different initiatives taken for the health of the general public. He said almost 90 percent of people could not afford the expensive treatment of dentistry, adding the dental related diseases could be avoided with just due care and prevention. He said the chamber

was making all possible measures to extend better health facilities in every nook and cranny of the Rawalpindi division, under which it had arranged mobile dental units for diagnosing chronic disease caused by bad oral hygiene. Besides, it was carrying out water testing and data collection in 74 union councils of the Rawalpindi division, he added. Chairman RCCI Standing Committee on Health Dr Shamil Daud Arain stressed the need for creating awareness among the masses about oral health as around 90 percent of Pakistanis were suffering from dental-related diseases. RCCI Group leader Sohail Altaf said, "a strong economy guarantees the strong national defence that comes from political stability.

Estate Office allots 1,227 govt houses in two year

ISLAMABAD: The Estate Office, Ministry of Housing and Works has allotted as many as 1,227 quarters of Cat-IV, government accommodations to the federal government employees during the last two years. "The Estate Office has made all the allotments on merit by keeping view of the seniority of the government employees who are working in different ministries and divisions," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said that the Ministry of Housing and Works also intends to modify government accommodation allocation rules to facilitate federal government employees. The official said a proposed amendment to modify the Allocation Rules, 2002 is under consideration which will be implemented as soon as possible. He said the ministry plans to eliminate Rule 20 of Government House Allotment. This rule currently allows a government house allocated to a retired federal employee to be assigned to their employed son or daughter. The official said the waiting list employees are of the view that the rule is based on injustice to transfer the government house from father to child on retirement as it deprives the right of senior employees who have been waiting for a long time. He said the officers and employees get their son or daughter recruited before retirement and the house is allotted to them, adding that the affected employees are demanding that the allotment of houses should be done only on the principle of seniority.—APP

Financial inclusion is impossible without women empowerment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: BizNet, Pakistan's premier platform for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship, celebrated its third successful edition at the President House Islamabad in association with Women Business Network. BizNet brought together a diverse range of industry leaders, policymakers, and startup founders to promote financial inclusion and technological advancements. The theme was "Embracing Financial Inclusion & Business Transformation." Iftikhar Hussain, CEO Transforming Hub & Founder, Women Business Network, expressed his gratitude to all stakeholders for their unwavering support, which has been instrumental in BizNet's journey to its third successful edition. He highlighted the roles of banks & Fintech in fostering innova-

tion, entrepreneurship, and economic growth in Pakistan. He expressed his gratitude to all stakeholders for their unwavering support, which has been instrumental in BizNet's journey to its third successful edition. He highlighted the roles of banks in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth in Pakistan. He emphasized financial inclusion is impossible without women entering into the workforce in Pakistan. Banks should take those initiatives that welcome females to do businesses. Iftikhar announced two significant initiatives aimed at furthering Transforming Hub & Women Business Network's mission. The first is a Women's Festival, scheduled for April, aimed at promoting gender equality, women empowerment through financial inclusion through sustainable fashion and showcasing of women

talent through stalls. The second initiative involves taking a delegation to the US, showcasing Pakistan's entrepreneurial spirit and seeking opportunities for collaboration and growth on an international level for diversity. President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi commended the State Bank of Pakistan for its efforts in promoting financial inclusivity, noting that despite progress, there is still a considerable journey ahead, particularly within our region. He praised CEO of Transforming Hub, Iftikhar Hussain for his steadfast commitment to inclusivity, recognizing the pivotal role individuals like him play in driving positive societal change. President Dr. Arif Alvi also addressed the concerning issue of education for street children, highlighting that 44% of Pakistani children are currently not receiving an education. He emphasized

the need for us to take proactive measures to address this critical issue. Muzaffar Piracha, Group CEO of Airlink Communications Ltd., emphasized the role of technology in advancing financial inclusion. He highlighted the importance of leveraging technology to reach underserved communities and provide them with access to financial services. Amer Ejaz, Chief Digital Officer of Jazz, underscored the future of financial inclusion, emphasizing that it is not just a trend but a necessity for sustainable economic growth. He highlighted Jazz's commitment to leveraging digital technology to enhance financial inclusion and empower individuals across Pakistan. The event concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to continue driving innovation, inclusivity, and economic growth in Pakistan.

PR shifts residential colonies to DISCOs

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has shifted as many as 16,535 out of 26,660 electric meters of railway's residential colonies to Distribution Companies (DISCOs) and Karachi-Electric (KE) to rationalize its expenditure on utilities. "The electric meters of residential colonies are being shifted to DISCOs by the department and the step has resulted in saving of Rs 1,300 million so far," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said Pakistan Railways had taken certain austerity measures to moderate its losses and all these austerity measures have been taken in line with the instructions issued by Finance Division from time to time. In addition to austerity measures, he said the department has rigorously followed a diversified approach for reducing its different costs along with measures to improve its revenue streams. He said in order to further reduce the electricity bills, Pakistan Railways had prepared a plan to shift on solar energy for that purpose the work has initiated by awarding the feasibility study to M/s NESPAC. The official said around 100 sites with heavy consumption of electricity had been identified and once shifted to solar energy, it would result in savings of Rs 1,000 million. He said that the human resource strength of Pakistan Railways was being critically analyzed to bring it at a rational level. This step will result in reduction of salary bill and, in the long run, will reduce the overhead of pension payments. Around 1,377 posts from Ministry of Railways, Headquarters office and extra division had been abolished which was likely to save Rs 720.551 million per year, he added. In order to improve the revenue streams, certain other steps have also been taken included to reduce manual working, streamline financial operations and to minimize risk of ghost employees and pensioners, SAP based ERP system is under development to bring transparency and increase in revenue stream. The official said the short-term leasing of land had been introduced instead of long-term leasing to stay competitive in the market for increased revenue flow. He said Railways passenger train fares and freight rates had been rationalized and were constantly being monitored based on supply and demand and volatile prices of fuel to generate more revenues. "Pakistan Railways remains committed to implement cost-cutting measures and revenue optimization strategies to address its financial challenges. The austerity measures undertaken are crucial for the sustainability and financial health of the organization," he added.—DNA

Chinese water-saving facilities shipped to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The first batch of equipment for the Million Acres of Green Pakistan Smart Farm Project participated by Chinese water-saving industry leader, Tianjin Dayu Irrigation Group, has been packed and delivered, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. The batch of intelligent water

and fertilizer integrated irrigation equipment covering a farmland area of 2,000 hectares will be used for the planting and irrigation of wheat, cotton, tomatoes, corn and other crops, providing vital technical support for the construction of smart farms in Pakistan. On July 7, 2023, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif launched the LIMS (Land Information and Management System) initiative, which aims to promote modern agricultur-

al development, improve agricultural productivity and meet the food needs of Pakistan's growing population through the application of advanced technology and modern irrigation systems, among which the Million Acres of Green Pakistan Smart Farm Project as a response to and support for this initiative. "Agriculture is Pakistan's pillar industry. The world's most advanced technology will help us increase production. It can not only

be as self-use, but will also be of great help to our food exports in the future. At the same time, Dayu Group has also made considerable achievements in flood prevention, disaster early warning, rural sewage treatment, and so on. We hope to cooperate closely with Dayu in multiple dimensions," said Ghulam Qadir, Pakistan's Commercial Counselor in China.



ISLAMABAD : A group photo of Behroz Haider (Groom) son of Sajjad Haider President Rawalpindi Islamabad Photojournalist association (Professional) with Shaiza Raza (Bride) in walima ceremony held at Serena Hotel. Dr Sultan Temuri Ch Shahid Leyla Zuberi also seen in picture.—DNA

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Yerevan's dual politics and S. Caucasus

HERE are two types of diseases in the world: curable and incurable. Although this disease is not fatal, it has an extremely damaging effect. There is no doubt that Armenia is the carrier of such a disease, and unfortunately, the carriers of this disease mostly cover the South Caucasus. The problem is not a territorial claim but simply spreading a harmful atmosphere in the area where it falls and destroying healthy creatures. If we look at recent history, we can witness that the Armenians have claimed territory in the South Caucasus, even in the territories of Russia, Georgia, Israel and Japan. Since fabricating history is as easy as drinking a glass of water for the separatist Armenians, forging maps of all sizes and formats, as well as creating fake historical monuments, has become their specialized art from time to time. In September 2023, when the separatist regime in Garabagh was neutralized by the Azerbaijani army, Armenia admitted that it was not responsible for the long-lasting crimes of the separatist clans in Azerbaijan's territories. Even when the separatist leaders were arrested and brought to Baku, the Yerevan administration welcomed this event very positively behind the scenes. Because at that time the names of Arayik Harutyunyan and Ruben Vardanyan were seen as a potential threat to the Pashinyan administration. It seems that Yerevan has switched to plan B and is simply trying to convince the remaining separatist elements with false promises. Reviving the so-called Artsakh parliament, he met with the head of the commission and former Armenian MFA Vardan Oskanyan. At the meeting, the parties discussed the fate of a group of separatists who were allegedly "departed" from Garabagh, but actually left Garabagh territory to avoid criminal responsibility. Although Vardan Oskanyan has been a politician who has blasphemed Pashinyan's administration for many years, recently he has made a lot of efforts to take a certain position within the administration. However, for some reason this politician, who is considered an expired political figure by the incumbent government in Armenia, could not win the Prime Minister's favour. Therefore, Oskanyan is currently trying to become more visible within the new faction nurturing separatism in the country. What to do? Business is business. Working for Pashinyan or the separatist clan makes no difference. At the end, all are sourced from the same root. The Armenian leadership continues the dualism in politics, the game that accords with its usual and traditional formula. Thus, by trying to delay or disrupt the peace talks on the one hand, official Yerevan is engaged in rekindling the extinct separatist fire inside, on the other hand. As a matter of fact, Pashinyan's speech the other day was clearly full of allegations against the territories of Azerbaijan. This reflects Armenia's territorial claim against Azerbaijan in a completely transparent form. Even the provocations on the border and the fact that it coincided with the snap presidential elections in Azerbaijan were not a coincidence. Everything is conceived, planned and executed from the beginning. The only thing about Armenia is that it cannot successfully implement its plans.

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UNRWA donors should reconsider suspension

AT A time of desperate need in Gaza, key donors have suspended funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency in response to allegations from Israel. Donors should take such accusations seriously but should also remember that the Israeli government has its own reasons for wanting to undermine UNRWA. In January, Israel presented allegations that 12 UNRWA employees participated in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack against Israel. In response, at least 16 countries – including some major donors, such as the US, Germany, Sweden and Japan – suspended funding to the UN agency. The EU, another major donor, is considering suspending funds. Some of those donors are waiting on the outcome of investigations into the allegations before potentially restoring funding. If funding is not restored, UNRWA officials warn that the lack of funds could start having a severe impact on the agency's ability to deliver services by late February. There is likely some truth in the Israeli allegations. With 13,000 employees in the Gaza Strip, it is unsurprising that a few individuals would, in some way, be involved in the attack. Nonetheless, any participation of UNRWA employees in such a brutal attack is appalling and such allegations must certainly be investigated. UNRWA immediately fired the 10 accused employees, with two having died, even without receiving evidence from Israel. On Friday, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant publicly identified the original 12 individuals and added that more than 30 UNRWA employees were involved in the attack and that 12 percent of the agency's workers in Gaza are affiliated with Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad. These are grave allegations and UNRWA donors should require that Israel provide solid evidence for these and other claims. For all UN agencies, maintaining independence and a professional commitment to their mission is essential. It must demand high standards for behavior and professionalism. Any involvement by UNRWA staff in an attack on Israeli civilians would clearly violate those standards. Also, the UN is a large institution, with many partners, and, realistically, problems will arise. For example, there have been horrific cases of UN peacekeepers sexually abusing women and children. There have been multiple corruption scandals. In such cases, the UN must act to ensure accountability and terminate employment or relationships with workers and partners that fail to uphold UN values. However, that does not mean totally shutting down an entire UN agency or mission, especially when millions of desperate people rely on the organization's services. When assessing the allegations against UNRWA, it is also crucial to remember that Israel has long sought to dismantle the agency and end its mission. The agency's mere existence is a thorn in the side of many right-wing Israelis and governments, including the current leadership. UNRWA is specifically devoted to caring for Palestinians who lost their homes and livelihoods during the 1948 war and the descendants of those refugees. Those refugees' existence is a constant reminder that the idea that Palestine, before Israel's establishment, was "a land without a people for a people without a land" was never true.



The problem in Palestine is not political, it is ideological

Dr. Ramzybaroud

The Israeli minister was not, however, simply talking out of anger. He meant it, because Israel's behavior in Gaza since then has demonstrated that such willingness to kill Palestinians en masse actually exists. Zionists are ready to do anything to survive and their survival is wholly dependent on the erasure of the perceived enemy; not "erasure" in an intellectual, political or even cultural sense, but the physical destruction of the Palestinians as well. The ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948, known as the Nakba, was a serious attempt at achieving that goal. But since the "enemy," being the Palestinian nation, survived and continues...

THE problem is not the absence of a Palestinian state, but Zionism itself. What is the use of a Palestinian state if Zionism, as a racist, exclusivist ideology, continues to define Israel and impose that definition on the Palestinians? This ideology calls for racial purity of Jews in Palestine, of course, at the expense of the native inhabitants of the land. To achieve this, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had to be forced into exile and thousands more killed, wounded or incarcerated. Neither two states nor even one state is possible if Zionism is not entirely defeated – not revamped, not "fixed," but eradicated. As Palestinians are today being killed in unprecedentedly large numbers in Gaza, Western politicians are waking up to the necessity of a Palestinian state. But why now? After all, it was these very politicians and their governments that either defended Israel or remained silent as it thwarted every possibility of peaceful coexistence. Theirs is not a moral awakening but a distraction to appear – at least before their own people – to be proactive, while Israel is systematically destroying the Palestinian people. Former UN Relief and Works Agency official Chris Guinness has said that the Israeli war on Gaza is "the first genocide in the history of humanity that is livestreamed on television." The genocide is worsening now that Palestinians are starting to die from starvation, while an even larger number are dying from diseases and polluted water, aside from those being blown up or shot by Israel. For the likes of David Cameron, Britain's foreign minister, to talk about the recognition of a Palestinian state as "absolutely vital" for "long-term peace" is bewildering, to say the least. Those struggling to survive daily are hardly concerned about yet more empty Western promises. The genocide underway in Gaza tells us that the issue is not merely political, but ideological. And, while Western leaders speak of "long-term peace," Israel entrenches its system of violence and apartheid. "There cannot be a situation in which children and women approach us from the wall. Anyone who ap-

proaches in order to harm security must receive a bullet," Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said last week. In Gaza, the violence is far more sickening. The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor this month reported that "groups of 10 to 20 Israeli civilians at a time were permitted to watch and laughingly film Palestinian prisoners and detainees in their underwear," as they were tortured and abused by Israeli soldiers. There can be no rational political justification for any of this. All of this – the language of genocide, the genocide itself and the threats of committing a greater genocide – is rooted not in a rational political theory but in Zionism. The problem keeps getting worse because we refuse to address it head-on. In fact, many are doing the exact opposite. For example, Western governments have passed – or are passing – laws equating criticism of Zionism with antisemitism. Even Facebook owner Meta is considering increasing its censorship of the term "Zionist" if it is critical of Israel. When Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu threatened, on Nov. 5, to drop a nuclear bomb on Gaza, he was condemned by many merely for his inappropriate language, not the act itself. Some Israeli officials also criticized Eliyahu, but only for damaging Israel's international reputation. The Israeli minister was not, however, simply talking out of anger. He meant it, because Israel's behavior in Gaza since then has demonstrated that such willingness to kill Palestinians en masse actually exists. Zionists are ready to do anything to survive and their survival is wholly dependent on the erasure of the perceived enemy; not "erasure" in an intellectual, political or even cultural sense, but the physical destruction of the Palestinians as well. The ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948, known as the Nakba, was a serious attempt at achieving that goal. But since the "enemy," being the Palestinian nation, survived and continues to resist and demand its collective rights, the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people is now back on the mainstream Israeli political agenda. This ongoing Gaza

war is the most serious attempt, to date, to destroy the Palestinian people. This is why Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government want to carry on with the war. On the one hand, they want to ensure the continued slaughter, thus the extermination, of the Palestinians, while on the other they are also fully aware that this is a historic opportunity to finish a job that previous Zionist leaders did not complete 75 years ago. Indeed, Israel sees the war on Gaza beyond the geographic confines of the tiny Gaza Strip. It is a war on the Palestinians everywhere. If Israel succeeds in subduing Gaza, it will turn its gaze immediately to the West Bank, then to the 2 million Palestinian citizens of Israel. It is important to recall that, before the current war, the Israeli incitement against Palestinians was focused mostly on the West Bank – with the declared aim of annexing about a third of that occupied region. There was also a major official Israeli campaign to curtail the rights and incite hatred against Palestinian citizens inside Israel. This campaign was rooted in history but became far more apparent following the Unity Intifada of May 2021. It was then that Israel realized that the "division" of the Palestinians was largely political and that, as a nation, Palestinians remain strongly connected. That is why Ben-Gvir lobbied, even before he claimed his ministerial position in December 2022, to have a national guard tasked with "restoring governance where needed." If Gaza falls, all Palestinians in the rest of Palestine will become the new target for Israeli violence, ethnic cleansing and, if necessary, genocide. Reducing all these issues to that of finding creative political solutions that would merely sell false hope to the Palestinian people is not only ignorant, or devious, but also a diversion from the real issue: Israel's Zionist ideology. Zionism, like all racist colonial ideologies, operates with a zero-sum approach to its relationship with the natives of colonized land: dominance through ethnic cleansing and genocide. For "long-term peace" to become a reality, Zionism must end. – Source: Arab News

Navigating Libya's political quagmire: Thirteen years after 2011 revolution

Ferhat Polat

Unfortunately, due to prolonged conflict and instability, Libya has become a country with limited revenue. This has led to a decline in socio-economic conditions across the nation. State building has become the critical solution to fragility and post-conflict demands, and it helps a country's progress towards economic and political stability and democracy. In this regard, Libya's main hurdles to the state-building process are the presence of spoilers and groups who view the peace process as a danger to their interests and power...

FEBRUARY 17 marks the 13th anniversary of the uprisings in Libya but Libyans have little reason to celebrate as the country continues to grapple with instability. Since the removal of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has been engulfed in a state of turmoil. The attempt to overthrow Gaddafi's regime did not succeed in establishing stable political structures. Libya has become embroiled in a complex civil war consisting of multiple phases. Since 2014, the country has experienced a division between rival administrations, resulting in the emergence of numerous militias and a state of lawlessness. The country gradually descended into conflict due to internal fuelling the rivalry between political-military forces. From 2014 to 2021, Libya was divided between two rival administrations, one in Tripoli and another in Tobruk. In March 2021, a new interim government called the Government of National Unity (GNU) was established. The GNU was chosen through a process backed by the United Nations and endorsed by Libya's east-based parliament (HoR). This approval was a significant milestone for Libya, as it marked the establishment of a unified government for the first time since 2014. The establishment of the GNU gave rise to expectations of political stability and the prospect of holding parliamentary and presidential elections in December 2021. However, the plan did not take place as expected, leading to the indefinite postponement of the elections. In the past thirteen years, the security situation in Libya has become increasingly unstable due to the ongoing failure of rival political parties to find common ground. The polarisation in Libyan politics and the subsequent inability to unite rival militias into a cohesive, professional national armed force has resulted in a significant security vacuum within the country. Security threats have emerged from various militia groups in both western and eastern Libya, with a particular concentration in the east of the region. This is primarily due to Khalifa Haftar, who leads the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA), consisting of militias and mercenary groups. The power vacuum also allowed foreign

mercenaries like Russia's infamous Wagner paramilitary company to exploit the situation and establish a presence within the country, even controlling Libya's oil fields. Libya's division at both the political and security levels has resulted in fierce competition for its oil resources. Consequently, oil ports and fields have been subjected to blockades by foreign forces. In June 2020, armed fighters associated with Wagner seized control of two of Libya's largest oil facilities, El Sharara, and its most prominent oil-exporting port. Libya is known for having the second largest oil reserves in Africa and is considered one of the wealthiest economies in terms of its oil reserves per capita. Unfortunately, due to prolonged conflict and instability, Libya has become a country with limited revenue. This has led to a decline in socio-economic conditions across the nation. State building has become the critical solution to fragility and post-conflict demands, and it helps a country's progress towards economic and political stability and democracy. In this regard, Libya's main hurdles to the state-building process are the presence of spoilers and groups who view the peace process as a danger to their interests and power and work to undermine any state-building efforts and the peace process. Thus, thirteen years after the Libyan conflict, the key to restoring the country lies in the unity of governmental institutions, especially security and economic institutions. The effectiveness of emergency response and recovery efforts is hindered by the absence of a centralised authority and the presence of armed groups. This makes it challenging to coordinate and implement effective measures. Additionally, the ongoing power struggle between different factions impedes resource allocation and slows the process of rebuilding essential infrastructure. For example, the collapse of two dams in the port city of Derna resulted in devastating floods that caused huge civilian casualties, displaced residents, and destroyed entire neighbourhoods. The much-anticipated presidential and parliamentary elections in Libya, initially planned for December 2021, have been indefinitely postponed due to a lack of preparation and ongoing

disagreements among various political forces about the legal framework for the election. The international community sees holding elections in Libya as crucial for addressing the crisis of legitimacy and rebuilding trust in the political system. Conducting a free and fair electoral process will effectively resolve this issue. However, the upcoming poll at this stage is facing several challenges. One of the main issues is the lack of agreement on the constitution. Moreover, polarising figures like Haftar and Saif al Islam al Gaddafi are vying for the presidency, further contributing to the confusion and disorder surrounding the election. To establish a more effective political system, it is necessary to go beyond the current infrastructure. One key aim of elections is to provide a roadmap for the nation, outlining policies and plans for the future. Previous polls have lacked clear manifestos or policy agendas, with the Constitutional Declaration of 2012 being the last indication of a political vision. Therefore, conducting a new election would enable the formation of a mandate for the elected government, shaping the path ahead. It is imperative to note that Türkiye and Egypt have been making efforts to repair their strained relationship, especially since the start of 2021. Both Ankara and Cairo have the potential to significantly impact promoting stability in Libya, considering their influence over the conflicting factions. Ankara has supported the UN-recognised Governments in Tripoli, while Cairo has backed Haftar's LNA. However, despite their differing allegiances, both nations acknowledge the importance of restarting the political process and offering support for democratic elections. The future of Libya remains uncertain as it undergoes a delicate transition. A clear and pragmatic roadmap for establishing democracy is urgently needed. This roadmap must include the development of a new constitution, holding elections and unifying the state institutions, which will lead to more long-term objectives of constructing a stable, secure, prosperous, and sustainable democratic society in Libya. – Source: TRT WORLD

Briefs

Senators
decry
alleged...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan after it was restored on Monday after an over 36-hour blockade since Saturday (February 17). Ahmed said those embroiled in rigging were playing with the national integrity. Suspension of internet services established that the polls were not transparent, he said adding, that the authorities were scared after allowing rigging, therefore social media platforms were shut down. "To some extent, the Rawalpindi commissioner relayed details about the irregularities in elections.

Gohar
demands
ECP CEC's...

FROM PAGE 01
but unfortunately, our concerns have not been addressed. The release of election results under Form-45s is crucial to uphold the public mandate." Highlighting the revelations made by former Rawalpindi commissioner Liaquat Ali Chhattha regarding electoral fraud, Gohar expressed concern for Chhattha's safety and called for full security for him and his family. He added, "Commissioner Rawalpindi has clearly stated what kind of fraud has taken place in elections. It is our duty to ensure his safety and protect those who expose the truth."

IHC to IGP:
arrest DC,
produce...

FROM PAGE 01
the lawyer representing Islamabad DC submitted a plea for Memon's exemption from the court. "My client is currently in Khairpur as he has to go to perform Umrah," the lawyer informed the court. At this, Justice Sattar remarked that the court hadn't accepted the plea for exemption. "Let the Ministry of Interior and DG Passports also ensure that the name of Irfan Nawaz Memon is placed on the Exit Control List (ECL) so that he is unable to leave the territorial jurisdiction of Pakistan," a short order released by the court stated.

Mushahid
demands...

FROM PAGE 01
The senator remarked that two "soft coups" were initiated against PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif through the judiciary, adding that "unfortunately, it happened again on April 10, 2022", referring to the ouster of the PTI government through a no-confidence motion initiated by a multi-party coalition. "When it happened with them, we celebrated a lot. When it was happening to us, those on the other side were happy," he observed, noting that it would have been better if elections were held after the PTI government was ousted in 2022.

ZAB case...

FROM PAGE 01
Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Musarrat Hilali - heard the presidential reference seeking to revisit the "controversial" death sentence awarded to former PM Bhutto in 1979. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and amicus curiae with expertise on the criminal and constitutional sides attended today's hearing. CJP Isa also said that imposing martial law is a decision of an individual and not of an institution of the army.

SIC...

FROM PAGE 01
Independents had announced to join the SIC. Addressing a news conference along with leaders of the SIC and the Majlis-e-Waddatul Muslimen (MWM) on Monday, PTI leader Barrister Gohar claimed his party had secured victory on 180 National Assembly seats. He said PTI-backed Independents declared returned from National Assembly, Punjab and KP assemblies would join the SIC. He said this alliance had been created for the best interest of the country.



LAHORE: Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins and the Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi witnessing PSL match. - DNA

Beyond boundaries

Australia empowers girls through Cricket

Australia's High Commissioner to Pakistan congratulated the girls and schools on their participation and thanked Kinnaird and PCB for their valuable support

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commission and Kinnaird College for Women today hosted the 5th Girls' Cricket Cup in Lahore, with the generous support of the Pakistan Cricket Board. By supporting this event, we aim to promote gender equality and empower these girls through sport. Australia's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins, congratulated the girls and schools on their participation and thanked Kinnaird and Pakistan Cricket Board for their valuable support. "Sport can help tear down barriers and stereotypes," Mr Hawkins said. "Every time these girls hit a boundary or take a catch, they're building their confidence and inspiring others." To prepare for the tournament, top coaches led the girls on a three-day coaching clinic. "We are very grateful for the participation of first-class

women's cricket coaches and members of the Pakistan National Women's Team, who took time out to build the girls' skills and encourage them to push beyond the boundaries," Mr Hawkins said. Head of Pakistan Women Cricket, Tania Mallick added: "It's great to see young girls coming forward and making this tournament a success. We have been working for the growth of women's cricket in Pakistan for quite some time. Recently, our talented Pakistani team performed quite well

in the inaugural ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup as well as Tri-nation series. We hope tournaments like this will help us explore more talent at the grassroots level." Principal of Kinnaird College for Women, Rukhsana David said: "We are delighted to host this tournament for young girls. Kinnaird aims for gender empowerment through participation in sports. We are excited to have Pakistan's national women cricketers as mentors to the par-

ticipants. This helps foster confidence, team spirit, and inspiration among the girls. We hope this tournament will go a long way in developing women's cricket in Pakistan." The 5th Girls' Cricket Cup involved teams from four schools and sports institutes: Government Shuhda-e APS Memorial Girls High School, Government Central Model School, Government Tehzeeb-ul-Binat Model Girls School and Kinnaird Cricket Academy.

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Afridi opens up on Rauf's lost bowling form

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi has commented on pacer Haris Rauf's lost form, highlighting the necessity for thorough assistance and guidance for him. Speaking on a local news channel, Afridi emphasised the importance of not marginalising Rauf but instead providing him with the support and mentorship he needs to regain his form. "Right now, Haris Rauf seems to be struggling with his bowling, and I'm not quite understanding it. He needs honest help at this moment, the guidance of seniors is necessary because we shouldn't sideline him completely," Afridi said. Afridi stressed by recognising Rauf's potential and past contributions to the team's success. "He has given some fantastic performances for Pakistan. That boy will improve even more when he plays longer-format cricket. When he plays four-day cricket, his bowling will automatically improve, but right now, he needs our support," he further added. Remember, Rauf's form has declined since the World Cup 2023 and has been seemingly struggling in the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 9. In the first game against Islamabad United, he conceded 38 runs in three overs while against Quetta Gladiators, he picked a wicket while giving away 47 runs. PSL season nine is in full swing as teams look to bag the elusive trophy. Four matches have already been played in the event with Quetta Gladiators at the top of the table with two wins in as many games. At the end of the remaining matches, the top four teams will qualify for the playoffs of PSL 9.

Schedule of remaining PSL 9 Matches
February 20, 2024 Multan Sultans v Islamabad United, Multan Cricket Stadium
February 21, 2024 Peshawar Zalmi v Karachi Kings, Gaddafi Stadium Lahore; Multan Sultans v Lahore Qalandars, Multan Cricket Stadium
February 22, 2024 Quetta Gladiators v Islamabad United, Gaddafi Stadium Lahore
February 23, 2024 Multan Sultans v Peshawar Zalmi, Multan Cricket Stadium
February 24, 2024 Lahore Qalandars v Karachi Kings, Gaddafi Stadium Lahore.

Sabalenka crashes out to Vekic in Dubai opener

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: Reigning Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka suffered an opening round upset at the hands of familiar foe Donna Vekic, going down 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-0 in Dubai on Tuesday. Contesting her first match since her successful title defence at Melbourne Park, Sabalenka blew a 7-6, 2-0 lead to succumb to her Croatian opponent in two hours and 22 minutes. The 31st-ranked Vekic, who now owns a 6-2 head-to-head lead in lifetime meetings against Sabalenka, was

aggressive throughout the match and enters her next clash with big-hitting Romanian Sorana Cirstea searching for her first WTA 1000 quarter-final of her career. "At all times I didn't give up. I didn't stop believing that I can win. I just kept fighting," said Vekic, who is 9-13 against top-five opposition. Aryna Sabalenka craving success in Dubai on heels of Melbourne triumph "To be honest, I didn't have big expectations coming to Dubai. Told my coach that I'm taking this week as half holidays. I can tell you I spent more time on the beach than on

the court. Maybe that's a good way going forward," she added with a laugh. In windy but warm conditions in Dubai, Sabalenka recovered from a break down then squandered a 5-3 lead before securing the opening set on her sixth opportunity on the 69-minute mark. The world number two leapt to a 2-0 advantage in the second set but Vekic struck back and claimed another crucial break in game eight to level the contest and force a decider. With the wind in her sails, Vekic put together a nine-game winning run, outlasting her powerful oppo-

nent, to deliver a final-set bagel and book her place in the last 16. Sakkari halts losing run Earlier on Centre Court, eighth seed Maria Sakkari snapped a three-match losing streak and claimed her first-ever Dubai main-draw victory, on her fourth attempt, with a 6-2 6-4 triumph over in-form American Emma Navarro. After suffering opening round exits in Abu Dhabi and Doha, Sakkari was admittedly nervous ahead of her clash with Navarro, who is already a title-winner in 2024 and has amassed 13 victories in the first two months of the season.

Lionel Messi makes heartwarming gesture to FC Barcelona

LONDON: Lionel Messi donated his eighth Ballon d'Or trophy to his previous club FC Barcelona Museum despite winning it while playing for Major League Soccer (MLS) side Inter Miami. Messi is the only player to have won eight Ballon d'Or, former Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo is the second with three less than the Argentine superstar. The 36-year-old won his seven previous awards while playing for the Catalan club. He left the club in 2021 on a bitter note due to Barca's financial crisis

and joined French side PSG on a free transfer. Messi led Argentina to their first World Cup glory in 2022 by scoring two goals in the final against his Paris Saint-Germain teammate Kylian Mbappe's France 4-3 and was awarded his seventh Ballon d'Or. Meanwhile, in 2023, he joined the MLS Inter Miami and guided them to the Leagues Cup victory and won his record-extending eighth Ballon d'Or. As per the report, Messi donated his eighth Ballon d'Or to Barcelona so that the trophy can be displayed

alongside the other seven he won while playing for the club. After winning his Ballon d'Or in October 2023, Messi delivered a speech saying that the feeling remains special despite winning it for the eighth time. "I'm delighted to be here once more, to be able to enjoy this moment one more time. To be able to win the World Cup and really achieve my dream, I want to share this with all those who were involved," he said. "They're all special these awards, the most special is the team prizes. It's always special to be recognised. I couldn't have dreamed of having the career that I had, everything I've achieved. "To have the success, the fortune I've had. The best team in the world, the best team in history, makes it so much easier to win so many titles, to win these individual prizes. - Agencies

Bilawal will support PML-N on...

FROM PAGE 01
if "someone" doesn't change their position over government formation. "Progress [in talks] can only be made if 'someone' is willing to change their position [...] We stand by our position and will not change it," Bilawal said without naming PML-N. He made these comments during a media talk outside the Supreme Court of Pakistan after attending the hearing of a presidential reference against Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's death sentence. Bilawal's remarks come as the coordination committees of the PML-N and PPP are set to hold a sixth meeting today to reach an agreement over the formation of the future government after both parties failed to secure National Assembly seats in sufficient numbers to form their government in the Centre.

Veto power countries behind...

FROM PAGE 01
and disadvantages of permanent membership of the UNSC as the permanent members could paralyse the Security Council using veto power. "We are trying to curtail the veto power of the permanent members," the Pakistani envoy said adding that there was no point in adding new permanent members to the UNSC. Urging for more non-permanent elected seats in the council, the Pakistani diplomat said that the UNSC should comprise 27 members with a majority of developing nations. Five UNSC permanent members have veto power including China, France, Russia, the UK and USA. These countries have vetoed resolutions hundreds of times with Russia using the power 125 times and the US 82 times.

X still inaccessible for four days

FROM PAGE 01

access to social media platforms. Ahead of the February 8 general elections, users were unable to access several social media sites, for which authorities concerned blamed an error. However, on the polling day, the internet was shut down to avoid terrorism, according to the caretaker government. Following the sought-after polls, there were repeated disruptions in accessing X. Internet shutdowns directly contradict constitutionally guaranteed rights like freedom of information (Article 19-A), freedom of speech (Article 19), and freedom of association (Article 17). In its February 2018 ruling, the Islamabad High Court declared internet shutdowns against fundamental rights and constitution.

US again casts veto...

FROM PAGE 01

hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. "Any action this council takes right now should help, not hinder these sensitive, and ongoing negotiations. And we believe that the resolution on the table right now would, in fact, negatively impact those negotiations," Thomas-Greenfield told the council ahead of the vote.

Germany World Cup winner passes away aged 63

BERLIN: World Cup winner Andreas Brehme, renowned for his decisive late penalty in the 1990 final against Argentina that secured Germany's third world title, has passed away at the age of 63. The offensive full-back and expert at set pieces quickly became a legendary figure in German football after his penalty kick led to a 1-0 triumph over Diego Maradona's Argentina in the World Cup final held in Rome. Brehme's illustrious career, during which he played for Bayern Munich and Inter Milan, commenced at Kaiserslautern, where he accumulated 319 appearances over two five-year stints. "FCK mourns the passing of Andreas Brehme," Kaiserslautern said. "He wore the Red Devils' shirt for a total of 10 years and became German champion and German Cup winner with FCK." "In 1990 he fired the German national team to the World Cup title with his penalty and became a football legend. The FCK family is in deep mourning and our thoughts are with Andi's family and friends." Bayern board member Karl-Heinz Rummenigge stated on the club's website: "I am deeply affected and shocked by the news of Andi Brehme's death. We played the 1986 World Cup together in Mexico and Andi was a great team player, extremely loyal and reliable. His joy for life was always contagious, and the fact that he had to leave us at the age of 63 makes me very sad." Inter, with whom Brehme won the UEFA Cup, Serie A and Italian Super Cup, announced that they will wear black armbands for their Champions League clash against Atlético Madrid on Tuesday night to mourn Brehme's passing. - Agencies



RAWALPINDI: Director Education Colleges Sher Ahmed Sati, Deputy Director Colleges Amjad Iqbal Khattak, Principal Mrs. Najma Anwar and the winner of the competition, Thobia Sultana Chaudhry, were the chief guests in the closing ceremony of the inter-district sports organized by Rawalpindi Directorate of Education Colleges Rawalpindi Division. Group photo with students. - DNA

Briefs

PTI sounds alarm over Bushra's life

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) raised the alarm over the serious threats to the life of PTI Chairman-for-life Imran Khan's spouse Bushra Bibi, who had been kept unlawfully in solitary confinement at Bani Gala sub-jail, suffering from severe pain for the last six days after being given her substandard, harmful, and poisonous food. In a strongly-worded reaction over the reports of giving harmful food to Bushra Bibi during imprisonment, PTI Spokesperson expressed deep concerns over the serious threats to Bushra Bibi's life, who had been unjustly and wrongfully imprisoned in a bogus and concocted case. PTI Spokesperson called upon the court and prison authorities to take all much-needed steps to ensure the protection of health and life of the former first lady.

Mandokhail booked over rioting on Feb 8

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: PPP leader Qadir Mandokhail has been booked by the police over charges of rioting inside a polling station during the Feb 8 general elections. The video of the incident went viral on social media, prompting the Election Commission of Pakistan to take notice. SSP Keamari-Arif Aslam Rao confirmed to media that a case had been registered against Mandokhail and others at Madina Colony police station of the Keamari district. According to the contents of the FIR, complainant Hafiz Kaleemullah said that he was a government primary school teacher who worked as a presiding officer for the NA-242 seat at MH School in Baldia during general elections.

Security forces killed terrorist in DI IBO

RAWALPINDI: On 20 February 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Dera Ismail Khan District. During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists as a result of which terrorist Muhammad Sohail was sent to hell. The killed terrorist remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the law enforcement agencies as well as target killings of innocent civilians. Sanitization operation is being conducted to wipe out any other terrorist found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism. - DNA

Haniyeh in Cairo for truce talks as death toll hits 29,195

The Nasser Hospital has no electricity, water, food, milk for children, oxygen and other vital medical needs – a situation that threatens lives of the patients and medical staff

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 137 on Tuesday, massive aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound neighborhoods, homes and shelter centers and massacre more civilians, mostly children and women. Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to attack different areas of Gaza, killing and injuring dozens of citizens. According to local media sources, Israeli warplanes simultaneously bombed two homes and a gathering of civilians in al-Nuseirat refugee camp and a third house in al-Zahra area in central Gaza, killing and injuring several citizens. Casualties, including at least 15 martyrs, were reported following multiple Israeli attacks on several homes in al-Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City. Meanwhile, A high-level delegation from the Hamas Movement led by head of its political bureau Ismail Haniyeh arrived on Tuesday morning in the Egyptian capital, Cairo. According to Hamas, Haniyeh will hold meetings with senior Egyptian officials to discuss the political and field situation in Gaza and the efforts being made to stop the Israeli aggression and provide aid for the civilians. Talks on a ceasefire in Gaza and a prisoner-captive swap between Hamas and Israel continue despite big challenges, ac-

China opposes acts against civilians in Rafah

BEIJING: China on Monday opposed and condemned acts against civilian and international law and called on Israel to stop military operation immediately in Rafah in southern Gaza. "China is closely watching the developments in Rafah. We oppose and condemn acts against civilians and international law," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning told reporters at a regular briefing while stating China's position concerning the recent developments in Rafah. "We call on Israel to stop military operations as soon as possible, do everything possible to avoid casualties among innocent civilians and prevent a more devastating humanitarian disaster in Rafah," she added. In response to a question about Israel prime minister's statement that his country won't accept an international mandate for a permanent solution to the Palestinian issue, the spokesperson said that the Two-State solution was the universal consensus of the international community to settle the Palestinian question. "Implementing the Two-State solution is the only way to end the cycle of conflict between Palestine and Israel," she added. Mao Ning said that China stands ready to work with all parties to hold a more broad-based, authoritative and effective international peace conference as early as possible, formulate a concrete timetable and the roadmap for the implementation of the Two-State solution. "China supports Palestine and Israel in resuming peace talks soon for the ultimate peaceful coexistence between the two states of Palestine and Israel," she added. Regarding the International Court of Justice open hearings about Israel's historical occupation of Palestinian territories, she said that on the ICJ advisory opinion, China had submitted its written statement on July 25 last year. The Chinese side will take part in the public hearings of the ICJ to have an in-depth elaboration on China's policy propositions on the question of Palestine, state China's positions on relevant international law issues regarding the right to self-determination, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and State responsibility, and express China's firm support for the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights and interests, she added. - Agencies

According to a Qatari foreign ministry spokesman. Dual standards in the international arena have been negatively affecting talks, however, AJ quotes the spokesperson as saying, drawing comparisons between the conflict in Gaza with Ukraine. Qatar chided international institutions for having failed to bring an end to the conflict. Meanwhile, The health ministry in Gaza said on Tuesday that the Israeli occupation army committed nine massacres in different areas of the Gaza Strip during the past 24 hours, killing at least 103 civilians and injuring over 142 others, while a large number of victims are still buried under the rubble of bombed buildings or lying on roads. In a statement, the health ministry added that the death toll from the ongoing Israeli bombardments, which started on October 7, climbed to 29,195 martyrs and the number of the wounded surged to 69,170 people. The health ministry also said that 18 patients had been evacuated from the Nasser Hospital to field hospitals, adding that 118 other patients are still inside the facility. The situation inside the Nasser Hospital, which the Israeli army turned into a military outpost, has become more catastrophic and life-threatening, according to the ministry. The Nasser Hospital has no electricity, water, food, milk for children, oxygen and other vital medical needs – a situation that threatens the lives of the patients and medical staff.

'No Deadlock' in talks with PML-N'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Qamar Zaman Kaira said on Tuesday that there was no significant deadlock in the talks between the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the PPP. Speaking to a private news channel, he said that while there may be minor issues to look at, discussions within the coordination committees of both parties were advancing positively. With several weeks remaining until the scheduled oath-taking on February 29, Kaira said that there was still ample time to address any remaining issues and finalize arrangements. The discussions within the coordination committees of both parties were making favorable progress, he added.

Rahul Gandhi bailed in defamation case

LUCKNOW, India: An Indian court Tuesday bailed senior opposition leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case brought against him for referring to the home minister as an accused murderer – his latest legal travails ahead of national elections. Critics have accused India's government of using the justice system to target political rivals, with several opposition figures the subject of active criminal investigations. Gandhi, 53, faces at least 10 other defamation cases and was briefly disqualified from parliament last year after being convicted of criminal libel in an unrelated case. He appeared in court in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh where his bail application was accepted, lawyer Santosh Pandey told reporters outside court. Tuesday's case stems from 2018 remarks in which he referred to home minister Amit Shah, a key confidante of PM Narendra Modi, as a "murder accused." - Agencies

Indian farmers reject govt offer

AMBALA: Indian farmers' unions have rejected five-year contracts for minimum support prices (MSPs) proposed by the Indian government, one of their leaders said in a video posted on social media platform X on Monday. The Indian government has offered guaranteed support prices for pulses, corn and cotton in a bid to break a deadlock with protesting farmers, Trade Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday after week-long clashes between security forces and protesters. Tear gas and barricades were used to deter the farmers, who form an influential voting bloc, months ahead of a general election due by May, in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks a record third term. Goyal's comments followed marathon talks with farmers' unions after the protesters, who are demanding higher prices backed by law for nearly two dozen crops. - Agencies

China opposes acts against civilians in Rafah

BEIJING: China on Monday opposed and condemned acts against civilian and international law and called on Israel to stop military operation immediately in Rafah in southern Gaza. "China is closely watching the developments in Rafah. We oppose and condemn acts against civilians and international law," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning told reporters at a regular briefing while stating China's position concerning the recent developments in Rafah. "We call on Israel to stop military operations as soon as possible, do everything possible to avoid casualties among innocent civilians and prevent a more devastating humanitarian disaster in Rafah," she added. In response to a question about Israel prime minister's statement that his country won't accept an international mandate for a permanent solution to the Palestinian issue, the spokesperson said that the Two-State solution was the universal consensus of the international community to settle the Palestinian question. "Implementing the Two-State solution is the only way to end the cycle of conflict between Palestine and Israel," she added. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari along with other party officials talking to media outside the Supreme Court of Pakistan after attending the hearing of a presidential. - DNA

Time for interaction with Kabul has come: Japan

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: Japan's ambassador to Kabul, Takayushi Kormaya, in a meeting with the acting minister of Information and Culture, said that the time for the world's interaction with Afghanistan has been reached and steps must be taken forward in this area, according to the Afghan ministry of Information and Culture. According to officials in the MoIC, Takayushi Kormaya also said that Japan wants good relations with Afghanistan. "In the meeting the ambassador of Japan said that as the time has been reached, the world must interact with the Islamic Emirate. He also highlighted the achievements of the Islamic Emirate and said that the Islamic Emirate has good achievements in various sectors," said Haqmal Zia, the deputy minister of Information and Culture. "The Islamic Emirate should also adopt correct and logical policies. Interaction with the world is inevitable and we cannot live on an island and not have any kind of relations with the world," said Salim Paigir, a political analyst. According to Haqmal Zia, the deputy minister, the cooperation between Kabul and Tokyo in the field of historical monuments was also emphasized.

'Mother of all rigging' has made Pak laughing stock

'Selected ones' have honoured the boot, Aleema said quoting Imran

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: PTI's founder Imran Khan has said that the "mother of all rigging" must end now because Pakistan has become a laughing stock globally, as per his sister Aleema Khan. What exactly does he mean by "mother of all rigging"? It was dismantling the PTI, snatching its iconic election symbol of bat, not allowing the party's candidates to submit nomination papers, coercing candidates into withdrawing from elections and denying the party the right to canvass. While speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail, where Imran is incarcerated, Aleema Khan said that her brother wants the culture of impunity to end and the mandate of the people must be respected to salvage the country's reputation internationally. Imran also ridiculed his arch nemesis, the PML-N, which willingly bartered away its narrative to grab power. "Instead of honouring the vote, the 'selected ones' have honoured the boot," Aleema quoted Imran. "The selection was so blatant and blind that corruption cases were dropped by the selectors against the 'selected ones'," she further stated quoting her brother. "Instead the PTI chairman was sentenced to 32 years in jail after marathon trials on trumped



up charges." Imran said that pre-poll, election day, and post-election rigging denied the people of Pakistan their democratic right to choose their representatives. "On the voting day, the internet was shut down, leaving people perplexed. But when it did not work, post-poll rigging was carried out at night by brazenly changing the results by ignoring Form 45," he added. The incarcerated PTI chairman also referred to the Rawalpindi commissioner who in a recent damning video confession admitted to rigging the election for the PML-N.

Yemen warns Europe not to 'play with fire'

NEWS DESK

SANA'A: A top-ranking Yemeni official has warned the European Union against "playing with fire" after the 27-member bloc launched a naval military mission in the Red Sea. Mohammad Ali al-Houthi, who is a member of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, made the remarks on Tuesday after an attack by Yemeni armed forces sank the UK-registered Rubymar cargo in the Gulf of Aden. "To the Europeans: do not play with fire and learn a lesson from Britain. You need not support the American devil in protecting the Israeli regime so that it can exterminate the people of Gaza with no disturbance," he said in an X post. It followed an announcement of the official launch of the EU naval operation called Aspidos ("shield" in ancient Greek) amid Yemen's maritime campaign in solidarity with the Palestinians in the Gaza strip. With a mandate set initially for one year, the mission will send European warships and airborne early warning systems to the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and surrounding waters. Houthi said that the EU mission will increase the militarization of the Red Sea, endanger international navigation, and affect the shipping of food to European countries.

14 injured in Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon

FOREIGN DESK

BEIRUT: At least 14 civilians have sustained injuries when Israeli warplanes hit multiple targets in Lebanon's southern town of Ghazieh with air-to-surface missiles, according to Lebanese military sources. The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Israeli fighter jets launched four airstrikes on Monday on the coastal town, which is located less than five kilometers from the city of Sidon. Two raids targeted the industrial area behind al-Rai private hospital, while another two struck the vicinity of a supermarket. The sources added that the two strikes targeted the industrial area destroyed a factory that manufactures and assembles electric generators. A tire factory and ten neighboring shops were also severely damaged. The two raids in the vicinity of a supermarket destroyed an iron and aluminum manufacturing factory and damaged six commercial stores.

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