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Extradition to US: Julian Assange wins temporary reprieve

Detailed News On Page-08

Hamas chief Haniyeh in Tehran for talks

Detailed News On Page-08



Shadab not considering Imad as competition

Detailed News On Page-06



President, PM condemn attack

Suicide attack: 5 Chinese engineers Killed in Shangla

China urges Pakistan to 'severely punish perpetrators' of Shangla attack

DNA / OUR CORRESPONDENT

SHANGLA: At least six people including five Chinese nationals were killed after their vehicle was attacked in Shangla's Besham city, said Malakand's deputy inspector general of police (DIG) on Tuesday. Confirming the number of casualties, the DIG said that a suicide bomber crashed his vehicle full of explosives into the car in which the Chinese nationals were travelling. He said that a Pakistani driver of the car was injured in the attack and was shifted to a local hospital. Later, the driver succumbed to his wounds during treatment. The deceased Chinese engineers included a woman. The Chinese nationals were engineers who were going to Dasu camp, Kohistan from Islamabad, the official added. Meanwhile, a heavy contingent of security personnel arrived at the incident's site and cordoned off the area. Security forces have launched a search operation in the area for the suspects. Authorities Shahrah-e-Karakoram for traffic movement between Besham and Kohistan. Taking notice of the incident, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited the Chinese embassy in Islamabad and extended condolences to the Chinese ambassador over the unfortunate incident and assured a swift and high-level

Military vows strict action

"Certain foreign elements are complicit in aiding and abetting terrorism in Pakistan, driven by their vested interests, the military's media wing said in a statement

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: As another militant attack sent shock waves across the country killing six people including five Chinese engineers in Shangla amid rising terrorism in Pakistan, the military pledged to ensure all those involved in aiding terrorism, directly or indirectly, are held accountable and

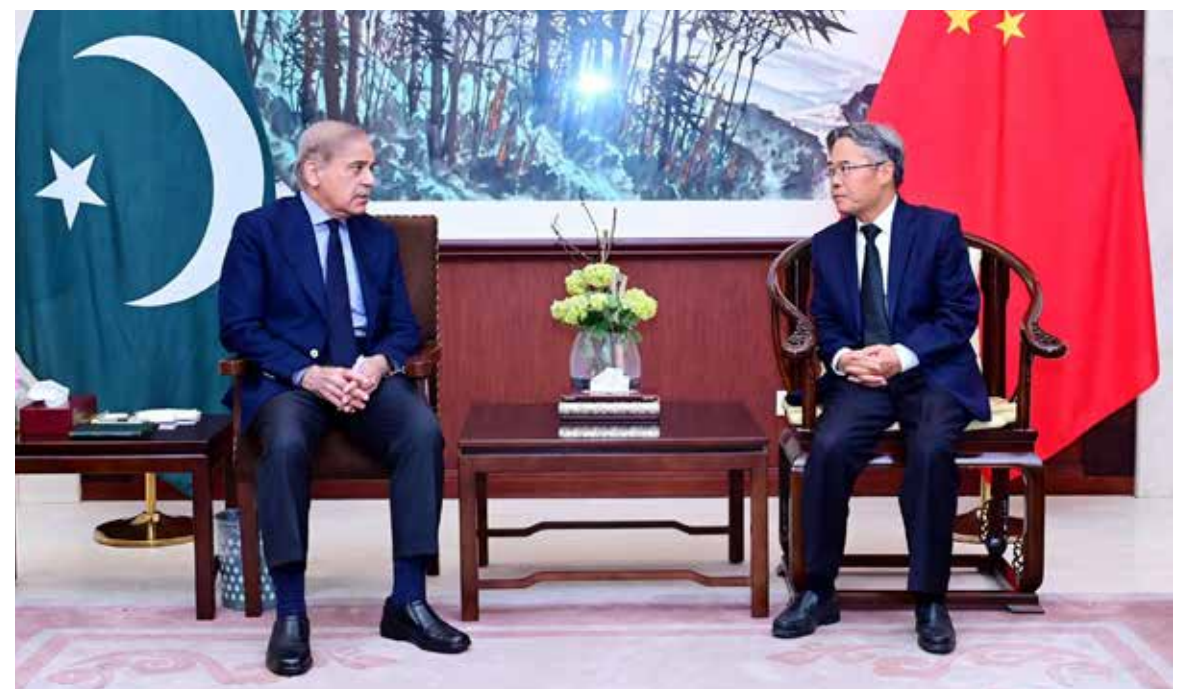
find their due comeuppance, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday. A woman among the five Chinese citizens and a Pakistani driver were killed when their vehicle was attacked in Shangla's Besham city as a suicide bomber crashed his explosives-laden vehicle into the car carrying the victims.

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el probe into the incident. The prime minister, in an interaction with the Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong sympathised with the bereaved families of the slain Chinese nationals, a PM Office press release said. He assured the Chinese side that the government would hold a high-level and swift probe into the attack and take the culprits and facilitators to the task. The prime minister also conveyed his condolatory message to the Chinese president and premier. "We will not let such nefarious attempts to undermine the Pak-China friendship succeed. The enemies of the

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor have again tried to interrupt it through such cowardly attempt but the enemy will never succeed in its evil designs," the prime minister remarked. He also reiterated the country's resolve to continue fighting against terrorism till its complete eradication. The Chinese ambassador thanked the prime minister for visiting the embassy and showing personal interest in the investigation of the incident. He also appreciated the prime minister's determination to maintain Pak-China friendly ties.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, and met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to offer condolence over the death of Chinese nationals in a suicide attack in district Shangla. - DNA

Turbat attack

Soldier martyred, 4 terrorists killed

Terrorists attempted to attack the Naval Base on the night of March 25th and 26th

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A sepoy of the Frontier Corps Balochistan on Tuesday embraced martyrdom while four terrorists were killed during a swift and effective response of the security forces to the terrorists' attack on the Pakistan Naval Base and the Navy Ship PNS Siddique in Turbat while ensuring the

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IHC judges write letter to SJC

Judges want spy agencies role defined

Six judges of the Islamabad High Court asked the Supreme Judicial Council to summon a convention in the wake of the top court's verdict in Justice (retired) Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: At least six judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday wrote to the Supreme Judicial Council, urging it to summon a judicial convention to review the grave issue of interference by intelligence operatives in judicial functions and/or intimidation of judges in a manner that undermines the judiciary's independence. The 11-point letter was signed by six IHC judges, including Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz. The judges said that this issue has arisen in the aftermath



of the top court's verdict last week in Justice (retired) Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's case.

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Briefs

President summons NA session on April 1

This will be the second session of the present 16th National Assembly of the country

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, on Tuesday, summoned a session of the National Assembly on April 1st at 4:00 PM in the Parliament House. The president summoned the session under the powers conferred by Clause (1) Article 54 of the Constitution of Pakistan, said National Assembly Secretariat in a news release. Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari lauded the security forces for their successful operation to foil a terrorist attack at the Naval Base in Turbat.

PTI demands swift justice

Military courts caused a human tragedy

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson demanded that the Supreme Court (SC) should ensure provision of swift and immediate justice to the civilians whose cases were pending before the military courts. PTI Spokesperson said that a human tragedy like situation was created in the country due to the establishment of military courts and the trials of civilians in these controversial courts. He stated that the constitution guaranteed a right of a fair trial to every citizen, thus the state did not authorize to deprive any citizen of this constitutional and fundamental right.

Wishes live broadcasting of hearing

Imran demands judicial probe to investigate May 9

Imran Khan said, keep me in prison but release other PTI leaders and workers

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan expressed his willingness on Tuesday to remain in jail while urging authorities to release other leaders of his party. Speaking to the media during the hearing of the £190 million reference, Imran again urged Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa to hear PTI's May 25 petition and form a judicial commission to investigate the May 9 incidents. "There has been no inquiry on the incidents so far," stressed Imran and added that "concealing information is also a crime. "A political party is being eliminated based on the May 9 incidents," said the PTI founder. Advocating for a comprehensive investigation of the February 8 elections, Imran demanded

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Talha joins PPP

Kundi sees forward bloc in SIC KP

"As soon as the oath is taken, opposition parties in KP will give a surprise in the Senate elections," Kundi said

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: PPP Central Information Secretary Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday asserted that opposition parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would spring a "surprise" in the upcoming Senate elections. He made the remarks

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FM receives call from Uzbek counterpart

Both sides discussed bilateral ties



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov on Tuesday discussed the bilateral ties and all areas of mutual interest between the two countries. On his X account, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said that he was delighted to receive telephone call from his brother Uzbek FM Saidov. "Thanked him for

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan-Japan desire to further enhance bilateral economic ties

Japan Ambassador to Pakistan Mitsuhiro Wada noted the commitment of the govt to continue with the implementation of prudent fiscal policies and structural reforms



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Japan on Tuesday expressed their desire to further enhance the bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Japan

and pledged to work together towards achieving common goals for the benefit of both nations. The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mitsuhiro Wada, called on Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, the Minister for Finance and Revenue, said a press release issued here. The Japa-

nese Ambassador congratulated the Finance Minister on assuming the office. The Minister for Finance and Revenue welcomed the Ambassador and stated that the Government is committed to undertaking reforms to bring macroeconomic stability and sustainability. The Minister stated that increasing the tax to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio remains a priority area. In this regard, the Government will strive to achieve end-to-end digitization to expand the tax base, bring transparency in the tax system and improve the client experience. He further apprised the Ambassador about energy sector reforms. While the focus would be on reducing the costs in the sector governance issues of the distribution companies will be addressed through private participation in the management and eventual privatization.

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PUC applauds UN, condemns attacks on Chinese citizens

Ashrafi emphasized the profound significance of the Pakistan-China friendship, asserting that every nefarious scheme devised by adversaries would ultimately falter

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Tuesday welcomed the United Nations Security Council resolution on Gaza, affirming that Israel's actions has constituted genocide in Gaza, surpassing even the brutality witnessed during the Second World War. Emphasizing the imperative of implementing the resolution, the Council underscored its significance as a pivotal victory for Islamic and just nations. Pakistan and its people ardently aspired for the establishment of Palestine as a secure and sovereign state, it said adding that demonstrating unwavering solidarity with their oppressed Palestinian brethren, Pakistan and its populace advocated for a fair, comprehensive, and sustainable resolution to the Palestinian conflict. These sentiments were expressed by the Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, along with esteemed scholars including Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Numan Hashir, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Mu-

hammad Ashfaq Pittafi, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana Obaidullah Gormani, Allama Tahirul Hasan, Maulana Hanif Osmani, and Maulana Muhammad Asghar Khosa, among others. Expressing grave concern over the dire situation in Palestine, where over 30,000 Palestinians, including more than 20,000 children and women, have tragically lost their lives since October 7, the religious scholars and leaders highlighted the unprecedented suffering endured by humanity in Gaza. They condemned Israel's egregious violations of moral principles and commended the Security Council's resolution as a beacon of hope amidst the despair plaguing Palestine and the Muslim Ummah. They asserted that the resolution marked a crucial initial step in halting Israel's brutal campaign in Gaza, pledging continued support from Islamic nations, particularly Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar, and the religious factions of the Muslim Ummah, to secure the rightful establishment of Palestine as a safe and independent entity. Raising the voice for a just, comprehensive, and sustainable resolution to the Palestinian conflict, the lead-

ers decried the relentless Israeli assaults during the sacred month of Ramadan, which had inflicted untold suffering, hunger, and deprivation upon the people of Gaza. They stressed the urgent need to implement the Security Council resolution to curb Israel's belligerence, terrorism, and cruelty, thereby averting further devastation and bloodshed. Furthermore, the PUC vehemently condemned the recent attack on Chinese citizens in Bisham. Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi conveyed profound sadness and sorrow regarding this deplorable incident, extending heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased Chinese residents. Ashrafi emphasized the profound significance of the Pakistan-China friendship, asserting that every nefarious scheme devised by adversaries would ultimately falter. He assured that the perpetrators responsible for the heinous act against our Chinese brethren would be brought to justice, unequivocally. Highlighting the swift and compassionate response of the prime minister for promptly offering condolences at the Chinese Embassy, Ashrafi underscored the depth and resilience of the bonds between Pakistan and China.



ISLAMABAD : Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlammov called on Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik.—DNA

QMC seeks machinery from PDMA to launch cleanliness drive in city

QUETTA : Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) has sought waste lifting machinery from Provincial Disaster Management Authority as the corporation has lack of machinery and tools to launch cleanliness drive in the city. Talking to APP, Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said the QMC authority had been not purchased new machinery and vehicles since 1994. He said an operation would be launched to clean the water courses and nullahs for efficient working of sewerage system so that the rain and waste water could not cause inconvenience to the public. Under the supervision of Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, the corporation has collected over 10000 tons of trash from the city in short period of 12 days. Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said the authority has all set to collect door-to-door garbage to make Quetta the cleanest city within two weeks. Commissioner said the government had taking efforts to increase the waste collecting capacity of QMC by 500 tons to 1600 tons daily by out sourcing the Quetta solid waste management. Hamza said the plan is in pipeline to operate the solid waste management in Quetta on public private partnership basis to improve sewerage system. He said the cleanliness drives were being carried out in every area of the city on regular basis and the QMC was ensuring collection and disposal of garbage in every area of the provincial capital city including Sariyab to Nawan Killi. He said, the QMC had lacked capacity to collect the total waste produced per day by the city due to shortage of staff and equipment.—APP

Minister for Maritime Affairs visits KPT

The Federal Minister expressed his strong affiliation with the Karachi Port Trust, emphasizing the abundant opportunities it offers that he plans to leverage during his tenure as Minister

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI : The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, on Tuesday visited Karachi Port Trust (KPT) head office. Upon his arrival, he was warmly received by Chairman KPT, Syedain Raza Zaidi, Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh presided over an introductory meeting attended by the Federal Secretary Iram Anjum Khan, KPT Trustee Asif Nisar Vohra and high officials of KPT. A detailed presentation was given that included information on KPT's activities, current projects, upcoming projects and KPT's key issues. During the meeting, Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed

Sheikh outlined his vision to elevate KPT and other port to meet international standards. The Federal Minister expressed his strong affiliation with the Karachi Port Trust, emphasizing the abundant opportunities it offers that he plans to leverage during his tenure as Minister. He further reiterated his commitment to promptly and decisively resolve the longstanding issues faced by KPT. Additionally, the Chairman of KPT echoed the Minister's sentiments and expressed optimism about the collaborative efforts to enhance the port's efficiency and address key challenges. Chairman KPT, Syedain Raza Zaidi, provided an overview of KPT's advance-

ments in modernization and enhancement efforts. Discussions encompassed ongoing development projects, completed initiatives, and future endeavors such as the LNG complex, Harbour Crossing Bridge, Cargo Village, and Industrial Village, etc. Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh commended KPT's progress and expressed confidence that sustained efforts towards achieving objectives would position Karachi Port Trust as a leading global port. The meeting concluded with Chairman Karachi Port Trust, Syedain Raza Zaidi, presenting a memento to Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, marking the conclusion of the day's proceedings.

PTC acknowledged as leading taxpayer

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited (PTC) has been honoured by the Government of Pakistan for its exemplary contribution as one of the country's highest taxpaying company. This recognition underscores PTC's steadfast commitment to corporate responsibility and its significant role in driving economic growth in Pakistan. As one of the leading multinational's operating in Pakistan, PTC has always placed a strong emphasis on compliance and integrity in fulfilling its tax obligations. In 2023, PTC contributed more than PKR 229 billion to the National Exchequer in the form of various taxes and duties. Furthermore, PTC has actively participated in the country's development endeavours, evident through its exports exceeding USD 48 million in 2023. The Company's substantial investments for its Environment, Social, and Governance Agenda underscores its dedication to shaping a Better Tomorrow™. The Government of Pakistan's acknowledgment of PTC as one of its highest taxpayers is a testament to the company's unwavering dedication to upholding the highest standards of corporate citizenship.

Over 303,000 unregistered Afghans via KP

PESHAWAR : As many as 303,162 Afghans have been returned to their own country via three border points in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the volunteer return and repatriation of unregistered and illegally residing foreigners in the country. According to statistics from the Home Department, 296,412 voluntarily returned to their country while 6,750 were deported through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It said that a total of 297,017 people have returned from the Torkham border point, 5446 via Angoor Ada and 689 through Kharlachi.—APP

SACM urges TEVTA to explore income opportunities

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Special Assistant to KP Chief Minister on Technical Education, Industries and Commerce, Abdul Karim Tordhir has directed Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) to find out opportunities of income from various possible sources for better and sustainable financial management and taking of effective measures for self-reliance and financial stability of the institute. He issued these directives during a briefing regarding Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) here in Hayatabad on Tuesday. Besides, the Managing Director (MD) TEVTA, Amir Afaq, Director Finance Munir Gul, Director HR Abid Iqbal, Director HR Sadiq Orakzai, Director P&D Haider Ali, Director Monitoring Nazir and other officers of the authority were present on this occasion. All sections of TEVTA gave separate brief-

ings to the special assistant regarding operational affairs, personnel, courses provided in training institutes, financial and administrative affairs, financial challenges and proposed plan to tackle them, curricular and development activities. The special assistant directed initiating efforts for introduction of a suitable business and production model to operate the financial affairs of the institute in a better manner, under which the resources and assets of the department can be utilized for the financial affairs of the institution. He also directed the inclusion of the trade of regional importance and characteristics in the curricular activities of technical education and assigning of responsibilities to the heads with the best performance and transparency in training institutions. In the meeting, the financial challenges faced by the Special Assistant and several suggestions were presented to deal with

them. The special assistant was given detailed briefing regarding operational affair, staff, courses taught in institutions and financial challenges faced by them. The Special Assistant was also briefed about the technical education institutions in the province, the courses offered in them and the responsibilities of the teaching and other staff of the institutions. On this occasion, the Special Assistant said that the technical education sector is the basic and important pillar of vocational education and training for the youth of the province, saying he is making efforts to strengthen it further. He said that in the formation of the new TEVTA board, good reputation and capable people should be included who can play their role in achieving the goals of the development of the organization because it is the government's effort to prepare people for the preparation of experienced and skilled manpower.



ISLAMABAD: A view of traffic jam at Islamabad Expressway at Faizabad in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE PHOTO

AIOU inks MoU with Takmil to enroll out-of-school children

This includes support for teachers' training, conducting training sessions for master trainers, and assistance in organizing educational activities

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Takmil - Teach A Kid Make Individual Life, regarding cooperation and facilitation to bring out-of-school children into the education network. Dean, Faculty of Education, Prof Dr Fazal ur Rahman and Director, Coordination and Follow-up, Prof Dr Syed Amir Shah represented


the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof Dr Nasir Mahmood in the ceremony. Chairman, Department of Distance, Non-Formal and Continuing Education, Dr Muhammad Ajmal Chaudhry from AIOU and a board member from Takmil, Dr Sania signed the MoU. According to MoU, Allama Iqbal Open University will provide educational and technical support to bring out-of-school children into the educational network. This includes support for teachers' training, con-

ducting training sessions for master trainers, and assistance in organizing educational activities.

Dr Fazal ur Rehman, addressing the ceremony, mentioned that both public and private sector organizations, as well as various NGOs, are working on out-of-school children, but they are still encountering some challenges. He emphasized that our Vice Chancellor believes that MoUs should not be mere paperwork; they

should bring tangible benefits to the community. Dr Syed Amir Shah said that enrolling out-of-school children is an excellent community service and a noble cause, and Allama Iqbal Open University is playing an exemplary role in solving this problem. He said that Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof Dr Nasir Mahmood, wished that not a single child should be left out of school. Dr Sania said that Takmil Foundation uses technology to provide free basic


education to out-of-school children in far-flung areas of Pakistan. Takmil has established 160 schools in which almost 5000 students have been admitted. Dr Sania said that with the support of Allama Iqbal Open University, we will be able to serve in a better way. Dr Ajmal said that AIOU will provide technical, capacity building support and training for teachers in 160 schools of Takmil. Dr Tahira Bibi provided the background of this MoU.





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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MARCH

March 01/Bosnia
National Day

March 03/Bulgaria
National Day

March 06/ Ghana
Independence Day

March 12 /Mauritius
National Day

March 17/Ireland
St. Patricks Day

March 20/Tunisia
Independence Day

March 21/Namibia
National Day

March 25/Greece
National Day

March 26/Bangladesh
National Day

March 27/Myanmar
Armed Forces Day

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Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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



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Hospitals

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MH.....561116
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DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

President RCCI Sakib Rafiq hosts iftar dinner for diplomats

The enchanting ambiance of the venue, Qazi Farms, served as the perfect backdrop for the evening's festivities, adorned with exquisite decor that added to the charm of the occasion.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sakib Rafiq, President of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, graciously hosted a splendid iftar dinner, bringing together esteemed members of the diplomatic corps and distinguished figures from the business fraternity. The event saw a notable turnout of diplomats representing a diverse array of nations, adding a touch of international flair to the gathering. Speaking on the occasion, Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman of REIT, emphasized the longstanding tradition of iftar dinners at the Rawalpindi Chamber, highlighting its significance in fostering camaraderie and collaboration among stakeholders. The enchanting ambiance of the venue, Qazi Farms, served as the perfect backdrop for the evening's festivities, adorned with exquisite decor that added to the charm of the occasion. Saqib Rafiq in his welcome remarks said that annual Iftar Dinner is a regular feature of RCCI aiming to bring together esteemed members of the diplomatic corps and distinguished figures from the business fraternity. Group Leader Sohail Altaf in his address demanded for ceasefire in Gaza and peaceful solution of Palestine. He also sent best wishes to Princess, Catherine of Wales, for her full recovery from cancer. The event saw a notable turnout of diplomats representing a diverse array of nations, adding a touch of international flair to the gathering. A large number of ambassadors and diplomats were present on the occasion, including the Dean of Ambassadors, Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Mulamov, Ambassador of Egypt, Mo-



rocco, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Finland, Belarus, Iran, Romania, Kenya, Nepal, Korea, Italy and Zimbabwe. Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Mr. Faisal Shahzad, Former Presidents,

members of the executive committee, Zia Ullah Shah, Raja Hanif, members of the Provincial Assembly (Punjab), Dr. Khurram Tariq, President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce, Tariq Jadoon, President Small Chamber of Commerce and Small Industries,



Azhar-Ul-Islam Zafar, Vice President Islamabad Chamber, Director AIC, Ejaz Qamar Kiani, Qazi Shaukat Mahmood, Chairman Qazi Group of Companies, Saboohi Hussain President, Women Chamber of Commerce Rawalpindi and representatives of dis-

trict and local administrations, representatives of Anjuman-e-Tajirun, Women Members, representatives from TDAP, Editors and Bureau Chiefs from Print and Electronic Media and a large number of members and businessmen attended the annual Iftar dinner.

Over Rs. 58 bn disbursed among BISP beneficiaries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs. 58 billion among over 55,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat scheme. The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (Jan-March) of Rs.10,500 of Benazir Kafaalat scheme is continued across the country smoothly. "Till March 25 at 4:00 pm, over Rs. 58 billion has been disbursed among over 55,00,000 beneficiaries of Benazir Kafaalat programme which makes 59.6 percent of the total beneficiaries", an official source revealed. The payment process is continued across the country, including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan simultaneously to disburse the increased payment of Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families. The

beneficiaries have been advised to receive their full payment through the agent/representative of their nearest designated bank and contact the toll-free number 080026477 or the nearest Tehsil offices in case of any deduction. Besides Benazir Kafaalat stipend payments, the disbursement of education stipends is also being carried out across the country. In some areas, the special Ramzan grant is also being issued to the beneficiaries, he added. The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly. However, the beneficiaries can also contact them on WhatsApp numbers including 03018472836/03028240958 (Sindh), 0318472831 (South Punjab-I), 03175370095 (South Punjab-II), 03028240972 (Central Punjab), 03028240977 (North Punjab), 03185761507 (Balochistan), 03175370081 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), 03155213394 (Azad Jammu and Kash-

mir and Gilgit Baltistan). The messages from the Benazir Income Support Program are sent only from 8171, and messages from any other number should not be trusted. The officials of BISP have been directed to ensure the smooth disbursement of Kafaalat payments to the women respectively without any deductions. The staff has been deputed to monitor the process of payment disbursement and take immediate action against the agents responsible for deductions from the beneficiary's payments. The BISP is currently supporting 9.3 million deserving families and acting as a lifeline for those facing economic hardship. The Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) program, also known as the "Benazir Kafaalat Programme," is the core initiative of BISP and was launched in 2008. Since its inception, the UCT/Kafaalat initiative has grown to the extent that it is now the largest single cash transfer program in Pakistan's history.

Businessman receives taxpayer award

The government also acknowledged Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and first-time filers who substantially contributed to the national treasury. Special incentives were offered to those who made significant tax payments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Tariq Rafi, Chairman of Siddiqsons Group, was recognized on Tuesday as the 4th highest taxpayer at the 'Tax Excellence Awards' ceremony. Established in 1959, Siddiqsons Group has demonstrated excellence across various sectors, including Textile & Denim Manufacturing, Real Estate & Construction, Tinplate Manufacturing & Tin-Can Packaging, and Dairy Industries, thereby expanding its global footprint, said a news release. The ceremony witnessed the distribution of approximately 40 awards to top exporters in sectors

such as textiles, sports, surgical goods, pharmaceuticals, foods, and steel. Furthermore, awards were presented to taxpayers who made significant contributions through their income tax payments in various categories, including companies, AOPs, and individual taxpayers. The government also acknowledged Small

and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and first-time filers who substantially contributed to the national treasury. Special incentives were offered to those who made significant tax payments.

Businessman receives taxpayer award

ISLAMABAD: Tariq Rafi, Chairman of Siddiqsons Group, was recognized on Tuesday as the 4th highest taxpayer at the 'Tax Excellence Awards' ceremony. Established in 1959, Siddiqsons Group has demonstrated excellence across various sectors, including Textile & Denim Manufacturing, Real Estate & Construction, Tinplate Manufacturing & Tin-Can Packaging, and Dairy Industries, thereby expanding its global footprint, said a news release. The ceremony witnessed the distribution of approximately 40 awards to top exporters in sectors such as textiles, sports, surgical goods, pharmaceuticals, foods, and steel. Furthermore, awards were presented to taxpayers who made significant contributions through their income tax payments in various categories, including companies, AOPs, and individual taxpayers. The government also acknowledged Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and first-time filers who substantially contributed to the national treasury. Special incentives were offered to those who made significant tax payments.—DNA

PNCA hosting painting competition

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) is hosting a drawing and painting competition themed 'Land and People of Pakistan' for individuals aged 6 to 25 years. The competition was specially being organized in connection with Pakistan Day celebrations. Director General PNCA Muhammad Ayoub Jamali told APP that the purpose of this competition is to engage the youth in healthy activities along with educating them about the beauty of our country. He said that interested young artists should submit their artwork on A4 size paper till March 27, 2024.—APP

WWF-Pakistan highlights vital role of groundwater recharge wells

ISLAMABAD: WWF-Pakistan arranged a field visit to the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore, where two groundwater recharge wells have been constructed as part of the Ravi River Restoration Project. The event brought together industry experts, academia, and members from the Ministry of Water Resources to witness the ongoing efforts towards ensuring the responsible and efficient use of water resources in the region, according to a news release. The Ravi River Restoration Project, funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation in partnership with WWF-Pakistan.—APP

IFA signs MoU with NIH to bolster food testing capabilities

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) Dr Tahira Saddique on Tuesday said that the IFA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Institute of Health (NIH) towards ensuring the safety of consumables in the Federal Capital. This collaboration aims to enhance food testing capabilities and strengthen efforts to combat the proliferation of harmful health products in the city. Talking to APP, she said that the MoU was signed between Dr. Tanveer, Chief Nutrition Wing of NIH, and Irfan Nawaz Memon, Director of IFA. This collaboration was expected to streamline food testing procedures, ensuring rigorous examination of food samples to identify any potential risks to public health. She revealed that the partnership entails a series of initiatives aimed at bolstering food safety measures across Islamabad. With access to the advanced facilities at the NIH laboratory, IFA would conduct thorough inspections of various eateries to eliminate substandard food items from circulation. Additionally, training sessions conducted by NIH experts would equip IFA personnel with the necessary skills to enforce food safety protocols effectively. Dr. Tahira highlighted the absence of a dedicated testing laboratory within IFA before this collaboration, emphasizing the significance of leveraging NIH's resources to expedite the sampling and testing process. The proximity of the NIH lab would enable swift transportation of perishable food items for timely analysis, thereby enhancing the efficiency of IFA's regulatory actions against adulterated food outlets. The partnership between IFA and NIH signified a concerted effort to address the challenges posed by unsafe food products in the city. By pooling their resources and expertise, both organizations were poised to elevate their capabilities in safeguarding the well-being of citizens. In conclusion, the alliance between IFA and NIH underscored a shared commitment to upholding food safety standards and protecting consumers from the risks associated with substandard food items, she added.—DNA

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Briefs

Markets, malls
buzzing with
shoppers after
iftar to soak in
Eid spirit

ISLAMABAD: Citizens of all ages from elsewhere in the country are thronging malls and markets after Iftar and are continuing shopping till late at night where buyers are seen busy buying new clothes, footwear and other items for their families in a festive mood. People belonging to all age groups including women and children are seen busy for early Eid shopping, said a report aired by a Private news channel. These days, kids-related items are in high demand, because every family, whatever its economic position, prefers to buy something for their young ones, said the owner. "We friends mostly try to buy dresses and shoes by the middle of Ramadan as all the good stuff is sold out during the last few days before Eid, while the tailors also stop taking orders during the last week of Ramadan as they also leave for native towns," said a female. Markets and Malls are also offering special discounts on popular Eid-related stuff to attract shoppers, said another visitor. "Shopping centers are seen always busy and crowded during Ramadan because people are looking for Eid clothing as well as gifts to give to their family," said a group of females. —DNA

Death
anniversary
of famous
playwright
Haseena Moin

ISLAMABAD: Third death anniversary of Pakistani dramatist, playwright and scriptwriter, Haseena Moin was observed Tuesday. Born on 20 November in 1941 at Kanpur, her family migrated to Pakistan after independence of Pakistan in 1947. Haseena Moin wrote several plays for stage, radio, and television including 'Tanhaiyan', 'Ankahi' and 'Dhoop Kinaray'. She was the recipient of the Pride of Performance award for her services to the performing arts in Pakistan. She passed away on March 26, 2021 in Karachi. —APP

NPO to
organize
webinar

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a webinar on "Digital Marketing Tools and Techniques" on March 28 (Thursday). Digital marketing, also called online marketing, is the promotion of brands to connect with potential customers using the internet and other forms of digital communication, said an NPO document shared here on Tuesday. This includes not only email, social media, and web-based advertising, but also text and multimedia messages as a marketing channel. The top digital marketing objectives that businesses strive to achieve are increasing brand awareness, driving website traffic, generating leads, and boosting sales and revenue. The workshop will provide information about search engine optimization, search engine marketing, and content marketing. —DNA

CDNS
achieve Rs 65
billion in Islamic
investment bonds

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved Rs 65 billion in Islamic finance bonds during the current fiscal year 2023-24 till March 25. "The National Savings had issued the Islamic bonds for the promotion of the Islamic finance system, which will help the development of the Islamic economy in the country," a senior official of the Directorate of National Savings told APP here on Tuesday. The official said that the CDNS had set the target of collecting Rs 75 billion from the Islamic finance bonds in the financial year 2023-24. Some Rs 16 billion were collected through the bonds during July 2023, the first of the ongoing fiscal year, he added. —DNA



RAWALPINDI: Women gather outside the Ration distribution center organized by Tehreem Quran Academy. —APP

Decision to shift TEXPO
to Karachi rotation violation

PHMA says Lahore, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Peshawar exporters want equal chance to showcase products to global buyers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association Zonal Chairman Mian Farrukh Iqbal has said that the unilateral, unconsulted and abrupt decision to shift the venue of TEXPO-2024 from Lahore to Karachi is sheer violation of the rotational schedule of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and it must switch over to the previous schedule to provide equal opportunities to the apparel and hosiery exporters of Lahore, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Gujranwala and Peshawar to showcase their quality products to the international buyers by utilizing this im-

portant platform. Mian Farrukh Iqbal said that the decision to move this year's event to Karachi contradicts the established schedule, as TEXPO 2023 has already been successfully held in Karachi last year. "It now qualified Lahore, as the next designated host for TEXPO 2024", he said and underlined the historic importance of Lahore. He said that it is a centrally located metropolis of Punjab and exporters feel it easy to set up their stalls in Lahore instead of travelling 1000 kilometers away from their production houses. The PHMA Zonal Chairman urged the authorities to reconsider and relocate TEXPO 2024 to Lahore to ensure maximum international exposure for local garment manufacturers and export-

ers. Drawing immediate attention of Zubair Motiwala, the Chief Executive of TDAP and Capt (Retired) Khurram Agha, the Secretary Commerce, he said that Lahore has strategic significance in attracting international buyers and promoting Pakistan's textile industry at the global level, hence its extra qualifications may also be exploited to enhance to give a quantum jump to the national exports. He acknowledged the role of TDAP in fostering industrial growth and expressed optimism regarding future collaboration between PHMA and TDAP. He also underscored the importance of TEXPO Pakistan as a vital platform for showcasing the country's textile sector to potential buyers from key markets such as

the USA, Europe, and China. He also advocated for regional inclusivity and fair representation and urged the TDAP to adhere to the rotational schedule and host TEXPO 2024 in Lahore. PHMA (NZ) Senior Vice Chairman Ammanullah Khan and Vice Chairman Khawaja Musharaf Iqbal emphasized that Lahore's status as a major textile hub would facilitate broader participation from manufacturers and exporters nationwide, promoting inclusivity and equitable opportunities for all stakeholders. They were confident that TEXPO Lahore would attract more buyers and subsequently the local exporters would get maximum orders. "It would certainly make this year's TEXPO a total success."

China-Pakistan youth
celebrate National Day

DNA

RAWALPINDI: In a heartwarming gesture of friendship and solidarity, the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community, in collaboration with the Beijing One Sphere Charity Foundation and the Zhixinxing Charity Team, made a generous donation to the local elderly orphans and orphans here at Dar-us-Salaam School. The event took place on 24 March, a day after the Pakistan National Day, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. Aiming to foster stronger ties and cultural exchanges between the youth of both countries, Chinese and Pakistani volunteers worked together with the school staff to pack and distribute supplies. A total of 200 families in the area received love packages, which



include beans, flour, sugar, cooking oil and other daily necessities. They were warmly welcomed by the staff and students of Dar-us-Salaam School, creating an atmosphere of joy and camaraderie. Malamazan, representing private busi-

nesses and volunteers, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to the local community. He emphasized the importance of fostering goodwill and friendship between the two nations through such initiatives. "I really admire

the resilience and strength of the Pakistani people and their desire to contribute to the betterment of society. We will remain dedicated to promoting youth engagement, cultural exchange, and social welfare initiatives," he added.

Pak seeks Chinese
Investment in
energy sector

BEIJING: Pakistan is actively pursuing Chinese investment opportunities to fortify bilateral ties and fuel economic growth, said Aslam Chaudhary Economic Minister here at the Pakistani Embassy. Addressing a seminar titled "CPEC and Trade & Investment Opportunities in Pakistan" at the China International Petroleum & Petrochemical Technology and Equipment Exhibition (CIPPE), Aslam Chaudhary said that the energy sector emerges as a key area for investment with the government's focus on renewable energy sources. Pakistan has vast untapped potential in hydropower, wind, and solar energy, presenting lucrative investment opportunities, he added. "Last year our government announced an alternate energy policy under which we have a projection that by the year 2030, 60% of the energy mix would be from green and renewable energy sources. Currently, we have 33%," he stated. Haseeb Gohar, Haseeb Gohar, Political Counsellor, Pakistani Embassy in China, said that Special Economic Zones (SEZs) along the CPEC route further incentivize investment, offering tax holidays and streamlined processes for businesses. With SEZs being developed across provinces, each area's unique resources and ecosystem are leveraged for development. He said that the second phase of CPEC promises increased industrialization and investment, further solidifying the bond between the two nations and driving economic growth for Pakistan. As opportunities abound across various sectors, investors are encouraged to explore and capitalize on Pakistan's potential for development, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday—DNA

Govt
implementing
IT-based track
& trace system

ISLAMABAD: Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs Tahir Khalil Sindhu Punjab said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will make the track and trace system fully functional for tax prevention in all sectors including tobacco, cement, sugar, and fertilizer industries. Talking to PTV News, he said that FBR along with federal ministries and provincial departments is introducing a track and trace system in factories in Pakistan to promote transparency. He further said that by introducing a track and trace system in various sectors, tax authorities will get quick and comprehensive access to data, facilitate proactive decision-making, and improve the accuracy of tax assessments. He said that the track and trace system aims to increase tax revenue through better monitoring and regulation. Replying to a question, he said that Shehbaz Sharif had strongly advised to use of the track and trace system to prevent counterfeiting and sub-standard products.—APP

CCP's
Statement
on proposed
PTCL-Telenor
Merger

ISLAMABAD: It is clarified that several newspapers have publicized misleading information on behalf of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) regarding the progress of the pre-merger application of PTCL. The PTCL intends to acquire 100% shareholding of M/s. Telenor Pakistan (Private) Limited ("Telenor") and M/s. Orion Towers Private Limited ("OT"). CCP received a pre-merger application on 29th February, 2024 from PTCL Lawyers. Initially, the application was submitted with incorrect fee. The remaining outstanding fee was sent to the Commission on 6th March 2024, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. CCP requested further information on 20th March, 2024 to complete its due diligence. The requisite information is still awaited from the PTCL lawyers.—APP

Pakistan-
Qatar sign
agreements

ISLAMABAD: The government of Pakistan and Qatar have signed several agreements and letter's of Intent (LOIs) with top Qatari companies the main purpose of this initiative was set to significantly enhance employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce in Qatar. An official source told APP, the signing of these Agreements with renowned Qatari firms, including Qatari Diyar-Saudi Bin Laden Group Construction (QD-SBG), Hamad Bin Khaled Contracting Company W.L.L (HBK), Ali Bin Ali Holding W.L.L, Sheikh Jabor Bin Mansour Bin Jabor Bin Jassim Al Thani (JM) Holding, Tabeeb Care Medical Services.—APP

Powering Economic Growth: Harnessing AI in
Pakistan's Energy Regulatory Organizations

In conclusion, the adoption of AI at the organizational level presents a transformative opportunity for regulatory organizations in Pakistan's energy sector to enhance efficiency and drive economic growth. By overcoming bottlenecks and building capacity, regulatory bodies can harness the power of AI to streamline operations, improve decision-making

IMRAN GHAZNAVI



In Pakistan, the power, oil, and gas sectors play pivotal roles in driving economic growth and ensuring energy security. Regulatory organizations within these sectors, such as the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), are tasked with overseeing market dynamics, enforcing compliance,

and fostering sustainable development. As Pakistan strives to achieve its economic goals, the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) at the organizational level presents a transformative opportunity for regulatory bodies to enhance efficiency and act as catalysts for national economic growth. Leveraging AI for Regulatory Efficiency In the near future, AI holds the promise of revolutionizing the operations of regulatory organizations in Pakistan's energy sector. By automating routine tasks, analyzing vast amounts of data, and providing actionable insights, AI technologies can streamline regulatory processes and improve decision-making efficiency. For example, AI-powered algorithms can be utilized to predict electricity demand, optimize resource allocation, and detect irregularities in energy markets, thereby enabling regulators to proactively address emerging challenges and ensure market stability.

Identifying Bottlenecks and Challenges Despite the potential benefits, the adoption of AI in regulatory organizations faces several challenges in Pakistan. One bottleneck is the lack of comprehensive data infrastructure and digital capabilities within regulatory bodies. Many organizations struggle with outdated systems, fragmented data sources, and limited technical expertise, hindering their ability to fully leverage AI technologies. Additionally, there may be resistance to change from stakeholders accustomed to traditional regulatory approaches, as well as concerns regarding data privacy, security, and ethical considerations in AI-driven decision-making processes. Overcoming Challenges and Building Capacity To overcome these challenges, regulatory organizations must invest in building robust data infrastructure, developing technical capabilities, and

fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. This requires strategic partnerships with technology providers, academic institutions, and industry stakeholders to facilitate knowledge transfer and skill development. Moreover, regulatory bodies should prioritize data governance frameworks, transparency mechanisms, and risk management protocols to address concerns related to data privacy, security, and accountability. - Implementing AI Solutions for Impact In order to realize the full potential of AI, regulatory organizations must strategically deploy AI solutions across key areas of operation. For example, in the power sector, AI can be used to optimize grid management, improve energy efficiency, and enhance demand forecasting accuracy. Similarly, in the oil and gas sector, AI technologies can enable regulators to monitor supply chains,

detect market manipulation, and ensure compliance with environmental regulations. By focusing on targeted use cases and measurable outcomes, regulatory bodies can demonstrate the tangible benefits of AI adoption and garner support from stakeholders. - Driving Economic Growth through Regulatory Innovation As regulatory organizations in Pakistan embrace AI and digital transformation, they have the opportunity to become drivers of economic growth and innovation. By promoting regulatory certainty, facilitating investment, and fostering a competitive market environment, AI-enabled regulatory bodies can attract private sector participation, stimulate job creation, and spur technological innovation in the energy sector. Moreover, by aligning regulatory objectives with broader national development priorities, such as poverty alleviation, climate action, and

inclusive growth, regulators can contribute to the sustainable and inclusive economic development of Pakistan. In conclusion, the adoption of AI at the organizational level presents a transformative opportunity for regulatory organizations in Pakistan's energy sector to enhance efficiency and drive economic growth. By overcoming bottlenecks and building capacity, regulatory bodies can harness the power of AI to streamline operations, improve decision-making, and foster innovation. As catalysts for change, regulatory organizations have the potential to leverage AI to unlock new opportunities for regulatory excellence and become engines of national economic growth in the near future.

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Who lost the right path?

AMID a genocide war unparalleled in modern times, moral battles rage and political alignments shift. Words prove to have a leading role in describing, categorizing, and ultimately evaluating current events and the place they will occupy in history books. While using language, concepts, and terms as a false mask for what's happening instead of revealing it, Jonathan Glazer steals the spotlight with his succinct words upon winning the Oscar for the Best International Feature Film "The Zone of Interest." "Our film shows where dehumanization leads, at its worst," writer-director Jonathan Glazer said. "Right now we stand here as men who refute their Jewishness and the Holocaust being hijacked by an occupation which has led to conflict for so many innocent people. Whether the victims of October 7th in Israel, or the ongoing attack on Gaza, all the victims, this dehumanization, how do we resist?" Glazer's language is attenuated to a large extent because the Zionist occupation of Palestinian land didn't merely lead to a "conflict" but rather it led to a war of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and unprecedented massacre against Palestinians continuing for 75 years filled with exterminations, displacement, oppression, and deprivation of freedom and human rights. Yet, Glazer's mere hint at an implicit stance and his question of who is responsible today for stripping Palestinians of their humanity compared to the Nazis who were responsible for stripping Jews of their humanity in the past stirred the anger of Zionists. Commentaries and articles began suggesting that Hollywood in the past used to know how to distinguish between good and bad. What does it mean for the Biden administration to support "Israel" operations against high-value Hamas targets in Rafah, as long as "Israel" avoids a wide-scale operation? What level of genocide crimes can be considered wide-scale if all this aggression over a period of one hundred and sixty days, witnessing the worst crimes against humanity, is not yet considered wide-scale? They want to pretend that the target is Hamas, but the real target is Palestine, the Arab identity of Palestine, the Arab identity as a whole, and the future of Arabs who are being killed while still in their mothers' wombs. So, what genocide surpasses this genocide? Since the start of this criminal aggression, the enemy and its allies have been manipulating their language to corner the readers' and viewers' opinions. Instead of demanding a global halt to the genocide crimes in Gaza and moving to serious negotiations, the enemy replaced halting ethnic cleansing crimes with the word "truce", implying that the genocide is ongoing and any cessation would mean a return to it at the time chosen by the Zionist thugs who believe in genocide ideologically. Now, weeks after the talk about a ceasefire without any seriousness from the perpetrators of genocide, the word "ceasefire" has been replaced with the word "respite", as if the killer has become fatigued from destruction, displacement, and the killing and shedding of the blood of hundreds of thousands, 72% of whom are children and women, and now the killer needs a "respite" to regather his strength and resume killing once again after arranging his procedures to sentence the innocent souls of Palestinian children and women to suffocation and death.



UK and big 'China threat'

LONDON'S concerns about the "China threat" are increasingly veering toward absurdity. On Monday, British Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden publicly accused China in parliament, alleging that "China state-affiliated actors" were involved in two cyberattacks targeting British democratic institutions and lawmakers. He also announced sanctions on two individuals and one company. Some British media outlets claimed that China obtained personal details of 40 million voters. Dowden also mentioned that statements of support from the US and other allies were expected later in the day. This may be the start of yet another collective attempt by the West to smear China. Previously, in reports by British media, the widespread attention to "the disappearance of Kate Middleton" globally has also been linked to China. An article in The Telegraph, a British newspaper, without providing any evidence, claimed that "China and Russia are fueling disinformation to destabilize the nation" by spreading negative information about the British royal family. From stealing personal information of 40 million voters and deliberately undermining British democracy, to sensationalizing news about Kate Middleton and affecting the reputation of the British royal family and national security, it seems as though China has endless designs on the UK, doing nothing else all day but targeting the UK. This symptom of paranoia deserves a severe diagnosis. In recent years, the UK has become one of the most enthusiastic countries in the West to hype up the "Chinese spies" and "China threat." Chinese-made cameras have been banned under suspicion of being "spy cameras," Chinese-made electric cars are labeled as "four-wheeled Trojan horses" monitoring British citizens for Beijing, and even Hong Kong laundry workers with a long hiring history in the British navy have been dismissed due to alleged "spy risks." The bizarre accusations from the UK about "Chinese spies" and "China threats" are sufficient to compile into a comprehensive "paranoia casebook." In fact, it is not China but the UK that is focused on causing disruption and infiltration. China has previously reported a case where the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) used the head of a foreign consulting firm to gather intelligence related to China for the British side and look for individuals to be recruited by the MI6. British media have also reported that agencies like MI6 have advertised to recruit Chinese-speaking individuals for intelligence activities. This is why some British politicians are so sensitive and fearful of so-called Chinese infiltration and influence; it's a projection of their own thoughts and actions. The so-called "Chinese spies" and "China threat" are nothing but the paranoia of some anti-China extremist politicians hijacking the entire country. They deliberately stoke fear of China to advance their political agendas and achieve their political goals. On one hand, by hyping up the idea of "Chinese spies" and "China threat," they cover up their failures in addressing domestic issues in the UK and divert public attention. On the other hand, there are those who simply do not want good relations between China and the UK. Just as China-UK relations were beginning to show signs of dialogue last year, suddenly there emerged a groundless case of the arrest of a parliamentary researcher as a spy, intentionally causing trouble for bilateral relations.

"Will Israel comply with the UNSC's ceasefire resolution for Gaza?"

Qamar Bashir



The UNSC has many arsenals in its armory which could be used to implement the UNSC resolution, if any of the party fails to abide by it as when the UNSC issues a resolution mandating a ceasefire between two countries, it signifies a collective international effort to restore peace and stability in the region. However, if one of the involved nations refuses to adhere to the provisions outlined in the resolution, a cascade of diplomatic, economic, and potentially military consequences may ensue. Initially, diplomatic pressure and condemnation from...

IN a remarkable turn of events, Israel found itself facing unexpected diplomatic pressure as the United States chose not to exercise its veto power against a ceasefire resolution championed by ten nations led by Mozambique. The resolution garnered the support of 14 members of the UN Security Council, with the US abstaining. The resolution called for an immediate ceasefire during a sacred period, with the ultimate aim of achieving a permanent and sustainable cessation of hostilities. Furthermore, it demanded the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, underscoring the necessity of humanitarian access to address their medical and other urgent needs. This development signaled a significant shift in the international community's stance on the conflict, highlighting a growing consensus towards prioritizing peace and humanitarian considerations in resolving the ongoing crisis. The shift in the US stance towards the ceasefire resolution primarily stems from multiple factors. Firstly, the enduring and relentless nature of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, Secondly, with impending elections on the horizon, the US President's concerns over potentially alienating Muslim voters, as well as support for a ceasefire from diverse religious, racial, and ethnic groups, influenced the decision-making process in Washington. The mounting frustration within US political circles at the Israeli Prime Minister's unwavering stance on military actions, particularly the planned Rafah attack, further compounded the situation. Moreover, Israel's ongoing massacre, hindrance of humanitarian aid deliveries exacerbated tensions and raised humanitarian concerns globally, prompting the US to reassess its approach. Israel incessantly and unlawfully pounding Gaza, hitting schools and hospitals and reducing large parts of neighborhoods to rubble. It unlawfully used white phosphorus in densely populated areas. Forced evacuation of all people from northern Gaza and displacing 1.9 million people. Unlawful killing of over 30,228 Palestinians most of them civilians, including 25000 women and children stemming from Israel's regular use of excessive lethal force and extrajudicial executions. The sweeping unlawful collective punishment by imposing restrictions on the movement of people and goods deprived the 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza of their right to freedom of movement and opportunities to better their lives; severely limited their access to electricity, health care, and water; and devastated the economy. Israeli authorities also held 2,873 Palestinians in administrative detention, without charge or trial based on secret information. More than 46,000 housing units have been destroyed and 234,000 others damaged, accounting for 60

percent of the housing stock in Gaza. At least 342 schools have been damaged, 187 "attacks on health care" were carried out, damaging 24 hospitals. These atrocities are in utter violation of the established principles of Geneva Conventions designed to ensure the protection and dignity of all individuals affected by armed conflict. Civilians, regardless of age, including children and the elderly, are entitled to special care and must be shielded from deliberate harm. Hospitals and medical personnel are protected. Civilian property such as households, places of worship, and industrial facilities are safeguarded from deliberate targeting. It prohibits collective punishment and emphasizes individual accountability for actions taken during conflict. The convergence of these factors ultimately compelled the United States to abstain from vetoing the ceasefire resolution, marking a significant departure from its previous staunch support for Israel's actions. Israel's response to international appeals, UN resolutions, and pressure from the US reflects a deep-seated determination to pursue its own strategic objectives in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Despite widespread calls for moderation and humanitarian considerations, Israel has remained steadfast in its military actions against Palestinians in Gaza. It even started hurling accusations at the US for US persistent advocacy for a two state solution and allowing humanitarian aid to enter into Gaza and warned that with or without the support of US, Israel would continue warfare and annexation of Palestinian territory, underscore Israel's uncompromising stance on key issues such as the two-state solution and the provision of humanitarian aid. By canceling a planned trip to Washington and rebuking the US for its perceived interference, Israel demonstrates its frustration with what it views as insufficient support for its military operations and broader objectives in the region. Big Question is what is next after the passing of the resolution if Israel refuses to abide by the resolution. This concern was put to writing by the UN secretary general, António Guterres, who in his tweet said quote, "The Security Council just approved a long-awaited resolution on Gaza, demanding an immediate ceasefire, and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. This resolution must be implemented. Failure would be unforgivable". The UNSC has many arsenals in its armory which could be used to implement the UNSC resolution, if any of the party fails to abide by it as when the UNSC issues a resolution mandating a ceasefire between two countries, it signifies a collective international effort to restore

peace and stability in the region. However, if one of the involved nations refuses to adhere to the provisions outlined in the resolution, a cascade of diplomatic, economic, and potentially military consequences may ensue. Initially, diplomatic pressure and condemnation from the UNSC and other member states could intensify, urging the non-compliant country to honor the ceasefire agreement. Concurrently, economic sanctions may be imposed, targeting vital sectors of the non-compliant nation's economy to compel compliance. This combination of diplomatic and economic measures aims to exert significant pressure on the non-compliant nation and encourage a return to peaceful negotiations and adherence to the UNSC resolution. In more severe cases where the refusal to comply persists, the international community may escalate its response. This could involve the authorization of military intervention by the UNSC to enforce the ceasefire resolution and restore order. Additionally, the non-compliant country may face further isolation on the international stage, with repercussions extending to legal consequences for breaches of international law. However, unfortunately, numerous resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) including those passed on Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have remained unimplemented for various reasons. These include the lack of enforcement mechanisms, political obstacles stemming from opposing interests among member states, resource constraints, challenges in securing cooperation among multiple parties, and the evolving nature of conflicts and geopolitical dynamics. Additionally, resolutions may face difficulties in implementation when they involve non-state actors or address issues beyond the control of the UNSC. Ultimately, the effectiveness of UNSC resolutions hinges on factors such as political will, international cooperation, enforcement mechanisms, and the evolving circumstances surrounding conflicts and crises. When these factors align, resolutions are more likely to be successfully implemented, but when they are lacking, resolutions may remain unimplemented or only partially implemented. The upcoming test will gauge the resilience and determination of the international community in confronting the actions of a single, albeit influential, nation: Israel. Whether the collective efforts of the international community will prevail over the policies of Israel remains to be seen, with time serving as the ultimate arbiter of this contentious struggle.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister at Embassy
of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC

Russia-Iran cooperation in the changing world

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The criticism in Tehran is based on two points. First, Iran hasn't prioritized developing its LNG industry like Qatar. Second, there is feeling that Russia pressures Iran to stay out of the European gas market, as Russia doesn't want Iran to become an alternative energy provider to Europe. Russia, led by Putin, sees energy exports as a tool in its geopolitical competition...

THE countries Russia and Iran are becoming closer in terms of security and defense. They are working on a long-term agreement to cooperate more in other areas. This collaboration covers various aspects including trade, investment and joint projects. The relationship between the two countries has strengthened especially since the conflict in Ukraine. Iran says that trade between them has doubled and Russia is now the largest foreign investor in Iran. Both the countries believe that the West poses a threat to their interests. They think that Western powers are limiting their actions on the world stage and supporting movements that aim to change their governments. Both Moscow and Tehran see the West as a common enemy. This shared perception of threat and common interests is the foundation of their growing cooperation. However, within Iran there is a disagreement about the value of Russia as a partner. Hardliners see closer ties with Russia as a way to protect against the West while others, including many Iranians, think that direct talks with the United States and a revival of the 2015 nuclear deal would be better for Iran. This division in opinion is not likely to go away soon and Western powers may try to take advantage of it. The moderate and pragmatic wing in Iran is doubtful about Russia's role and sees promises of strategic relations with Russia as unrealistic. They see a common threat with Russia and believe that working together is crucial for their mutual security. Even though there are disagreements, they prioritize their strategic goals. The leaders in both Iran and Russia feel that not cooperating could be costly for both countries and there are benefits to working together. Russia is seen as a crucial sup-

porter for Iran internationally especially in the tensions with the West. The war in Ukraine has increased the importance of the alliance for both nations. While there is no formal alliance but there are an unwritten commitment between Moscow and Tehran for mutual protection. Despite past obstacles, the two countries have started to strengthen ties particularly in the energy sector. Before 2022, Russian companies were cautious due to Western interests but this changed when a \$40 billion agreement was signed in July 2022. The deal involves upgrading Iranian oil and gas sectors with a focus on projects like the North Pars gas field. However, questions arise about the reliability of the partnerships specifically considering past withdrawals from projects. Iran also faces challenges in attracting foreign investment due to sanctions and economic issues. Despite assurances from Iranian officials, doubts exist about the long-term significance and success of the deal, given the geopolitical nature of the cooperation rather than purely commercial reasons. Someone from Iran criticized a deal between Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Russia's Gazprom. They questioned whether Russia would help Iran build the necessary infrastructure to export gas to Europe. The critics think it is not logical for Gazprom to invest in Iranian LNG (liquefied natural gas) infrastructure because they lack experience. They also doubt Russia's commitment to investing in Iran. The criticism in Tehran is based on two points. First, Iran hasn't prioritized developing its LNG industry like Qatar. Second, there is feeling that Russia pressures Iran to stay out of the European gas market, as Russia doesn't want Iran to become an alternative energy provider to Europe. Russia, led by Putin,

sees energy exports as a tool in its geopolitical competition with the West. Russia has no reason to help Iran upgrade its energy infrastructure for European markets and some in Tehran believe Russia might invest in Iranian projects to gain control over them and slow down Iran's emergence as an alternative oil and gas exporter to Europe. There is a competition between Iran and Russia in Asian oil markets. Some in Iran suggest exporting more oil to Europe instead of competing with Russia in Asia. Those in Iran supporting closer energy ties with Russia argue that Iran should think globally and prioritize political ties over economic gains. They see Russia's separation from the West as an opportunity for Iran. They believe that aligning with Russia helps the survival of the Islamic Republic as an anti-American model. It looks like the United States and Europe can't do much to stop Moscow and Tehran from getting closer. This is because they are working together in a way that makes leaders in both countries less worried about a big threat. Without a new nuclear deal and with Iran doing bad things, like violating human rights and hurting innocent protesters, becoming friends with the current leaders in Tehran seems unlikely. European countries might consider putting a lot of pressure and more tough actions on Iran. This could make Iran feel vulnerable and give them a reason to get closer to Russia. The same thing is happening on the Russian side. Russian actions in Ukraine have made it hard for them to become friends with the West in the near future. Instead, when the West puts pressure on Russia, it strengthens the reasons for Moscow to be friends with Iran. In simple terms, as long as the West keeps up the pressure on both Russia and Iran, Moscow and Tehran will probably work together more.

Briefs

Suicide
attack: 5
Chinese...

FROM PAGE 01
Earlier, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also visited the embassy informed the Chinese ambassador about the details of the attack and deaths of Chinese engineers. He also shared the details of ongoing rescue operation on the site of attack. "The entire Pakistani nation equally shares the grief of their Chinese brothers in this time of sorrow," Naqvi said, pledging to deal with the elements involved in the attack with iron fists. He said that the attack on Pakistan-China brotherly ties is not acceptable. "We will not let the bilateral relations get affected," he added.

Military
vows strict
action

FROM PAGE 01
"Certain foreign elements are complicit in aiding and abetting terrorism in Pakistan, driven by their vested interests. Despite the veneer of innocence, these elements are being continuously exposed as sponsors of terror," the military's media wing said in a statement condemning the attack. It said that the recent incidents of terrorism in Pakistan, notably in Gwadar, Turbat, and Besham, are dastardly acts aimed at destabilising the internal security situation. While the first two attempts were successfully thwarted by armed forces, the latest incident in Besham led to the loss of six innocent civilians including five Chinese nationals.

Pakistan-
Japan
desire to...

FROM PAGE 01
Meanwhile, on the occasion, Ambassador Wada noted the commitment of the Government to continue with the implementation of prudent fiscal policies and structural reforms. He informed that presently 80 Japanese companies are operating in Pakistan. The Ambassador highlighted some of the issues being faced by Japanese automakers in Pakistan. He appreciated the government's efforts towards economic revival and expressed Japan's continued support for Pakistan's initiatives aimed at fostering growth and prosperity.

Judges want
spy agencies
role defined

FROM PAGE 01
The top court had restored Justice Siddiqui's stature as a judge and his pension but could not restore him as a judge because he had crossed the retirement age of 62, as it noted that the SJC unlawfully dismissed him for levelling serious allegations at state institutions in a speech before the Rawalpindi bar. They noted that Justice Siddiqui had been removed for accusing the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) DGC Gen Faiz Hameed of interfering in the constitution of benches at IHC and dictating verdicts. The IHC judges, where Justice Siddiqui had served and was in line to become its next chief, said that they supported Justice Siddiqui and that the allegations he had levelled should be probed, as observed in the top court's verdict.

Imran
demands...

FROM PAGE 01
scrutiny, questioning the legitimacy of the Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) to conduct inquiries amidst allegations of rigging. In a plea for fairness, Imran urged authorities to consider releasing other PTI leaders while he remains incarcerated, stating, "If you want to keep me in jail, keep me but release the others." He cited the health concerns of party leaders such as Dr. Yasmeen, Mehmoodul Rashid, Alia Hamza, Jjaz Chaudhry, and Umar Cheema.

Pakistan vs Australia T20I, ODI
series schedule announced

The Pakistan cricket team will play three ODIs and as many T20Is against Australia on their tour down under

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan cricket team is set to visit Australia for a white-ball series scheduled for November this year as Cricket Australia (CA) on Tuesday released its international schedule for the 2024-25 season. The Pakistan cricket team will play three ODIs and as many T20Is against Australia on their tour Down Under. Pakistan is set to return to Australia after nearly 11 months since competing in the Benaud-Quadir Trophy, featuring three Test matches held in Perth, Sydney, and Melbourne from December 2023 to January 2024. The three-match ODI series kicks off on 4 November at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, followed by matches in Adelaide and Perth on 8 and 10 November, respectively. The last time Pakistan played an ODI series in Australia was in 2016. Following the ODIs, Pakistan and Australia will also clash in a three-match T20I series. Pakistan last played a T20I in Australia in 2022 during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup final.

ODI series schedule:
4 November: MCG, Melbourne (D/N)
8 November: Adelaide Oval, Adelaide (D/N)
10 November: Perth Stadium, Perth (D/N)



T20I series schedule:

14 November: The Gabba, Brisbane (N)
16 November: SCG, Sydney (N)
18 November: Bellerive Oval, Hobart (N).
Meanwhile, Cricket Australia remains committed to exploring the possibility of arranging a match between India and Pakistan in Australia. However, Peter Roach, CA's cricket operations manager, noted that there wasn't an opportunity to organize a tri-series that would lead to a showdown be-

tween the historic rivals this season. "We haven't got a tri-series in the FTP (Future Tours Program)," Roach said. "Going forward, we're always interested in opportunities for matches and content that will engage our fans. It's fair to say that every country in the world would love to see India and Pakistan competing in their country. We're on record as saying that we're one of those countries that have asked the question. There's no room in our sched-

Luke Ronchi approached by
PCB for role of head coach

Former New Zealand cricketer Luke Ronchi has asked for some time before reaching a decision

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Former New Zealand cricketer Luke Ronchi has been approached by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for the role of head coach, according to sources. The current New Zealand batting coach, Ronchi, has asked for some time before reaching a decision, sources added. Ronchi had refused PCB's offer last year after which Grant Bradburn was appointed. Ronchi achieved the rare feat of representing both New Zealand, his country of birth, and Australia. The 42-year-old featured in four Tests, 85 ODIs and 33 T20Is after making his limited-overs debut for Australia in 2008. In league cricket, he has played for Guyana Amazon Warriors, Islamabad United, Mumbai Indian and Perth Scorchers. The development comes after Shane Watson, Mike Hesson and Darren Sammy refused to coach the Pakistan team. Watson wants to



honour his current coaching and commentary commitments rather than leaving them at a short notice. An Indian Premier League (IPL) commentary stint and head coach of Major League Cricket side San Francisco Unicorns are among Watson's commitments, along with coach-

ing Quetta Gladiators. The fact that he has a young family also played a role in his decision. Meanwhile, Sammy declined approaches from the PCB, citing his existing contract with the West Indies board as the head coach of the white-ball teams. The Mohsin Naqvi-led PCB

PCB to pay
homage to late
Shaharyar
in a ceremony

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will pay homage to its former chairman late Shaharyar Khan in a ceremony here on March 28. Late Shaharyar Khan served as the chairman of PCB twice and also performed the duties of the manager of the national cricket team.

The deceased was also considered a skilled cricket diplomat, who also played key roles in reinstating Pakistan-India cricketing ties. The former PCB chairman passed away earlier this week in Lahore. He was 89 at the time of his demise. According to his family, the deceased was suffering from prolonged illness and on Saturday morning, his condition worsened, leading to his saddened demise. The PCB offered condolence on the passing of its former chairman and stated that Shaharyar Khan will be remembered for his vital role in bringing international cricket to Pakistan. "The Pakistan Cricket Board, through its chairman, the Board of Governors and employees, expresses deep sadness and sorrow over the passing away of former chairman PCB Shaharyar Khan earlier this morning, in Lahore. He was 89," stated PCB in a press release. "The PCB pays heartfelt condolences to Shaharyar Khan's family on his sad demise and wishes to always remember him as one of the vital characters in bringing cricket back to Pakistan during the last decade," the statement added. The newly-appointed PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi expressed his sorrow on the demise of Shaharyar Khan and acknowledged the late's effort in the development of the game in the country. "On behalf of the PCB, I express my deep condolences and grief over the passing of former Chairman Shaharyar Khan. He was a fine administrator and served Pakistan Cricket with utmost dedication. "Pakistan Cricket will stay indebted to the late Shaharyar Khan for his commendable role as head of the board and for his services in the growth and development of the game in the country." - Agencies

Kundi sees
forward bloc
in SIC KP

FROM PAGE 01
while addressing a press conference in Islamabad with PPP General Secretary Nayyer Bukhari and former Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUIF) senator Talha Mahmood - who announced that he would be joining the party. "As soon as the oath (on reserved seats) is taken, opposition parties in KP will give a surprise in the Senate elections," Kundi said. The PPP leader also criticised the KP government for employing "delaying tactics" in the oath-taking of MPAs on reserved seats. Noting that the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) had been denied reserved seats by the Peshawar High Court, he said the PPP wanted the oath-taking to take place as soon as possible. He said the PTI-SIC was afraid that "they would lose many Senate seats" if oath were administered to women and minorities on reserved seats. The PPP leader stated that the PTI-SIC was violating the Constitution and law, urging KP Assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati to fulfil his constitutional role. Kundi further said there were reports of a "forward bloc" within the PTI-SIC in Punjab and that there were also rumours of the same happening in KP. "I am also hearing such voices in KP that there may soon be a press conference, and a forward bloc may be announced," he said. Kundi further said that "more friends from KP" were in contact with the party and would join it.

Soldier
martyred,
4 terrorists
killed

FROM PAGE 01
safety and security of the personnel and assets. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the terrorists attempted to attack the Naval Base on the night of March 25th and 26th. However, the security forces in the vicinity were immediately mobilised to support the naval troops. "Synergetic & effective response by the armed forces enabled killing of all four terrorists in ensuing joint clearance operation," the ISPR said. The martyred soldier was identified as Sepoy Noman Fareed (age 24 years, resident of Muzaffargarh) of Frontier Corps Balochistan, having fought gallantly, embraced, shahadat, during intense exchange of fire. "Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Pakistan Armed Forces remain committed to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country at all costs," the ISPR said. Meanwhile, As many as four terrorists were killed on March 25th during an Intelligence Based Operation (IBO) conducted in Dera Ismail Khan District, the military's media wing said on Tuesday. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, an intense exchange of fire took place between the forces and the insurgents, whereas the killed terrorists were identified as Terrorist Mustafa, Terrorist Qismat Ullah and Terrorist Islam Ud Din.

FM receives
call from
Uzbek
counterpart

FROM PAGE 01
his message of felicitation. Discussed all areas of mutual interest and invited him to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience. Also assured him of his full support to further bilateral relations between our two brotherly countries for the benefit of our people," he further added Reciprocating his post, FM Saidov, posted on X that it was a pleasure to have a phone conversation with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. "The Strategic Partnership Agenda between Uzbekistan and Pakistan is getting wider and covering many spheres of fruitful bilateral relations," he added. The Uzbek FM further said that they saw an upward trajectory in every dimension of their cooperation. He further said that their respective ministries stood ready to further facilitate the close ties.

Shadab not
considering Imad
as competition

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani all-rounder Shadab Khan has opened up about his competition with returning all-rounder Imad Wasim in the national team. Imad Wasim came out of international retirement last week and declared his availability for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to run from June 2 in the USA and the West Indies. However, Shadab Khan remained unfazed by Wasim's comeback and stated that he does not consider the fellow all-rounder a competition. "I never thought that he [Imad] is my competition, so he will take my place. Whatever Allah has written for him or for me, will happen," said Shadab while talking to a local news channel. "Whoever is in form, playing well, and beneficial for Pakistan should be in the team. Such thoughts never crossed my mind." Upon being asked about leading the Pakistan team if the opportunity arose, the star all-rounder shared that he is not considering the prospect of becoming captain at the moment. "I haven't thought about becoming the captain of the national team yet. I've talked before that we try to change things too quickly by bringing one person over another, thinking that things will be alright," he added. He also backed the current T20I captain Shaheen Afridi, stressing that replacing a captain after one series would not benefit the team. - DNA

Carlos Alcaraz sinks Monfils
to advance in Miami

20-year-old defeats French veteran 6-2, 6-4 to continue his pursuit of 'sunshine double'

MIAMI: Top seed Carlos Alcaraz powered into the fourth round of the Miami Open with a 6-2, 6-4 win over French veteran Gael Monfils at Hard Rock Stadium on Monday. The 37-year-old Monfils was coping well with the power play of the talented Spaniard until he hurt his ankle in the fifth game. While Monfils carried on bravely, bringing out some wonderful defensive shots from Alcaraz, the world number two was too much for the Parisian. There were plenty of smiles, in between the occasional wince from Monfils, who enjoyed some entertaining rallies where Alcaraz could show his deftness of touch. With the outcome feeling like a formality, Alcaraz eased off the gas and Monfils was able to break for the first time to reduce the deficit to 5-3. Monfils then held his serve with a brilliant cross court winner before Alcaraz wrapped up business to book a place in the fourth round against Lorenzo Musetti. "He's a great athlete," Alcaraz said of Monfils. "He reads almost every ball so I had to be patient but at the same time, with my forehand, my best shot, try to move him around the court, to get him tired a little bit and give myself the chance to dominate the point, get to the net, hit my best shot. That's what I was trying to do in the match and it worked pretty well," he added. Alcaraz said he had enjoyed playing under the lights in front of stars such as Brazilian footballer Neymar and NBA star Jimmy Butler of the Miami Heat. But he expects a much tougher test from Musetti, who won an enthralling battle with American Ben Shelton in front of a raucous crowd on the Butch Buchholz court 6-4, 7-6 (7/5). "I know that Lorenzo is a really talented player so that's a really tough one," said Alcaraz. "But I am really happy with the level that I am playing, with the performance that I am bringing to the court," he added. Earlier, fourth seed German Alexander Zverev came through a tricky test against American Christopher Eubanks, winning 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. Zverev delivered a crucial break when Eubanks was serving for the set at 5-3 before breaking early in the second to go 3-0 up and see himself through to victory. - DNA

Squash star Danish Atlas Khan receives Tamgha-e-Imtiaz

He served Pakistan squash and kept Pakistan flag flying internationally for 20 years

DNA

PESHAWAR: Pakistan squash star Danish Atlas Khan received the prestigious Tamgha-e-Imtiaz from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali the other day in Peshawar. The Peshawar-born, Danish, is a former Pakistan no 1 squash player, who started playing at the age of six. He served Pakistan squash and kept Pakistan flag flying internationally for 20 years. He represented Pakistan in 20 countries including USA, England, Canada, Switzerland, France and China. He has won 35 gold medals, 20 silver medals and 16 bronze medals over the course of his illustrious career. Danish Atlas Khan is a five-time Asian Squash Champion and Asian Games gold medalist in team event in China 2010. He is the youngest ever Asian Games gold medalist athlete at the age of 16. He also won the silver medal



in British Junior Open 2009 and is a former rank no 1 junior squash

player in Asia. He also won bronze medal in World Junior squash

championship and was world rank no 3 in World junior in 2012.

Notable Achievements:

1. Gold Medalist - Asian Games 2010 team event in China
2. Chicago Open Champion 2015 in USA
3. Gold Medalist - Asian Senior Team Championship in Hong Kong 2014
4. 2 Times Asian Junior Champion Individual 2011 in Jordan & 2012 in Iran
5. Silver Medalist - 2016 South Asian Games Team Event in India
6. Silver Medalist - World Junior Championship Team Event in Ecuador in 2010
7. Silver Medalist - Asian Junior Team Event 2011 in Sri Lanka
8. Silver Medalist - U17 British Junior Open squash Championship 2009 in England
9. Bronze Medalist in World Junior Individual Championship in Qatar in 2012
10. Won 14 National Senior and junior Squash championships.

Briefs

Fin min terms tax award winners 'national heroes'

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday termed the tax award winners 'national heroes', urging the countrymen to pay their due taxes being responsible citizens. "You [the tax award winners] are really our national heroes. The entire nation and the country should follow you as a beacon of light," the minister said while addressing the Tax Excellence Awards distribution ceremony here. The high taxpayers were awarded with the prizes by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Highlighting importance of tax collection in revenue generation, Aurangzeb said direct tax on domestic side and exports on the external front were levers of the growth and development. "In Pakistan's case, the both flows have been raise-bound and therefore underwhelming, and redressing them on urgently basis is critical." The finance minister reiterated a firm resolve of the government for restructuring and digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), for which it was in process of appointing consultants "for design and implementation in term of end to end digitalization."

Syria strikes kill 13, including Iran Guard

BEIRUT: At least nine pro-Tehran fighters, including an Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander, were among 13 people killed in air strikes in eastern Syria on Tuesday, a war monitor said. "Nine pro-Iranian fighters, including a Revolutionary Guards commander, were killed in air strikes targeting the villa they were staying in, which served as a communications center," the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. It said four people were killed in a separate strike in the town of Albu Kamal on the Iraqi border. The Britain-based monitor said it had no word on who carried out the strikes and there was no immediate claim of responsibility. Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes targeting pro-Iranian groups fighting alongside the forces of President Bashar Assad in the country's more than a decade-old civil war. The United States has carried out a much smaller number of strikes against pro-Iran groups in eastern Syria which it holds responsible for a flurry of attacks on US interests in Iraq and Syria during the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. - Agencies

PIA privatisation plan approved

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The privatisation and restructuring plan of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Tuesday was approved by its board of directors which was recently constituted. The 83rd meeting of the PIA's board of directors was held on March 25 during which the scheme of arrangement for the airline's privatisation and restructuring was approved, as per the official announcement. The board of directors will coordinate with Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), said the statement. Meanwhile, as per the sources, the plan also discussed different proposals regarding the future of the organisation's employees. The government had appointed Ernst & Young - a global financial advisory firm - to prepare the plan for the loss-making firm which completed its task during the caretaker setup. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has asked the Pakistani authorities to privatise the bleeding state-owned enterprises to revitalise the sick economy.

Israel continues strikes in Gaza despite UN ceasefire resolution

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the Israeli attack on the UNSC resolution is unjustified and has no meaning other than the insistence of Netanyahu to achieve his malicious, undeclared war goals

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: There is no let-up in the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an "immediate ceasefire." Israel carried out air raids and artillery strikes on several parts of Gaza on Tuesday, hitting residential buildings and gatherings of displaced people, "killing and wounding hundreds of people", the Palestinian Information Center said. This brings the total number of Palestinians killed in the Israeli aggression on Gaza since October 7 to 32,414, in addition to 74,787 injured. Among the victims are 15 people, including four women and children, who were killed in an attack on a house in the neighborhood of Mosbeh, north of Rafah. Media reports also said that fighting on the ground continued unabated. That's while the UN Security Council on Monday adopted a resolution for an "immediate ceasefire" for the ongoing Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The resolution was put forward by the 10 non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. The US abstained and the 14 other council members all voted in favor of it. After the vote, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres wrote on social media platform X that failing to implement the resolution "would be unforgivable." Palestinian resistance movements

Hamas chief in Tehran for talks

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh is in Tehran for meetings with senior Iranian officials, just a day after the UN Security Council adopted a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The leader of the Palestinian resistance movement arrived on Tuesday afternoon and immediately sat down for talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. "Examining the latest situation of the war in Gaza and the ongoing aggression of the Zionist regime against the people of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are among the most important agendas of the trip and the talks between the officials of the two sides," official news agency IRNA reported. Since the start of Israel's military aggression and genocide against the Palestinians, the Islamic Republic has used all its diplomatic power to stop the war and send immediate humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. Political analysts believe the visit is of great importance as it takes place just one day after the ceasefire resolution was adopted. It is

the second visit of the head of the political bureau of Hamas to Iran since the outbreak of the Israeli war on Gaza in October. Meanwhile, Qatar said Tuesday that indirect talks between Hamas and Israel are still ongoing between technical teams. "We are continuing our mediation efforts with our partners," Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari told a press conference in Doha. He cited "difficulties" on the ground related to the cease-fire negotiations. "There is no set timeline for the indirect negotiations," the spokesman said. The Israeli government on Tuesday pulled its negotiating team out of indirect talks with Hamas in the Qatari capital, accusing the Palestinian group of being "not interested in continuing talks" after allegedly rejecting a US-brokered compromise. Haniyeh, who is based in the Qatari capital of Doha, met Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in November. Iran is a key supporter of Hamas although it has repeatedly declared that groups operating within the Axis of Resistance, including Hamas, act independently when it comes to policy-making and military performance.

have welcomed the resolution, but Israel's minister for military affairs Yoav Gallant said Israel will not stop its attacks in Gaza. "We will operate against Hamas everywhere - including in places where we have not yet been," Gallant said. Israel's foreign minister, Israel Katz, also said in a post on X that the attacks will continue until all the captives taken by Hamas during its October 7 blitz are released. Meanwhile, The head of Yemen's Supreme Political Council says the country's maritime operations in the Red Sea against Israeli-affiliated commercial vessels will cease only if the Tel Aviv regime's crimes in Gaza stop. Addressing a ceremony in the Yemeni capital city of Sana'a on the occasion of the ninth anniversary of the Saudi-led war on Yemen, Mehdi al-Mashat said that Yemenis have never sought a conflict and always advocated a peace process. "We assure that Yemen is not a danger to any party, and anyone who has an issue with the Sana'a government can solve it through dialogue," he said. "The only way to stop Yemen's operations is to stop genocide and violence against the oppressed people of Gaza," he added. More than 170 days into the Israeli war on the besieged coastal Palestinian territory, killing at least 32,300 Palestinians, famine looms over much of the blockaded territory as the regime continues to block food and basic supplies from entering the Strip using starvation as a weapon of war.

Unity always important, especially in war: Zelenskyy

WEB DESK

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said unity is always important, especially in times of war and airstrikes that have been targeting multiple regions of the country, including the capital Kyiv. "Last year we initiated a new tradition - to celebrate the holy Ramadan together ... I am very glad that we are here today in the same composition. Unity is always important, especially when life is overshadowed by war and the strikes of evil," Zelenskyy said during an iftar, or fast-breaking meal during the month of Ramadan, in Kyiv on Monday. The dinner was attended by leaders of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and representatives of the Muslim community. Zelenskyy thanked Muslim soldiers in the Ukrainian army for defending the country. Russia launched a "special military operation" in Ukraine two years ago. The Ukrainian leader wished "peace and tranquility" to those who are "deprived of normal life and security" in conflict areas, especially referring to the people in Syria, Gaza, Libya and Sudan. "In Ukraine, we wish everyone who values life ... We wish a just peace to all nations whose homes are being destroyed by war. We wish justice to our state of Ukraine and all other nations. May this time of Ramadan support all of us - our people and our country. And may our unity remain firm," Zelenskyy said. Mustafa Dzhemilev, leader of the Crimean Tatar people, and Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov also addressed the event and expressed their gratitude for the efforts of Muslim soldiers in the military.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif calls on President Asif Ali Zardari. - DNA

Prime Minister, President discuss political, economic situation

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari held their first meeting on Tuesday since assuming charge of their respective offices. PM Shehbaz and President Zardari exchanged views on the country's overall political and economic situation. Both high-ups expressed joint commitment to steer the country out of challenges. They also discussed measures for providing relief to the masses during the month of Ramadan. It may be noted that the PML-N formed the government in Centre and Punjab with the support of PPP, with both parties pledging to work together to end the economic crisis in the country. Taking the country's reins, the PML-N expressed confidence in the economic revival of the country after a few years of hardship. Party's supremo Nawaz Sharif expressed hope that Pakistan will come out of difficulties in the next two years by taking difficult decisions. "I believe the next 1.5 or 2 years will be difficult but we have to stay united [during the difficult times] and face our opponents," he said while addressing the parliamentary party meeting after the decision on government formation last month. He pledged on the government's behalf of providing relief to the masses by bringing down inflation, food prices and utility bills as well as stabilising local currency value against the US dollar. The PML-N supremo had also heaped praise on his younger brother and party president Shehbaz Sharif, saying he dealt with immense challenges during his brief stint in power.

Elahi allowed to contest by-poll

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court's appellate tribunal on Tuesday granted permission to former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi to contest by-election from PP-32 (Gujrat). LHC's Justice Shahid Karim, the tribunal judge overturned the rejection of Elahi's nomination papers for PP-32 by-polls. The tribunal also allowed Zera Elahi and Sumaira Elahi to contest the elections.

Announces restructuring of FBR PM Shehbaz vows to bring economic stability

Shehbaz added that refunds to the tune of Rs65 billion were made to the exporters and expressed determination for timely payments of refunds in the future

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed the resolve on Tuesday to bring macroeconomic stability and put Pakistan the path of growth. Addressing the Tax Excellence Awards ceremony in Islamabad, the premier said ensuring export-led growth through joint efforts was the only solution to make the country debt-free. The prime minister also said the government will strive to elevate productive sectors such as industries, information technology (IT), and agriculture. Referring to the new IMF programme, the premier said the government is taking the step to bring stability to the country's economy. "The state will also focus on addressing the issue of inflation while ensuring growth and creating job opportunities," said PM Shehbaz, adding that the federal government along with the provincial governments will create an enabling situation for the private sector and address the issues faced by the sector. Shehbaz added that refunds to

the tune of Rs65 billion were made to the exporters and expressed determination for timely payments of refunds in the future. The prime minister also vowed to provide electricity to industries at competitive rates with the aim of increasing productivity. In regards to investments, the PM said that a platform of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been formed to attract foreign inflow and the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be developed in a timely manner. Talking about tax reforms, the PM said the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) will be restructured and mentioned the hiring of consultants, scheduled for next month, for the complete digitalization of the tax collection body. Highlighting the low tax-to-GDP ratio, the premier said the tax base needs to be enhanced while terming the leading taxpayers and exporters 'heroes of the country' and announced that they will be issued blue passports. - DNA

Julian Assange wins temporary reprieve from extradition to US

If Assange had been denied permission to appeal he could have been extradited within days to face espionage charges

LONDON: Julian Assange has been handed a reprieve in his fight against extradition to the US after two judges ruled the WikiLeaks founder could take his case to an appeal hearing - but only if the Biden administration is unable to provide the court with suitable assurances. The president of the king's bench division, Victoria Sharp, and Mr Justice Johnson said Assange had real prospects of success on three of the nine grounds argued, but adjourned the leave to appeal application to give the US government three weeks to provide reassurance on the relevant matters. If Assange had been denied permission to appeal he could have been extradited within days to face espionage charges. While the judges' decision means he avoids that fate it leaves him facing a further wait, with his future still unresolved. In a written judgment, handed down on Tuesday morning, Sharp said the concerns that had real prospects of success at appeal but which "may be capable of being addressed by assurances" were "that the applicant [Assange] is permitted to rely on the first amendment, that the applicant is not prejudiced at trial, including sentence, by reason of his nationality, that he is afforded the

same first amendment protections as a United States citizen, and that the death penalty is not imposed". At a two-day hearing last month, which Assange was too unwell to attend, his lawyers argued that he faced a "flagrant denial of justice" if extradited to the US to face charges relating to the publication by Assange and WikiLeaks of thousands of classified and diplomatic documents they said had exposed torture, rendition, extrajudicial killings and war crimes. His wife, Stella Assange, expressed dismay at the judges' decision. "What the courts have done has been to invite a political intervention from the United States ... send a letter saying 'it's all OK,'" she said. "I find this astounding. This case is a retribution. It is a signal to all of you that if you expose the interests that are driving war they will come after you, they will put you in prison and will try to kill you. The Biden administration should not issue assurances. They should drop this shameful case that should never have been brought." Ahead of the decision there had been reports that the US government was considering a plea deal offer to Assange, allowing him to admit to a misdemeanour, which would enable him to walk free from prison in the UK but his lawyers said they had been "given no indication" Washington intended to change its approach. - Agencies

