



Islamabad POST

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Pak invites Chinese investment

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Aqib Javed appointed as interim coach

Detailed News On Page-06



PM calls for crackdown

Tax evaders, abettors won't be left unpunished

“National progress is only possible when everyone fulfils their due responsibility,” says premier

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: A day after the finance minister vowed bringing all sectors into the tax net, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that tax evaders and their abettors will not be left unpunished. Chairing a meeting in Islamabad to review overall economic situation of the country, the prime minister said that those dodging taxes would be brought to justice. He directed the relevant authorities to expedite action against tax evaders, saying: “National progress is possible only when everyone fulfils their due responsibility.” Highlighting his government's major economic achievements, the premier mentioned the bullish trend in stock market and reduced inflation rate from 38% to 7%. Pakistan's Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation dropped to 6.9% year-on-year in September 2024, the lowest since January 2021, down from 9.6% in August, driven by the high base effect, easing commodity and energy markets, and a stable currency, according to statistics issued by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) last month. “Relief of people is being given priority over every other step to fulfil promises made to them,” said the premier. He said the decline in interest rate from 22% to 15% will boost business activities in the country. The PM said: “Confidence of foreign investors has increased during the last few months of incumbent government while foreign exchange reserves have also witnessed a surge due to the increase in domestic exports and record remittances.” In addition to this, the PM paid tribute to the Punjab government for landmark reforms in the agricultural sector. Last week, taking the lead among provinces, the Punjab Assembly approved the Punjab Agricultural Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2024, despite a walkout by PPP and PTI lawmakers protesting the rejection of their proposed amendments. The meeting was briefed about the current situation of the economy, inflation and actions taken against tax evaders.

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Fin Min praises ADB's long-standing support

Mr. Tariq Niazi said the ADB had quite a substantial pipeline for Pakistan with significant projects planned for economic reforms and socio-economic development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) led by Senior Director Mr. Tariq H. Niazi called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at the Finance Division today. During the meeting also attended by ADB's Country Director Ms. Emma Fan and her team in Pakistan, Mr. Tariq H. Niazi briefed the Minister on ADB's public sector management and governance initiatives aimed at ensuring stronger macro-fiscal management and effective governance with improved policy framework and institutional capacities in the Bank's developing member countries. Mr. Tariq Niazi said the ADB had quite a substantial pipeline for Pakistan with significant projects planned for economic reforms and socio-economic development, particularly policy and administration reforms, digitalization of FBR, private public partnerships,

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receiving a briefing from the Ministry of Finance regarding the country's economy and the meeting with the IMF delegation. – DNA

Section 144 imposed in Islamabad

Order restricts all types of gatherings in the capital, including religious, political, and other public meetings

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Authorities have reimposed Section 144 in Islamabad prohibiting gatherings of five or more people for the next two months, according to an official notification released on Monday, ahead of a planned protest by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the federal capital. The order, issued by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, restricts all types of gatherings in the capital, including religious, political, and other public meetings, as part of measures aimed at maintaining public order. This move comes days after a previous imposition of Section 144 expired on November 17.

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ATC indicts Qureshi, 20 others

The court frames charges against Qureshi, Ejaz Chaudhry, Umar Sarfraz Cheema and others

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has formally indicted PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi and 20 other accused in the case related to the planning of the May 9 incidents. The hearing took place in Kot Lakhpat Jail, where the court addressed the cases related to the incidents that occurred on May 9. During the proceedings, ATC framed charges against Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Ejaz Chaudhry, Umar Sarfraz Cheema, and other accused individuals in

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Amid govt's curbs

IT industry can't function without VPN, says PTA

Briefing Senate panel, Major Gen (retd) Rehman says common man also needs VPN amid looming ban

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Chairman Major General (retd) Hafeezur Rehman on Monday acknowledged the importance of virtual private network (VPN), saying that industry cannot function without it. The PTA chairman made the remarks while briefing the Senate standing committee on Information Technology and Telecommunications as the regulatory authority, earlier today, extended the deadline for the registration of VPNs until November 30.

The extension came rising concerns over the misuse of unauthorised VPNs for activities such as bypassing internet restrictions and accessing prohibited content. Briefing the Senate body, the PTA chairman urged people associated with IT business to register their VPNs to avoid any inconvenience. The PTA chairman was of the view that the “common man needs VPN” amid the looming ban on the private gateways. “Freelancers and companies required VPNs.” VPN registration policy was introduced in 2016, he told the lawmakers, adding that they recently launched a campaign in this regard.

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CII chairman clears the air about VPN decree

Says it all depends on the purpose for which the technology is being used

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Chairman Allama Dr Raghieb Naemi on Monday cleared the air about a recently-issued fatwa (religious decree) declaring the use of VPN un-Islamic. Appearing in a private news outlet programme, Dr Naemi said no matter VPNs were registered or not, statements ‘against national security’ and ‘character assassination of a person’ were against Islamic jurisprudence. He said, “Whether it is a registered VPN or unregistered, if attempts are made to access indecent

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Donald Trump allies make WW3 warning over Joe Biden missile move

Donald Trump Jr tweeted that the president was trying to “get World War Three going” before his father took office

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden's apparent green light for Ukraine to strike Russia with US-made long-range missiles has caused consternation among Donald Trump's allies. Trump himself has not commented, but he won the election after promising to end the war - and people close to him have condemned the move as danger-

ous escalation. Biden has committed tens of billions of dollars to Kyiv's war effort, and at the weekend he reportedly ditched a long-standing red line on Ukraine's use of American weaponry to launch attacks deep into Russia. Donald Trump Jr tweeted that the president was trying to “get World War Three going” before his father took office. Biden's decision has not been formally confirmed and it may never be. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said no such announcement was forthcoming - “missiles will speak for themselves”. Trump swept to victory on 5 November and is due to

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Briefs

'Glad tidings in offing'

Appeals to COAS for announcing amnesty for those languishing illegally in jail

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Monday predicted that glad tidings would start appearing before Dec 30. Speaking to reporters, the former federal minister criticised the government for staying above law and violating all norms of decency. He also took aim at former premier Nawaz Sharif's son Hassan Nawaz for going bankrupt in the United Kingdom to evade tax. “I once again appeal to the army chief for amnesty for those languishing illegally in jail. As many as 102 people haven't hired a lawyer yet,” he added. Referring to the recent visit of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission, Ahmed said people were already weighed down under inflation which would worsen.

Indictment of Imran, Bushra delayed

Khan was present in court, Bushra Bibi did not appear

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: The indictment of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in the new Toshakhana case was postponed once again. The hearing took place at Adiala Jail, presided over by Accountability Court Judge Shahrukh Arjumand. While Imran Khan was present in the court, Bushra Bibi did not appear. Her legal team requested an exemption on medical grounds, instructing her to appear at the next hearing. The judge warned that failure to attend the court would result in bail revocation and forfeiture of surety bonds.

PTI leader warns

'Dharna' on the cards, as Islamabad protest looms

“Our protest will remain peaceful and without arms,” says Waleed Iqbal

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Waleed Iqbal has said that his party's march towards Islamabad could turn into a sit-in but asserted that it would remain peaceful. “The Islamabad march can turn into a dharna [sit-in]. However, our protest will remain peaceful and without arms,” the party leader said while speaking on a TV programme. The federal government has warned of strict action against the PTI if its members turn violent on November 24, the date of the protest, as the authorities had alleged that they had arms in their previous protests. Prime Minister's Adviser Rana Sanaulah had also cautioned the party that its “do-or-die” protest could lead to a crackdown on the PTI while Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Shazia Marri, whose party is a part of the coalition, condemned the “call to spread chaos”. Iqbal, on the show, stressed that the Constitution allows every citizen to protest, sans arms — echoing the party's long-standing stance,

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Apex body meeting postponed due to PM's 'ill health'

Prime Minister's illness delays key National Action Plan meeting on counter-terrorism and security issues

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The meeting of the National Apex Committee, scheduled to review the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on counter-terrorism, has been postponed owing to PM Shehbaz Sharif's ill health. PM Shehbaz has not held any meetings or chaired any sessions over the past two days, and no meetings were scheduled for today, Express News reported, quoting sources. Doctors had advised the prime minister to take

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Offshore exploration bids expected by June 2024

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Chaired Fifth Session of the Exploration & Production Committee

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister today chaired the 5th session of the Committee constituted by the Prime Minister to develop a comprehensive action plan for addressing the challenges faced by the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector in Pakistan. Building on the discussions from previous sessions, several key decisions were made to improve the sector's outlook. The Committee reached an in-principle agreement to submit a long-awaited framework to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for the sale of 35% of the un-allocated gas volumes to third-party buyers. The framework includes a 100 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscf) cap for the first year, with annual reviews thereafter. In another significant move, the Committee decided to initiate a bidding round for available onshore exploration blocks by December 2024. The deadline for bid submissions is set for March 15, 2025. In parallel, a separate bidding process will be launched for offshore exploration blocks, with a six-month period allowed for potential bidders to evaluate the offered blocks and make their bids by 30th of June 2024. The Committee was also updated on the ongoing digitization efforts of the Directorate General of Petro-

Govt poised to reopen bidding for privatisation

Privatisation of loss-making state-owned enterprises also part of IMF's demand under \$7bn loan agreement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation Abdul Aleem Khan said on Monday that the government was set to restart the bidding process for the privatisation of the cash-strapped Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) after receiving an underwhelming offer of Rs10 billion from a sole bidder. Aleem's remarks came during the meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Privatisation, chaired by Senator Talal Chaudhry, where he briefed members on the PIA privatisation efforts. He told the meeting that the government was planning to invite fresh expressions of interest (EOIs) after earlier attempts faced hurdles, including a lack of buyer interest and

bids falling significantly below the benchmark value. The government had eyed selling a major share in the national carrier, but investors pulled out, with only Blue World City submitting a bid of Rs10 billion against an envisaged minimum bid of over Rs80 billion. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb had termed the failed PIA privatisation move a “setback” for the government but stressed that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) listened to the government on this and that privatisation of SOEs would continue. The government is pressing for the privatisation of loss-making SOEs not only due to fiscal constraints but also because it is part of the IMF's demand, which has approved a \$7 billion loan for Pakistan.

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leum Concessions (DGPC). A competitive process has been initiated to advance this digital transformation, which will streamline operations and enhance efficiency in the sector. Additionally, the Committee was informed about the launch of an Integrated Energy Modelling Study, being conducted by internationally recognized consultants. This study will focus on the role of oil, gas, and LPG in Pakistan's energy mix, provide insights into supply-demand dynamics, and develop a comprehensive gas market model. The findings from this study, which are expected to inform policy decisions on gas supply management for priority sectors, will be presented in a draft report due in January 2025. The Committee also discussed a proposal to revise gas sale prices on a monthly or quarterly basis. After careful deliberation, the Committee directed the Petroleum Division to further analyze the proposal and resubmit it at the next meeting. The committee also discussed the security challenges faced by exploration and production companies and emphasized that provision of fool proof security is of paramount importance for promoting investment in E&P sector for energy security of Pakistan. Due to prior commitments of some Committee members, it was decided to reconvene the next session at a later date to continue discussions on the remaining items outlined in the Terms of Reference (TORs) of the Committee.

Punjab CM for enhancing bilateral ties with Spain

The chief minister said, "Spain is Pakistan's second largest export partner in the European Union, there are numerous opportunities to increase bilateral trade volume." An agreement to increase cooperation in the fields like economy, climate change, disaster risk management and environmental pollution was also discussed in the meeting

DNA

LAHORE :A Senate delegation from Spain called on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz at the Chief Minister's Office here on Monday. During the meeting, the CM discuss the promotion of bilateral relations, trade and tourism between Spain and Punjab. The chief minister said, "Spain is Pakistan's second largest export partner in the European Union, there are numerous opportunities to increase bilateral trade volume." An agreement to increase cooperation in the fields like economy, climate change, disaster risk management and environmental pollution was also discussed in the meeting. Maryam said, "We heartily appreciate Spain's support for achieving GSP Plus status. Friendly ties with Spain are highly valued and we want to work together with Spain on early warning system, and rescue services to prevent flood damage. We intend to further promote parliamentary diplomacy. We are making Punjab a tourist hub, will welcome Spanish investment in the sector.

Aspecial package is being prepared to facilitate foreign investors."

She said, "We are especially focused on women empowerment. The number of female parliamentarians has increased significantly." Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed a deep sense of grief over the loss of life and property due to recent floods in Valencia, Spain, and offered her cooperation for the relief, recovery and rehabilitation of victims. She also appreciated the relief package provided by Spain under the flood response plan in Pakistan. The Spanish parliamentary delegation said, "It is very welcome to have a woman in the post of chief minister." They added, "Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has been running affairs of the province quite smoothly." They also mentioned in the meeting a street attributed to Allama Iqbal in Cordoba, Spain. Earlier, 4-member Senate delegation from Spain called on Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan in the Punjab Assembly here on Monday. The delegation comprised Vicente Azpitarte, Natalia Ucero, Antonio Gutierrez and Luis

de la Pena. Pakistan Ambassador to Spain Zahoor Ahmed and Secretary General Chaudhry Aamir Habib were also present. PA Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan accorded a warm welcome to the delegation, and said the visit of the Spanish parliamentary delegation reflected the growing relationship between Pakistan and Spain. He said the exchange of parliamentary delegations would further strengthen bilateral relations between both the countries. Malik Muhammad Ahmad said that Parliamentary diplomacy could play a significant role in resolving global challenges, adding that steps had been taken to improve parliamentary tools in the Assembly. Now standing committee hearings were open to the media instead of in-camera, he said and added that legislative process was very transparent and organised, ensuring the participation of every member. This system promotes deep research and discussion on various topics so that the best laws could be made, he added. The PA Speaker said that joint measures were the need of hour to deal with natural calamities.



LAHORE: A four-member delegation from the Spanish Senate included Senators Vicente Azpitarte, Natalia Ucero, Antonio Gutierrez, and Luis de la Pena called on Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan.

Sudden hike in LPG prices hits Hazara region

ABBOTTABAD: A sudden increase of Rs 400 in LPG prices has put a heavy burden on the residents of Hazara region, coinciding with the onset of the cold wave on Monday. The increase has sparked concerns among citizens, who are already grappling with the rising inflation. According to the details amid cold wave across the region, LPG supplying companies raised the price of a 15 kg cylinder by Rs 400 overnight. Just a few weeks ago, the same cylinder was priced at Rs 4,000. With the recent rains and a further drop in temperatures, the price hike in LPG cylinders has added to the miseries of the local population. Residents, already struggling with soaring living costs, are now facing the dual challenge of extreme cold and escalating gas prices. APP

Efforts afoot for people's welfare

SARGODHA: Provincial Minister for Ushr and Zakat Rana Munawar Ghous Khan on Monday said the Punjab government was taking practical steps for people welfare. While talking to APP here at Umer Park, the minister said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was doing politics of hatred in the country whereas the incumbent government, under the leadership of the chief minister, was taking public-friendly initiatives to make the province prosperous. A number of development projects were also underway, he added. APP

Kundi, James for skills uplift programs in KP

James Hampson shared the British Council's plans to establish a high-tech Skills Development Centre for Excellence at IM Sciences University, Peshawar. He invited the Governor to inaugurate the centre in January 2025

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi during a meeting here on Monday with James Hampson, the Country Director of the British Council in Pakistan, and the Head of Education at the British Council, reiterated his commitment to advancing education and skills development in the province. Pakistan's cuisine The Governor outlined his priorities, including enhancing the quality of education, empowering youth and women through skill training programs, and forging partnerships between universities and their counterparts in Eng-

land. These collaborations aim to bring global expertise to KP universities through student and faculty exchanges. A key topic of discussion was the Governor's vision for the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) KP chapter, which he presides over. The Governor emphasized the importance of innovative initiatives and expanding its reach for community service. He also highlighted the immense potential of arts and design talent among university students in KP, particularly young women, and shared that a formal proposal for collaboration with the British Council on this initiative had already been sent. James Hampson shared the British Council's plans to establish a high-tech Skills

Development Centre for Excellence at IM Sciences University, Peshawar. He invited the Governor to inaugurate the centre in January 2025. The British Council team also briefed the Governor on the recently launched "GOAL" program, aimed at enrolling 250,000 out-of-school girls in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including merged districts. They also discussed other impactful programs, including TVET (Technical and Vocational Education Training) and higher education initiatives being implemented across Pakistan. Both sides agreed to collaborate further for the progress and empowerment of the youth of KP and decided to convene a follow-up meeting soon to formalize upcoming programs.

IDEAS-24 to kicks off today at EXPO centre

KARACHI: The 12th edition of the four day International Defense Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2024 will be kicked off from Tuesday (November 19) at EXPO Centre Karachi. According to details, the Ministry of Defense and the Defense Export Promotion Organization (DEPO) are set to host IDEAS 2024 at the Karachi Expo Centre from November 19 to 22. The event aims to showcase Pakistan's advanced and conventional defense capabilities while fostering international collaborations. Highlighting the strategic importance of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the exhibition seeks to solidify Pakistan's defense industry on the global stage. The exhibition will feature a comprehensive display of cutting-edge defense equipment, including weaponry, tanks, fighter jets, helicopters, naval ships, submarines, and advanced drone systems. In addition, innovations in missile technology, cyber defense, satellite systems, and electronic warfare will underline Pakistan's growing technological prowess in defense production. The Pakistan government attaches a high level of importance to IDEAS. The exhibition attracts a large number of delegates and it is seen as a vehicle for facilitating their own indigenous arms trade. The inaugural launch of IDEAS occurred in 2000 and was a vehicle to promote Pakistan's domestic arms manufacturing businesses whilst providing a stage for international vendors to offer solutions to the requirements of the three-services of Pakistan. The event, having always been scheduled for the Karachi Expo Centre, in its first year attracted 45 delegations from foreign countries, media reports said. APP

Fazaia Bilquis college for women holds 31st convocation

ISLAMABAD: The 31st Convocation of Fazaia Bilquis College of Education for Women, PAF Nur Khan, was held on Sunday at the Convocation Hall, Air University, Islamabad, celebrating the academic achievements of students from the 2020, 2021, and 2022 sessions. The ceremony was graced by Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan, Vice Chancellor of Air University, as the Chief Guest, while Begum Air Marshal Kazim Hammad attended as the Guest of Honour, according to a press release. A total of 804 students were conferred degrees across various disciplines, including Master of Arts in English, B.Ed (Hons) Elementary, Associate Degree in Education, BS (Hons) in English, Computer Sci-

ence, Mathematics, Psychology, and BBA (Hons). The top performers of the session were awarded 19 Gold and 18 Silver medals for securing the first and second positions. Special recognition was given to Ms. Erum Kham, Ms. Beenish Farooq, and Ms. Khizra Fatima, who were presented with the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy for their outstanding academic performance, co-curricular achievements, and exemplary conduct. Principal of Fazaia Bilquis College, Wing Commander Ayesha Waheed, welcomed the guests and delivered the annual report. Ayesha Waheed highlighting the institution's pioneering role in empowering women through education since its establishment in 1984. Ayesha Waheed said that

the college continues to provide teacher training programs and general courses, equipping women with the skills to contribute to the nation's progress. Additionally, the college extends opportunities to underprivileged students, ensuring access to education for those in need. Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan conferred the degrees upon the graduates and presented medals and certificates to high achievers, while merit certificates were also awarded to dedicated faculty members. The ceremony concluded with Begum Air Marshal Kazim Hammad presenting the college crest to Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan, marking the end of a memorable event that celebrated academic excellence and the college's legacy. APP

Literature festival attracts enthusiasts

The poetry session highlighted the vibrant literary culture of the region and the significant contributions of women to the literary arts

PESHAWAR: As part of the inaugural events of the Dosti Peshawar women literature festival, a Mehfil-e-Mushaira held here at Peshawar Barrack on Monday wherein renowned poets attracted literary enthusiasts by presenting their poetic contributions in Urdu and Pashto languages. The event was presided over by renowned Khyber Pakhtunkhwa poet Professor Dr Nazir Tabassum. Moderated by Dr Sadaf Ambreen, the event commenced with a captivating poetry by emerging poetess Sakina Rawish, whose heartfelt poetry set the tone for the evening. The session continued with a melodious Pashto ghazal by Shaheen, followed by soulful Urdu ghazal by Dr Zaigham Hussain, which resonated deeply with the audience. Dr Shahida Sardar mesmerized the participants with her Pashto and Urdu ghazals, earning widespread appreciation. Samina Qadir's charming Pashto ghazal added a delicate touch to the evening, while Bekhzada Danish's impactful poetry left the audience spellbound. Jahanzeb Shaor followed with a series of Urdu ghazals, captivating listeners with his expressive delivery. Later, the famous poet of Peshawar, Professor Dr Ishaq Wardak, delighted the audience with his graceful presentation, paving the way for Bushra Farrukh's delightful poetry, which were received with great admiration. Khalid Rauf Qureshi's heartfelt Urdu ghazal drew applause from the crowd. The stirring performance by special guest Nasir Ali Syed energized the gathering. The Mushaira was concluded with an address by the event's president, Professor Dr Nazir Tabassum, who shared his thoughts and also presented poetry, leaving the audience in awe. The event was organized by Dr Hamida while assisted by Dr Fareeha, Saniyah Siraj, Tashfeen Zia, Dr Anital Zia, and Dr Zarmina Baloch. The poetry session highlighted the vibrant literary culture of the region and the significant contributions of women to the literary arts. DNA

Punjab govt committed to empower youth

By providing youth with market-driven skills, the program will enable youth to excel in the global job market and secure better livelihood opportunities, he said in an interview with state run news channels

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the CM Task Force on Skills Development, Adnan Afzal Chattha reaffirmed the Punjab government's commitment to empowering youth with world-class skills development education. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, he said that the government aims to transform vocational institutes to meet international standards, equipped with state-of-the-art labs and a modern curriculum. By providing youth with market-driven skills, the program will enable youth to excel in the global job market and secure better livelihood opportunities, he said in an interview with PTV News. The Punjab government is playing a significant role

in promoting skill development education alongside traditional schools, aiming to raise awareness among youth and parents, he added. The government is promoting various programs to equip youth with market-driven skills, enhancing their employability globally, he said adding that the government has launched various initiatives to empower youth, including the Prime Minister's Digital Youth Hub, Laptop Scheme, Skills Development Programme, Talent Hunt Youth Sports League, Green Youth Movement, National Innovation Award, Youth Development Centre, National Youth Council, and YES Programs. Additionally, vocational training programs in fields like nursing, elec-

trical work, solar technology, tile fixing, welding, and bricklaying are available, he mentioned. He said that key partners include TEVTA, PSDF, and international collaborations like China these programs aim to equip youth with market-driven skills, enhance employability globally and contribute to Pakistan's economic growth. He said that empowering rural women and youth through vocational training programs is a game-changer for their socio-economic well-being. The Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) is playing a vital role in bridging the skills gap in Pakistan's rapidly evolving job market, he said and added that PSDF is Pakistan's largest skills development fund, aiming

to boost the skill development of youth, marginalized communities and women from rural areas, he further mentioned. This initiative is crucial in addressing the skills gap and ensuring that the workforce is equipped to meet the demands of the modern job market, he noted. He said that the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) is also leading this effort, focusing on developing a skilled workforce crucial for socio-economic growth. CM's primary objective is to enhance the employability of Punjab's youth by providing training in cutting-edge fields such as cloud computing, cybersecurity, data analytics, graphic designing, artificial intelligence, machine learning

and game development, he added. This initiative also promises international certification from renowned organizations like Microsoft, Adobe, Cisco, and Unity, recognized globally for their standards, he said and highlighted that TEVTA is launching an exciting program on Wahdat Road to equip youth with graphics and printing skills, thanks to a collaborative effort with China. The chairperson also underlined that agriculture and climate internship programs, emphasizing their focus on cultural export and training initiatives. He said that the Punjab government is empowering youth through soft skill courses, such as hospitality and chef training which is a fantastic opportunity for them to develop valuable. APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

- NOVEMBER**
- Nov 01/Algeria National Day
 - Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day
 - Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution
 - Nov 09/Cambodia National Day
 - Nov 11/Poland Independence Day
 - Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein
 - Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day
 - Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day
 - Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day
 - Nov 18/Oman National Day
 - Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day
 - Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day
 - Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day
 - Nov 25/Suriname National Day
 - Nov 28/Mauritania National Day
 - Nov 28/Albania Flags Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
 PIA Flight Info.....114
 PIA Cargo.....9280979
 Railway Inquiry.....117
 Railway Exchange9270831-5
 WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
 CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Chairman CDA calls for joint efforts to tackle smog

Randhawa participates in smog awareness symposium and walk organized by capital hospital CDA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa participated in the Smog Awareness Symposium and Walk as a chief guest hosted by Capital Hospital CDA. The event was aimed at raising public awareness about the growing environmental challenges posed by smog and air pollution. The event was also graced by other guests including Member Administration, Mr. Tahir Mehmood; Member Finance, Mr. Tahir Naeem Akhtar; Prof. Dr. Shajee, Head of the Medicine Department at PIMS; Dr. Shazli Manzoor, Pulmonologist; Dr. Imtiaz Paracha, Pulmonologist; and Dr. Akbar Siddique Sati, former Head of the Medicine Department. During the Smog Awareness Symposium, Chairman CDA, Mr. Muhammad Ali Randhawa appreciated the initiative and emphasized the critical need for collaborative efforts in tackling the issue of smog and promoting sustainable urban development. He encouraged all sectors of society to play a role in improving air quality and protecting the health of the public. "Smog knows no boundaries,



and it is a shared responsibility to work together to reduce pollution levels in our cities. The steps we take today will benefit generations to come," Mr. Randhawa remarked. Prof. Dr. Naeem Taj, who served as both the chief organizer and supervisor of the event, opened the symposium with a compelling address highlighting the importance of collective efforts to mitigate air pollution and promote clean, healthy environments for future generations. "Increased levels of air pollution, particularly during the winter months, pose a significant threat to public health. Our goal today is not only to raise awareness but also to provide practical solutions that individuals, communities, and institutions can adopt to reduce their environmental impact," said Prof. Dr. Taj. Following the symposium, Chairman CDA, Mr. Muhammad Ali Randhawa along with other participants took part in the Anti-Smog Walk fostering community engagement and environmental responsibility and a Tree Plantation Drive as part of the hospital's ongoing environmental initiatives. The Anti-Smog Walk aimed to highlight the urgent need for sustainable solutions to

combat smog. The Participants including environmental experts, healthcare professionals and local authorities walked through designated areas around the hospital, carrying banners with messages about air quality, environmental protection, and the importance of clean air for public health. The walk was a powerful demonstration of solidarity and a call to action for everyone to take responsibility for their environment. The volunteers, hospital staff, and community members worked together to plant a variety of trees on the hospital grounds, symbolizing a collective commitment to enhancing green spaces and com-



batting the effects of air pollution. Prof. Dr. Naeem Taj expressed his gratitude to all attendees, sponsors, and participants, saying, "Events like these are critical in raising awareness and inspiring meaningful change. It is through these efforts that we can protect the health of our communities and build a cleaner, greener future." The Smog Awareness Symposium and Walk concluded with a renewed sense of commitment from all involved to take immediate steps in addressing air pollution and to continue advocating for stronger policies to reduce smog and its harmful effects on public health.

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Pakistan's ports significantly improved: Qaiser

"Due to these improvements, Maersk Line, Mediterranean Shipping Company, Hutchison, and Abu Dhabi Ports Company have signed memoranda of understanding and agreements to invest in Pakistan's maritime sector and shipping industry," he said

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, has said that Pakistan's ports have been significantly improved, and many companies have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to invest in Pakistan's industry. The Minister, who participated in the Global Maritime Trade Summit organized by the International Chamber of Shipping, expressed his gratitude for the invitation. He thanked the Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping, Emmanuel Grimaldi, and the Hong Kong Transport and Shipping Department. In his speech, the Minister stated, "About 90% of global trade depends on the shipping industry. He emphasized that Pakistan's ports have been significantly improved." "Due to these improvements, Maersk Line, Mediterranean Shipping Company, Hutchison, and Abu Dhabi Ports Company have signed memoranda of understanding and agreements to invest in Pakistan's maritime sector and shipping industry," he said. Sheikh also invited other international shipping companies to invest in Pakistan. He said, "Pakistan's geographical location is of great strategic importance, as it provides easy access for transporting goods to China, Central Asian countries, and the Middle East." The minister said, "Our deep ports at Port Qasim and Gwadar have significant handling capacity, but the current transportation is less than half of their potential. This is in contrast to nearby ports like Dubai, Jebel Ali, and Salalah, which are quite busy." Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh also highlighted, "The ongoing rapid development at Gwadar Port, with hopes that it will soon be fully operational. Recently, the federal cabinet directed that 50% of trade will be routed through this port." "This port is of immense importance for trade with China, Russia, Hong Kong, and other countries," he emphasized. He said, "Pakistan is making its maritime sector environmentally friendly in line with the standards set by the International Maritime Organization." "Pakistan is among the countries with less than 1% carbon emissions globally, yet it is one of the top ten countries most affected by climate change. Despite this, Pakistan is striving to transition to carbon-free ships and is actively implementing a decarbonization policy," Sheikh mentioned. "Pakistan has recently signed the Hong Kong Convention and will make every effort to transition the shipping industry to green energy under this agreement to minimize pollution," he noted. "A new maritime policy will be introduced either later this year or at the beginning of next year. Under this policy, foreign investors will be provided with tax incentives and other facilities, Sheikh reiterated.—DNA

Govt committed to strengthen healthcare system: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD :Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Monday said that Parliament is committed to enhance country's healthcare sector, while emphasizing the pivotal role of young doctors in transforming the health care system. While delivering key note address at the 57th Convocation of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPS) here, he highlighted the dedication, compassion, and hard work of young doctors as essential to advancing healthcare in the country. "Patients often

sacrifice everything for their treatment in hospitals. In such times, kind words and a smile from senior doctors offer them a new sense of life," the Speaker remarked. The convocation was attended by Punjab Health Advisor Major General (Retd) Azhar Kiani, former caretaker Health Minister Punjab Dr. Jamal Nasir, CPS President Dr. Muhammad Shoaib Shafi, distinguished doctors, graduating students, and their families from across the country. Ayaz Sadiq has described the graduating doctors as essential for the nation's healthcare system. He lauded CPSP as one of Pakistan's premier institutions which is renowned not only nationally but also internationally for its immense contributions to medical education and training. Addressing the young doctors, NA Speaker urged them to extend their responsibilities beyond medical treatment and foster ethical, and honest relationships with their patients. He pointed out critical challenges such as improving maternal and child healthcare and delivering medical services in rural areas, underscoring that these issues

cannot be resolved without the commitment and expertise of young medical professionals. While mentioning the CPSP's six decades of service, he commended its role in maintaining high standards in post-graduate medical education. He praised the leadership of CPSP for equipping its graduates with world-class knowledge and skills, as well as instilling values of compassion and humanity. The Speaker also assured parliament's full support for CPSP's initiatives aimed at advancing healthcare in Pakistan. He urged the institution's leadership to focus on fostering both technical expertise and ethical leadership among their graduates. While extending congratulations to the graduates and their families, Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged their sacrifices and hard work and expressed pride in their accomplishments.—APP

PN Commodore Asim, DG Sri Lanka Navy discuss 13th PN led CTF-150 mission activities

ISLAMABAD: Commodore Asim Sohail Malik of Pakistan Navy(PN), Commander Combined Task Force 150, held a virtual Key Leadership Engagement with Rear Admiral Buddhika Liyanagamage, Director General Operations of Sri Lanka Navy. The meeting focused on reinforcing objectives of Combined Maritime Forces and exploring avenues of cooperation with Sri Lanka Navy in support of CTF-150 mission to counter illicit maritime activities at sea. During the meeting, Commodore Asim Sohail Malik apprised the Admiral on the operational activities of 13th PN led CTF-150 mission and underscored importance of collaborative approach to combat threats posed by Non-State Actors. Potential participation of Sri Lanka Navy assets in CTF-150 was also agreed by both sides as CMF collaboration with littoral states is vital to disrupt narcotics trafficking and



other illicit activities in North Arabian Sea. Commander CTF 150 also highlighted Pakistan Navy's commitment to maritime peace and stability in the region and reiterated support for upcoming command of CTF-154 by Sri Lanka Navy team.—DNA

PTI supporters advised to beware of exploitation

ISLAMABAD: A prominent Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Sardar Nadir Khan Gabol on Monday advised Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters to beware of exploitation by their party leaders and issued a stern warning to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, stating that the federal government will not tolerate the misuse of public resources. In an interview with the PTV news channel, he said that the government has made it clear that it will not tolerate the misuse of government resources for PTI's personal agenda, adding, that the government will closely monitor PTI's actions to prevent any exploitation of public funds or resources for political gain. Gabol said that the government was making progress and would not be swayed by PTI's attempts to exploit the situation for their gain. He urged youth to distance themselves from the PTI protests, adding, that the country's progress and welfare should be the primary focus, rather than getting entangled in political unrest. He emphasized the importance of youth involvement in creating positive change for Pakistan.—APP

Violation of smog rules 3 industrial units issued notices

RAWALPINDI: Environment Protection Department (EPD) Rawalpindi on the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi here on Monday inspected various industrial units and imposed Rs 300,000 fine on a unit for spreading smog and environmental pollution. Deputy Director Environment Rawalpindi informed that warning notices were also issued to three units on violation of the smog rules. During the smog prevention activity, 901 vehicles were also inspected in Rawalpindi district, he said adding, 12 smoke-emitting vehicles were impounded while owners of several vehicles without fitness certificates were imposed fines amounting to Rs 780,000. He urged the citizens to support the government initiatives for the improvement of the environment. He also requested the people not to burn garbage to prevent air pollution. Earlier, Climate scientist, Salaal Hasan, on Monday, blamed volatile organic compounds for creating smog as most of the industries were using these dangerous molecules. Talking to media, he said that volatile organic compounds, mostly chlorine, hydrogen, and sulfur produced from different sources, when reacted with sunlight caused ozone layer at the surface of the earth. "Quality of air index above 80 to 100 marks is considered health hazard," Hasan added. He also maintained that these chemicals directly affect the tissues of the lungs, which could result in deaths or irreversible disability and it could be very dangerous, especially for infants and pregnant women. He called for regulating the emission of a quantity of gases into the air with strict compliance.—DNA

ANF arrests 13 suspects with 37 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to arrest 13 suspects and recovered 37 kg drugs worth Rs 4.2 million, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Monday. He informed that in an operation, 90 grams hashish was recovered from an accused arrested near a university in Islamabad. The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. In another operation, 8 kg hashish was recovered from the secret cavities of a car intercepted on GT Road in Mansehra and an accused was also arrested. A total of 4.4 kg hashish was recovered from 2 suspects rounded up near Burhan Interchange, Attock. Another operation near a hotel in Mansehra was conducted and 7 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle besides netting an accused.—APP

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Briefs

17 held
in search
operation

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police conducted a grand search and combing operation on Monday in various areas of the Shehzad Town police station jurisdiction, falling under the Rawal Zone, to curb criminal activities. A police spokesperson told APP that, the operation was conducted under the supervision of SP Rawal Zone Kazim Naqvi. He said teams comprising police personnel, CTD including lady officers and Frontier Corps (FC) officials, participated in the operation. Prior to the operation, all personnel were briefed on their assignments and security protocols, he added. During the operation, 313 suspicious individuals were checked, and 201 houses, shops, inns, hotels, and motels were thoroughly inspected. As a result, 17 suspects were shifted to the police station for further investigation. Additionally, four pistols, one rifle, and four motorbikes were seized and moved to the station. DIG Ali Raza said that the objective of such operations is to eliminate criminal activities and ensure the safety of residents. —APP

Suspected
human
trafficker
arrested

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested a key suspect in a human trafficking case linked to a tragic boat accident in Libya, on Monday. According to FIA spokesperson, this action came on the orders of Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Raza Naqvi. Yasir Mehmood, a suspect listed in the Red Book's most wanted list was apprehended during a major operation by the FIA's Guiranwala zone. He faces multiple charges with over five cases filed against him in 2023 by the Composite Circle Gujarat. Yasir is accused of defrauding victims by collecting Rs 24 lakh each to facilitate their illegal journey to Europe. He reportedly transported victims through Libya to Egypt and Dubai where they were held in poor conditions. Tragically, some victims died during a boat attempt to reach Italy. The arrest was made possible through modern technology following extensive raids aimed at capturing him. Investigations are ongoing and efforts to apprehend additional suspects in the trafficking network are underway. —APP

FIA arrests
man for sexual
exploitation of
child

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Monday arrested a suspect involved in the sexual exploitation of a young girl in Lahore. According to the FIA spokesperson, this marks the first operation conducted under the International Child Sexual Exploitation Database (ICSED) since Pakistan joined the international database on November 1. The suspect identified as Asim Butt was apprehended during a raid on Kami Road in Lahore. The victim is the daughter of the housemaid employed by Butt. Authorities recovered objectionable material from the suspect's mobile phone. —APP

Anti-state
activities
not to be
tolerated

ISLAMABAD: A member of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab Asma Naz Monday said that anti-state elements spreading chaos and confrontation will face swift action and stressed that the PML-N leadership will not allow the youth to be misled by nefarious motives. In an interview with PTV news channel, she said that government will take strict action against individuals and groups creating unrest in the country and will ensure the safety and stability of citizens. She pointed out that PML-N leadership faced imprisonment without substantial evidence, while Imran Khan allegedly exploits the public and youth for personal gain. —APP

Nasir for transforming capital
into premier business hub

President ICCI emphasized the Chamber's core values, he assured the business community that their dignity and interests would remain paramount, pledging to secure essential amenities and resources for industrial and trade growth while adhering to regulatory frameworks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Nasir Mansoor Qureshi has pledged to elevate the Chamber's service delivery and transform Islamabad into a premier business hub. Speaking to a delegation of business leaders led by Raja Hassan Akhtar, President of the Traders Welfare Association (TWA) Blue Area, he outlined his strategic vision, which includes developing mega expo centers, world-class hotels, and fostering tourism-driven economic activities to benefit the busi-

ness community and strengthen national financial stability. President Qureshi revealed that funding requests have been submitted to the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) to support these transformative initiatives. Emphasizing the Chamber's core values, he assured the business community that their dignity and interests would remain paramount, pledging to secure essential amenities and resources for industrial and trade growth while adhering to regulatory frameworks. A cornerstone of Qureshi's vision is the internal restructuring of ICCI. He highlighted the in-

roduction of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to digitalize membership processes and ongoing renovations of key facilities, including the Munawar Mughal Hall and the basement, to enhance member services. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Chairman of the Founder Group, stressed the importance of unity within the business community for economic progress. Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group, reaffirmed his support for collective efforts to address key challenges, particularly in the Blue Area. Yousuf Rajpoot, Group Leader for Blue Area, raised critical issues

facing the community, including concerns with the CDA, Police, IESCO, and FBR.

Raja Hassan Akhtar expressed gratitude to the ICCI leadership for its unwavering support and called for sustainable solutions to persistent challenges like parking shortages in Blue Area and other markets to ensure smooth traffic flow and improved customer experiences. Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry lauded President Qureshi's visionary leadership, commending his dedication to initiatives that benefit the business community. They described the Chamber as a "second home" for its members. The meeting witnessed robust participation from prominent business leaders, including Executive Members Waseem Chaudhry, Ateequr Rehman, Naveed Satti, Zulqurnain Abbasi, and ICCI members Khalid Chaudhry, Naem Siddiqui, Babar Chaudhry, Tehmas Butt, Deputy Chairman TWA Blue Area Amin Peerzada, and other key stakeholders. At the end traditional turbans were placed on ICCI's portfolios and senior members as symbol of honor and respect by the visiting business leaders.

Ethiopia, Pak agree to
enhance health sector coop

Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker highlighted the commitment of the Government of Ethiopia for ensuring health, safety and security by creating awareness on diseases, hygiene and environment-friendly issues that reduced maternal and child mortality, increased longevity, and wellbeing of the society

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Monday explored various avenues of enhancing the bilateral cooperation in the health sectors, mainly joint efforts in research and development areas.

The discussion to enhance the cooperation took place during a meeting between H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the FDR Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination H.E. Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath. The meeting mainly focused on global health security, institutional linkages, exchange of researches on preventing and curing communicable diseases such as pandemics and outbreaks, medical and allied health professional education for Ethiopian students in Pakistan, and medical tourism.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker highlighted the commitment of the Government of Ethiopia for ensuring health, safety and security by creating



awareness on diseases, hygiene and environment-friendly issues that reduced maternal and child mortality, increased longevity, and wellbeing of the society. He said Ethiopia is a 3rd diplomatic hub in the world, and recently established a state-of-the-art disease control center where joint researches are being conducted on different diseases especially the communicable ones. The Ambassador also highlighted the strong attachment of Ethiopian students who studied

from Pakistan, recalling their eagerness to help Pakistan during the flash floods 2022. "There is a strong need to invest in people-to-people relations to advance the bilateral relations to the high level," he added. He said there is a huge potential for the people of Pakistan to invest in the pharmaceutical and surgical sector of Ethiopia which imports a major chunk from various countries. On the other hand, the Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services,

Regulation and Coordination acknowledged Ethiopia's friendly bond with the people of Pakistan, expressing strong commitment to strengthen Pakistan's relations with Africa especially Ethiopia through Ethiopian Airlines.

He agreed to work closely with the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad for initiating collaboration in research and development sector, and cooperation for exchange of research in health sector, and provision of medical and allied health professional education.

Seminar on workplace
harassment protections

ISLAMABAD: The Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) office is scheduled to organize an awareness seminar on the Provisions of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010 here Wednesday. The seminar, organized in collaboration with the UN Women would address key aspects of creating safe and inclusive work environments for women, according to press statement. The event will bring together esteemed speakers and specialists, including representatives from UN Women Pakistan, FOSPAH (Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection

Against Harassment), and the Auditor General's Office. Keynote addresses and sessions will focus on gender stereotypes, respectful workplace practices, and international best practices for preventing workplace harassment. The seminar will kick off with preliminary remarks on the workshop's objectives by Dr. Zahra Kamal, a prominent psychologist and gender specialist from UN Women. Louise Nylin, UN Women's Country Representative, will deliver remarks to set the tone for the day. Other highlights include a presentation on workplace

harassment laws by Ms. Meher Jamy of FOSPAH, and an engaging discussion on gender and social norms led by Dr. Zahra Kamal. The closing sessions will cover concepts and norms of respectful workplaces and international best practices with emphasis on situation in Pakistan by Muhammad Younas Khalid of UN Women. The seminar will also feature an exchange of mementos and conclude with certificate distribution, accompanied by remarks from Abdul Ghufuran Memon, Additional Auditor General of Operations. —APP

Pakistan to continue unwavering
coop to Syria in education

Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the importance of Pak-Syria Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) and highlighted the role of PFG in the National Assembly as a significant platform for fostering mutual understanding and collaboration

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz has said that Pakistan would continue its unwavering cooperation and support to Syria in education, trade, tourism, especially religious tourism. During a meeting with the Ambassador of Syrian Republic in Pakistan Dr. Ramez Alraee, he said that Pakistan and Syria enjoy historic and brotherly relations, both countries are tied in the bond of shared religion, fraternity, history and culture. The matters pertaining to bilateral relations and important regional and international issues were discussed in the meeting. The Speaker stressed the need for unity among the Muslim countries to cope with the challenges confronting to Muslim um-

mah. He said that the peace in the Middle East is linked with peace in Palestine. He noted that Pakistan fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and a desire durable peace in Syria. Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the importance of Pak-Syria Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) and highlighted the role of PFG in the National Assembly as a significant platform for fostering mutual understanding and collaboration. He lauded the commencement of commercial flight operations of Syrian Airlines between Damascus and Lahore. The Speaker was confident that flight operations of Syrian Airlines would promote people-to-people contact, trade and tourism between both

brotherly nations. He also appreciated the hospitality extended by Syria to Pakistani Zaireen visiting Syria for Zayaraat of Shrines. The envoy said that Syria values its historic relations with Pakistan and the Syrian Government wants to further strengthen the existing ties through enhanced cooperation in diverse fields. While apprising the NA Speaker regarding the newly started flight operation, the ambassador said that this initiative would not only facilitate the Pakistani Zaireen & business community but will also strengthen the socio-economic cooperation between both countries. He praised Pakistan's efforts for promotion of peace in the region. He expressed his gratitude to People and Government of

Pakistan for supporting Syria in the field of education & religious tourism. Later on, the Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Brahim Romani met with NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at the Parliament House. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest regarding enhanced cooperation in trade & energy sector and parliamentary diplomacy. Ayaz Sadiq said that Pakistan and Algeria have deep-rooted historical ties and Pakistan appreciates the unwavering support extended by Algeria to Pakistan on international forums. He further emphasized the need to increase people-to-people contacts along with parliamentary cooperation through the Pak-Algeria Friendship Group (PFG). —APP

SCP may
decide
Trusteeship
of Dr. AQ Khan
hospital
tomorrow

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has adjourned the hearing of a petition related to the Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan Trust Hospital until tomorrow, ordering the petitioner to produce the original deed of trust document that establishes his trusteeship. This comes after the petitioner's counsel claimed their client had no involvement in the alleged forgery attempt to take over the hospital using a fake deed of trust, stating they didn't sign the document. A two-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Khan Afridi, has given the accused an ultimatum that the Court may settle the issue unilaterally if the original document of the deed of trust is not produced before the Court by tomorrow. The prosecution argued before the Court, saying Dr. AQ Khan founded the trust and handed it over to his daughter in September 2021. The accused produced a fake document in October 2021 to illegally take control of the hospital. The prosecution also mentioned that the accused has been unwilling to share the deed of trust. —APP

easypaisa
receives \$10m
investment from
shareholders

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Microfinance Bank (TMB), operator of Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform, easypaisa, has received US\$10 million in equity investment from its shareholders, Telenor Group, and Ant Group, as easypaisa prepares to launch its digital retail banking operations in Pakistan, subject to regulatory approvals. This capital injection represents a pivotal step in the easypaisa's ongoing digital transformation journey and reflects the strong confidence of both shareholders in the role the bank is playing in empowering a financially inclusive Pakistan. Sharing his thoughts on the recent developments, Irfan Wahab Khan, Chairman, Board of Directors, TMB / easypaisa, said, "Our commitment to advancing a digital Pakistan is stronger than ever. With solid financial results that underscore sustainable growth, easypaisa is evolving into an innovative platform at the forefront of digital finance, ready to reshape banking in Pakistan once again. We are proud to support the transformation of Pakistan's financial services landscape. —APP

Free
Generative
AI training to
engineers

Don't miss the chance to be part of this transformative program

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is set to launch a free online training program on Generative Artificial Intelligence to equip engineers with cutting-edge skills in artificial intelligence. The program, developed in collaboration with PakAngels Silicon Valley USA, iCode Guru, and Aspire Pakistan, will commence on December 1, 2024, with registrations already underway. According to the PEC, the six-week training course offers participants an opportunity to gain international certification with a traceable QR code. The program focuses on introducing engineers to generative AI technology, its applications, and practical model-building techniques. The training is tailored for engineers registered with PEC, engineering managers, university engineering faculty and students, and corporate sponsorship partners. The course covers topics such as an introduction to generative AI, an overview of generative models, and hands-on model-building exercises. The program emphasizes the significance of early adoption of AI technologies, offering participants several advantages, including automating time-consuming tasks to enhance efficiency, expanding capabilities beyond traditional engineering methods, developing complex software without requiring programming knowledge, staying competitive in a rapidly evolving job market, and gaining leadership skills in the AI domain. The training is being organized considering that the global market for generative AI is expected to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2032. By 2030, 40 percent of tasks are predicted to be automated through AI-powered solutions, and AI could contribute \$4.4 trillion annually to global productivity. By 2028, 70 percent of companies will adopt AI models to stay competitive. Engineers participating in the course will learn to solve complex problems using AI models to analyze data and run simulations, generate creative designs and innovative solutions, access AI-powered insights across various disciplines, and develop sophisticated engineering software without writing code. The interested participants can register through the official PEC website at www.pec.org.pk/ai-training, scan the QR code provided on the flyer, or contact ai.training@pec.org.pk for assistance. This initiative underscores PEC's commitment to fostering technological advancements in Pakistan's engineering sector and preparing professionals for a future driven by AI. Don't miss the chance to be part of this transformative program. —DNA

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German coalition's collapse

Germany, once the iron engine of Europe, finds itself rusting. Guided by chancellors such as Konrad Adenauer, Helmut Schmidt, Helmut Kohl and Angela Merkel, the country emerged from post-war ashes to become a paragon of economic resilience and political stability. Yet today, that same Germany is faltering – its economy stalling, its politics paralysed – and the timing could not be more precarious. Both Europe and China, crucial partners in Germany's economic orbit, now find themselves tethered to a sinking anchor. Earlier this month, the German government imploded. In the end, Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition of Social Democrats, Greens and Free Democrats, a fragile assemblage of incongruent ideologies, succumbed to internal schisms, leaving Germans to elect a new Bundestag and thus a new chancellor on February 23. This political fracture comes at a profoundly inopportune moment. Germany's economy, forecast to contract by 0.2 per cent this year, is now alone among the Group of 7 nations with a negative growth outlook. Economic expansion might be sluggish in the United States, France and Japan, but at least it remains positive. Not so in Germany, where a low unemployment rate conceals a graver issue: a shortage of skilled labour so severe that the government, despite its political inertia, had to relax immigration standards. To stave off collapse, Germany needs 400,000 skilled immigrants annually, a demand as stark as it is unlikely. Failure to meet it spells nothing less than a twin crisis of dwindling productivity coupled with mounting social costs. Berlin stops Chinese companies from investing in German chip makers over security concerns. After all, Germany's industrial core, that wellspring of post-war prosperity, is withering. High energy prices – a consequence of moving away from using Russian gas – have battered the country's manufacturing sectors, from chemicals to automotive. Consider BASF, a pillar of German industry, which has announced plans to downsize or shift operations abroad in search of more stable and affordable energy sources. Deindustrialisation, once unthinkable for Europe's manufacturing giant, has become an unsettling reality. Germany's industrial production is projected to record a 1.5 per cent fall this year. This figure is not merely a statistic; it is a symptom of the rot within. However, Germany's woes transcend labour and energy. The debt brake, or Schuldenbremse, enshrined in the constitution to limit federal deficits to 0.35 per cent of gross domestic product, is strangling growth. In an era of global competition, it is akin to commanding an Olympic sprinter to jog while rivals sprint ahead. Unsurprisingly, one of the coalition's failures was to get even modest stimulus measures through the Bundestag. This paralysis has rendered Berlin impotent, a model of dysfunction in a time that demands decisiveness. The implications for Europe are profound. As the European Union's largest economy, Germany accounts for 24.2 per cent of the bloc's GDP, a staggering figure in a union of 27 nations. When Germany stumbles, Europe tumbles. For smaller economies deeply entwined with German supply chains, the pain is palpable. Take the Czech Republic, for instance, where nearly 30 per cent of exports head to Germany, or Austria, where that figure hovers around the same mark. Germany's automotive industry – which provides 5 per cent of its GDP and more than 800,000 jobs – stretches its roots deep into central and eastern Europe.



US arrogance and ignorance

I saw an amusing T-shirt for sale online at a MAGA (Make America Great Again) website the other day. It has this printed on the front, "Sorry I can't hear you over the sound of my freedom." It's apparently a parody of "Sorry, but I can't hear you over the sound of how awesome I am", a more sinister internet meme often attributed to a now-defunct US mercenary group called Blackwater, which was infamous for its killings of civilians during the illegal American occupation of Iraq. If you listen to how US officials, both current and retired, talk about Hong Kong – and actually about the rest of the world generally – you have to wonder if they hear anything other than the sound of their own awesome voices. Take Gregory May, the US consul general in Hong Kong. He has professed a love for the city's two-dish rice meals, and even once took a social media photo of himself buying boxes of them in the street. "So tasty and affordable," he posted on Facebook. Well, I am glad there is at least one thing he likes about the city, though I seriously doubt he actually liked eating it beyond the posting as a PR exercise. I can't quite picture him eating a two-dish ricebox in his no doubt ornate office, and I am sure the exclusive American Club in Central doesn't allow outside food. But sorry, I digress. There is a more serious point I want to make, kind of. "We do want a better relationship with Hong Kong, but that's going to require some changes on the Hong Kong side, specifically the treatment of political prisoners," May said early this month. Political prisoners. Exactly who are they? Obviously, where May and his American colleagues see political persecution, Hong Kong is actually administering legitimate legal prosecution. But let's not argue about politics, and focus on what May was saying: If only Hong Kong would learn to play ball, everything would be hunky dory. If it just changes its legal and political systems, the US will consider having a better relationship. The whole world could say the same about the United States. If the US would stop interfering with other countries, everyone would just love America. I often complain that Britain still thinks it's a post-colonial master over Hong Kong. But it's actually the US. For example, in 2020, Washington started sanctioning Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu and 10 other current and former local and central government officials over the Beijing-imposed national security law and its erosion of local autonomy. Autonomy according to whom? Perhaps the Americans were referring to articles in the Sino-British Joint Declaration, a bilateral treaty to which, unless I am mistaken, the US is not a party. How is it that America decides to be the judge, jury and executioner of other people's bilateral treaties? Just because! Now consider the latest from Dennis Wilders, a former deputy assistant director of the CIA. He said president-elect Donald Trump didn't want war with China, but "peace through strength" as the "goal is to make it clear to Beijing that it shouldn't even think about fighting". "Trump is anti-war and unlikely to engage in conflict during his term," he said. "The defence budget will likely increase by 5 per cent, with more missile units, ships, and air capabilities."

Israel's annexation juggernaut to be stopped

Chris Doyle

The incoming Trump administration is packed full of potential appointees who, if not devoted annexationists, are firmly in the Israel can do no wrong camp. Mike Huckabee, Trump's choice to be the American ambassador to Israel, has said: "I think Israel has title deed to Judea and Samaria. There are certain words I refuse to use. There is no such thing as a West Bank. It's Judea and Samaria. There's no such thing as a settlement. They're communities, they're neighborhoods, they're cities. There's no such thing as an occupation." He is of course defiantly opposed to any two-state solution

It was only a matter of when. It has always only been a matter of when. For years, Israeli leaders have craved the West Bank. Few hid their desire to annex it either wholly or in large part. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich last week announced plans to annex the West Bank in 2025. There was little pushback in Israel or internationally. Back in 2019-2020, when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last veered down this dangerous path, it was more of a political gambit. He used it to advance normalization with Arab states. It was a condition of the Abraham Accords that Israel suspend its annexation plans, though Netanyahu insisted they were only delayed. What is different this time around? The settler movement is today even more firmly established at the heart of Israeli politics. The annexationists are in charge and not just the racist firebrands like Itamar Ben-Gvir and Smotrich. The incoming Trump administration is packed full of potential appointees who, if not devoted annexationists, are firmly in the Israel can do no wrong camp. Mike Huckabee, Trump's choice to be the American ambassador to Israel, has said: "I think Israel has title deed to Judea and Samaria. There are certain words I refuse to use. There is no such thing as a West Bank. It's Judea and Samaria. There's no such thing as a settlement. They're communities, they're neighborhoods, they're cities. There's no such thing as an occupation." He is of course defiantly opposed to any two-state solution. Watch out for Israeli plans to annex areas of Gaza as well. Given the trajectory of Israeli crimes there, some ministers might be dreaming of devouring

all of the Strip. Southern Lebanon might even follow. But none of this is written in stone. Trump will be keen to reassert his claim as dealmaker-in-chief. He knows a full-scale annexation of the rest of the West Bank is contrary to getting any peace deal. Netanyahu will stake out the maximalist position on territory to make it look like a concession if he only annexes Area C, which constitutes about 60 percent of the territory. The settlers, in cahoots with the Israeli army, have prepared the ground. The last decade has seen a rise in targeted violence against Palestinians in communities they aim to displace. But nothing has compared to 2024. More than ever, Palestinians live in fear of the unrestrained violence of their illegal neighbors. The regional war also increases the opportunity for Netanyahu. As Israel is bombing Gaza and Lebanon daily, with regular strikes in Syria and even on Iranian territory, the West Bank segment of the war has been given backwater status in the global media. Yet the future of the West Bank is what fires up Israeli leaders. It is what they see as the historical heartland of Israel. Everything else is secondary. Would annexation be a disaster? It would have to be annulled if there were to be a Palestinian state. It could lead to the dismantlement of the emaciated, impotent Palestinian Authority and the restoration of direct Israeli control over Palestinians in cities like Ramallah and Nablus. Ethnic cleansing would accelerate. Settlers enjoy sovereignty as it is, living under Israeli civil law while Palestinians in the West Bank live under martial law. But they want the rural and herding communities corralled

into ever more crowded Palestinian cities. Given the asymmetry of this conflict, it would be years or even decades before this could be reversed. Others argue that, given annexation has already effectively been in place for years, Israel being in full day-to-day control of the West Bank would force the world to confront the one-state reality. Annexation would formalize Israel's system of apartheid, which is at its most intense in the West Bank. Palestinians living under Israeli domination are not going to be given a right to vote. Laws would be decided in a parliament they have no access to. One minister made clear this month that Palestinians would not be allowed voting rights. The privileged position and superior rights of Israeli Jews would be hard to ignore. It would focus the Palestinian rights movement behind the anti-apartheid struggle. If Israel wants a single-state reality, then the campaign for full equal rights will gather strength. What has long been a hollow piece of public relations – that Israel is a democracy – would be shredded in front of the world. Perpetual occupation and the domination of another people is the antithesis of a democracy. Even the most boneheaded of bigots might have to concede that controlling the lives of nearly 7 million Palestinians and denying them the vote would end this illusion. Such a system will inevitably fall. It is just a question of when. Sadly, annexation may not be the most horrific aspect. It will be the mass ethnic cleansing that accompanies it that may go down in history, in Gaza as well as the West Bank. It is hard to see who or what will stop Israel's criminal juggernaut.

Once again, it was the economy, stupid

Mohamed A. El-Erian

One reason why Democrats failed to respond is that they were obsessed by another (ironically correct) characterization of the economy. The Harris campaign emphasized America's "economic exceptionalism," echoing a point that many professional economists have been making. The Democrats pointed to robust US growth, which has outpaced the rest of the G7, and to recent gains in real wages owing to the decline in the inflation rate. And, of course, there have been multiple record highs in the stock market

The famous mantra, "it's the economy, stupid," coined by the political strategist James Carville, helped Bill Clinton unseat President George H.W. Bush in 1992, and now it explains another election. The economy played a critical role in the 2024 US presidential race, creating the conditions not only for Donald Trump to trounce Kamala Harris and for the Republicans to gain control of the Senate and the House of Representatives, but possibly also for a counter-elite to usher in a new power structure. The election's outcome reflected two seemingly opposing views of the economy, both of which are correct. The interaction between them says as much about the basic economics-related strategies of the two political campaigns, good and bad, as it does about the state of expert economic communication in today's America. The message from voter surveys was unambiguous: the economy was one of the two main issues in this election (the other being illegal immigration). When asked for specifics, many said "inflation" and, if pushed harder, they reported being heavily influenced by what they see as excessively elevated prices and the lack of any sign that they are coming down. The Trump campaign masterfully exploited voter dissatisfaction with the cost of living. Following Ronald Reagan's example in 1980, they repeatedly posed variations of the question: "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?" One reason why Democrats failed to respond is that they were obsessed by another (ironically correct) characterization of the economy. The Harris campaign emphasized America's "economic exceptionalism," echoing a point that many professional economists have been making. The Democrats pointed to robust US growth, which has outpaced the rest of the G7, and to recent gains in real wages owing to the decline in the inflation rate. And, of course, there have been multiple record highs

in the stock market. But this approach signaled to many voters that the Democrats simply did not understand what was going on; that they are fundamentally disconnected from pocketbook realities on the ground. On some occasions, they even came across as being full of hubris. After all, a "K-shaped economy" means that improvements associated with robust growth are not evenly shared. Some sectors and households prosper, others struggle. Among those struggling the most are very-low-income households that have exhausted their pandemic savings, maxed out their credit cards, have no financial buffers and, therefore, live with an unsettling degree of economic insecurity. Michael Spence, the Nobel laureate economist, put it well at a recent lecture at the University of Cambridge's Judge Business School. Pointing to data illustrating the financial fragility of the bottom half of the income distribution, he noted that such households hearing about economic exceptionalism from the traditional media may have one or more of the following reactions: "the media doesn't know what it is talking about," "the media is biased," or "the media is not to be trusted." From these starting points, one can easily arrive at a belief that whoever is talking about the economy doing well simply does not understand or represent one's interests. The Democrats also lost control of the narrative on inflation. It did little good to tell people that the rate of price increases, while still positive, had fallen sharply from its 2022 high when their concerns were with the overall price level. The cumulative effect of inflation has added to their cost of living and thus reduced their quality of life. Similarly, record-breaking equity market runs mean little to households that own few, if any, stocks. Meanwhile, a housing price boom is far from a blessing for those seeking to buy their first home. But the issue is not just how each party communicated to voters. The traditional expert economic consensus has also been found wanting, not least in its inability to describe clearly and

widely the interaction between these two views. Mainstream economists also stood little chance of changing voters' minds about the other big issue in this election: immigration. By bolstering the US economy's supply side, illegal immigration has, in fact, supported growth. But the experts who formulate the consensus economic opinion were never going to be able to communicate this to skeptical voters, particularly because they belong to a club that has taken one credibility hit after another for the past 16 years. It started with the failure to anticipate the 2008 global financial crisis and subsequent Great Recession, which almost resulted in an even more devastating depression. Likewise, in 2021, the mainstream expert economic consensus insisted that the rise in the US inflation rate would be "transitory," i.e., temporary and reversible. But this view was upended when inflation continued to rise, peaking above 9 percent in June the following year. This saga also served as a reminder of an unusual fact: the head of the world's most powerful central bank, the US Federal Reserve, is not an economist, but a lawyer. Would we have someone lacking in formal medical training put in charge of the National Institutes of Health? All these threads are consistent with a broader theme that was apparent in this election. Not only has the "establishment," including traditional media, taken a big hit, but the incumbent elites that have led this establishment are being seriously threatened by the rise of a counter-elite. As the historian Niall Ferguson put it, this election was also a victory for "the new generation of builders whose autistic-virile qualities (Elon) Musk exemplifies." There are many important messages in Trump's decisive victory and the down-ballot results. Democrats and the economics profession would do well to heed them.

Mohamed A. El-Erian, President of Queens' College at the University of Cambridge, is a professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Briefs

Tax evaders, abettors won't be left unpunished

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A day earlier, Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb said all the promises made with the IMF were transparent and there was nothing secret which came under discussion with the Fund's team that visited Pakistan last week, according to The News report. "All the promises made with the IMF on account of quantitative and qualitative targets are transparent and placed on the Fund's website. This is Pakistan's program which is held, supported, assisted and funded by the IMF," he said in a televised address. "There is no surprise in it and I welcome this visit of the IMF because of the ongoing dialogue, as mutual trust develops through dialogue."

Fin Min praises ADB's...

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climate change, policy-based guarantees, financial and budgetary support, support in poverty reduction, and technical assistance in pension reforms. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb lauded the ADB's financial and technical assistance provided to Pakistan over the years. He said the bank's priority areas of assistance were aligned with Pakistan's development needs. He welcomed the Bank's assistance in building climate resilience and taking forward the agenda of government and pension reforms. Meanwhile, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a virtual meeting with the Governor State Bank of Pakistan and Chairman Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) and their teams to discuss progress on financing for the priority sectors today.

Govt poised to reopen bidding...

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The minister highlighted that interested parties had shown initial enthusiasm during earlier bidding rounds — but it did not materialise. He emphasised PIA's potential to become a profitable entity if restructured effectively. "PIA operates lucrative routes and can be transformed into a profit-generating institution," Aleem asserted. Drawing parallels with Air India, he noted that its privatisation succeeded only after five failed attempts, underscoring the need for persistence in the process. He also criticised the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for imposing GST on aircraft purchases, a tax he claimed was not levied globally in that manner.

'Dharna' on the cards, as Islamabad...

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which has time and again resorted to holding demonstrations. This time, PTI founder Imran Khan has listed down four demands for the government — revoke the 26th Constitutional Amendment, restore democracy and the Constitution, returning the public's mandate, and release all "innocent political" prisoners. Despite Defence Minister Khawaja Asif saying that the doors for negotiations have not yet closed, PTI Secretary Information Sheikh Waqas Akram has ruled out holding talks with the government or the establishment.

Apex body meeting...

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complete rest two days ago due to fever and chest infection. After a follow-up check-up this evening, future appointments will be decided, they say. The meeting, which was supposed to be chaired by the Prime Minister, was intended to review the overall law and order situation. It was also set to analyze the increasing incidents of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and approve key decisions.

Secy education inaugurates female basketball tournament

The tournament features eight teams from across Islamabad, showcasing the best female basketball talent in the city

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Eight teams are set to compete for the trophy in the Federal Female Club Basketball Tournament, which kicked off on Monday at Hamidi Hall, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad. The event is organized by Right to Play, in collaboration with Alliance Française, under the supervision of the Federal Basketball Association. The opening ceremony, held with great enthusiasm, was graced by Federal Secretary for Education Mohiuddin Wani, who attended as the Chief Guest. Fabrice Disdier, representing Alliance Française, was the Guest of Honour. Also present were Ali Khayam, Country Director for Right to Play, and Ouj E Zahoor, General Secretary of the Federal Basketball Association. The event was further honored by the presence of the wife of the Ambassador of France, a former international

basketball player, and the wife of the Polish Ambassador, both of whom showed their support for the young athletes. The tournament features eight teams from across Islamabad, showcasing the best female basketball talent in the city. The event aims to promote sportsmanship, provide a competitive platform for players, and highlight the growing interest in women's sports in the region. "We are delighted to see such incredible talent and dedication from our female athletes," said Federal Secretary Mohiuddin Wani during his opening remarks. "This tournament is a testament to the potential of women's sports in Pakistan, and we are committed to supporting initiatives that empower young athletes." Right to Play and Alliance Française have partnered for this tournament with the goal of fostering greater female participation in sports. Their



collaboration with the Federal Basketball Association highlights their shared commitment to creating opportunities for women athletes and providing them with a platform to excel.

The emotions will be for the end, says Rafael Nadal

MADRID: Retiring superstar Rafael Nadal says he will not be distracted by emotion as he aims to help Spain win the Davis Cup in the final tournament of his illustrious career. Nadal, a 22-time Grand Slam champion, will retire from tennis after representing his nation at the men's team event in Malaga. Spain play the Netherlands in the quarter-finals on Tuesday, but it remains unclear if 38-year-old Nadal will be fit enough to play a significant part. The former world number one has played only seven tournaments this year after battling various injuries over the past couple of seasons. "I'm not here for retiring, I'm here to help the team win," said Nadal, who announced last month he was planning to quit here. "It's a team competition and the most important thing is to all stay focused on what we have to do - that is play tennis and do it very well. "The emotions are going to be for the end." Nadal has played a significant part in five

Davis Cup victories for his nation and another would be the perfect way to bookend his career. If Spain beat the Netherlands, they will move into a semi-final against Germany or Canada on Friday. The final takes place on Sunday. Spain have a strong squad headed by French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz, with Roberto Bautista Agut, Pedro Martinez - both ranked inside the top 50 of the ATP singles - and doubles specialist Marcel Granollers completing the team. Nadal, ranked 154th in the world, arrived in Malaga on Thursday and has been practising with the other members of the team over the past three days. Spanish captain David Ferrer said he "doesn't know yet" if Nadal, who has not played since a chastening defeat by long-time rival Novak Djokovic at the Paris Olympics in early August, will be ready. "You will know tomorrow. For the moment, I have not decided the players that are going to play," Ferrer said. Hordes of foreign visitors climbing aboard a travel coach is a familiar sight in the Costa de Sol. This was

a unique early morning excursion to Fuengirola, however, for the start of Nadal's farewell show. With the media room at the Palacio de Deportes too small to accommodate the journalists wanting to speak to Nadal, hundreds of reporters and photographers were instead asked to go to the five-star Higuera Hotel in the hills overlooking the tourist resort. Inside a vast conference hall, journalists were reminded it was the team news conference for Spain - not solely the Nadal show. Inevitably almost all the questions - in both the English and Spanish parts - were for Nadal. Nadal's answers included the importance of saying farewell at home, the thought process leading up to his retirement announcement and that he assumed Roger Federer would be "too busy" to turn up in Malaga. Federer and Nadal famously held hands and cried when the Swiss star retired at the Laver Cup in 2022. You would expect a similar outpouring from Nadal - with or without Federer - whenever Spain says 'Gracias Rafa' this week. - Agencies

Aqib Javed appointed as Pakistan's interim white-ball head coach

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday, announced the appointment of former pacer Aqib Javed as the interim head coach of the men's white-ball teams. According to the cricket board, Aqib will coach the national white-ball sides until the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025, slated to run from February 19 to March 9. The PCB further shared that Aqib will continue to serve as a senior member of the national men's selection committee during his stint as the interim white-ball head coach and will be assigned with additional responsibilities after the multi-national tournament. "During this tenure, Aqib will continue to serve as a senior member of the men's National Selection Committee, and will be assigned additional responsibilities following the conclusion of the eight-team tournament," shared PCB in a statement. Aqib's first assignment as the interim head coach will be the white-ball tour of Zimbabwe, comprised of three ODIs and as many T20Is. The team will then tour South Africa for as many white-ball matches. Ahead of the Champions Trophy, Pakistan will host New Zealand and South Africa for an ODI triangular series from 8-14 February. The cricketing body further shared that it will begin the search for a permanent white-ball head coach, aiming to complete the appointment by the end of Champions Trophy. The position was vacated after Gary Kirsten's untimely resignation, just days before the team's departure to Australia.

Bentancur banned for seven games over racial slur

LONDON: Tottenham midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur has been given a seven-match domestic ban by the Football Association for using a racial slur about team-mate Son Heung-min. Bentancur, who has also been fined £100,000 and ordered to take part in a mandatory face-to-face education programme, was charged by the FA in September after comments made while appearing on TV in his home country of Uruguay in June. "Rodrigo Bentancur denied this charge, but the independent regulatory commission found it to be proven and imposed his sanctions following a hearing," said an FA statement. The 27-year-old will not return to domestic action until 26 December, missing Premier League matches against Manchester City, Liverpool and Chelsea, among others, plus Spurs' League Cup quarter-final against Manchester United. He will still be available for Tottenham's Europa League matches. Bentancur has played 15 times for Tottenham this season and scored his first goal of the campaign in a defeat by Ipswich on 11 November. The incident happened in his own time and so, as he plays in England, fell under the jurisdiction of the FA - unlike the situation involving Chelsea midfielder Enzo Fernandez. Fernandez was on international duty when he posted a video - which the French Football Federation (FFF) said included an alleged "racist and discriminatory" chant - of Argentina celebrating winning the Copa America, and is being investigated by world governing body Fifa. - Agencies

Zimbabwe announce ODI, T20I squads for Pak series

Zimbabwe's ODI squad features three uncapped players

WEB DESK

HARARE: Zimbabwe Cricket on Monday, has announced the ODI and T20I squads for the upcoming white-ball home series against Pakistan, set to be held at Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo. The white-ball series will commence with three ODIs on 24, 26 and 28 November, followed by as many T20Is scheduled for 1, 3 and 5 December 2024. Craig Ervine will lead Zimbabwe's ODI squad, which includes seasoned players like Sikandar Raza, Sean Williams, Blessing Muzarabani and Richard Ngarava. The squad also features three uncapped players - Trevor Gwandu, Tashinga Musekiwa and Tinotenda Maphosa. However, Zimbabwe have retained the T20I squad that delivered record-breaking performances in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 sub-regional qualifier in Kenya last month. All-rounder Raza will continue to lead the side in the shortest format. Zimbabwe's Convener of Selectors, David Mutendera, expressed his confidence in both ODI and T20I squads before

termining the white-ball home series against Pakistan a tremendous opportunity to bolster their progress in the sport. "Facing a high-calibre side like Pakistan is a tremendous opportunity for us to gauge our progress and showcase Zimbabwe's potential on the international stage. We are confident that both our ODI and T20I squads will be competitive."

Zimbabwe's ODI squad: Craig Ervine (c), Faraz Akram, Brian Bennett, Joylord Gumbie, Trevor Gwandu, Clive Madande, Tinotenda Maphosa, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Brandon Mavuta, Tashinga Musekiwa, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Richard Ngarava, Sikandar Raza, Sean Williams

Zimbabwe's T20I squad: Sikandar Raza (c), Faraz Akram, Brian Bennett, Ryan Burl, Trevor Gwandu, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tinotenda Maphosa, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Wellington Masakadza, Brandon Mavuta, Tashinga Musekiwa, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Richard Ngarava.

Australia crush Pak to complete series sweep

Stoinis scores a swashbuckling half-century in the run chase

SPORTS DESK

HOBART: Marcus Stoinis scored a belligerent half-century and led Australia to crush Pakistan by seven wickets in the third T20I and sweep the three-match series 3-0 here at Bellerive Oval. Set to chase a modest 118, Australia raced to the victory for the loss of just three wickets and 52 balls to spare. The home side got off to a shaky start to the pursuit as both openers Jake Fraser-McGurk (two) and Matthew Short (18) returned to the dugout inside four overs with 30 runs on the board. Skipper Josh Inglis then joined hands with Marcus Stoinis and registered an anchoring 55-run partnership for the third-wicket, which lasted with the former's dismissal in the 10th over. Inglis scored 27 off 24 balls with the help of four boundaries. Following his dismissal, Stoinis switched gear and steered Australia over the line in 11.2 overs. He top-scored for Australia, courtesy of

his fifth T20I half-century, smashing an unbeaten 67 off just 27 deliveries with the help of five sixes and as many fours. For Pakistan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Jahandad Khan and Abbas Afridi could pick up a wicket apiece. Opting to bat first, the touring side could accumulate 117 runs before getting bundled out on the first delivery of the penultimate over. The new opening pair of Sahibzada Farhan and Babar Azam could not give visitors a steady start as the former walked back in the second over after scoring nine off seven. Following the early hiccup, Babar and Haseebullah Khan registered an anchoring 44-run partnership for the second wicket. The duo appeared in command against Australian bowlers until Adam Zampa got rid of Haseebullah in the seventh over to open the floodgates. The wicketkeeper batter scored 24 off 19 deliveries with the help of three boundaries. Pakistan then lost two more wickets - Usman Khan (3) and skipper Salman Ali Agha (1) - before



their mainstay Babar was cleaned up by Zampa in the 13th over with just 91 runs on the board. Babar remained the top-scorer for Pakistan with a 28-ball 41, which featured four fours. The visitors lost two more

wickets in the next over and consequently slipped further to 92/7. Shaheen Shah Afridi offered some fight with a gutsy 16-run cameo, which included two fours and a six. However, after his dismissal, the green

shirts could add only one run to their total before being swept away by the ruthless Australian attack. Right-arm pacer Aaron Hardie was the standout bowler for Australia, picking up three wickets. Zampa and

Spencer Johnson bagged two each, while Xavier Bartlett and Nathan Ellis shared two between them. For the unversed, Australia have an unassailable 2-0 lead in the ongoing three-match series against Pakistan.

Donald Trump allies make WW3 warning...

FROM PAGE 01

be back in the White House for a second term from 20 January next year. Trump has campaigned on a promise to end the US involvement in wars and instead use taxpayers' money to improve Americans' lives. He has said he will bring the Russia-Ukraine war to an end within 24 hours, without saying how. One thing is certain, though: Trump has always seen himself as a dealmaker and will not want Biden to take any such credit. His son, Donald Trump Jr, was among the first Republicans to respond. "The military industrial complex seems to want to make sure they get World War Three going before my father has a chance to create peace and save lives," he said. Another vocal Trump supporter, Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, condemned Biden, too.

IT industry can't function...

FROM PAGE 01

"Internet will never be shut down if VPN is registered." The PTA chairman said: "Whenever the internet has to be shut down, the industry suffers." He apprised the lawmakers that 25,000 VPNs have been registered so far, adding that the PTA had blocked over 0.5 million obscene websites. Stressing the need for registration of illegal encrypted networks, the PTA chairman said: "20 million Pakistanis attempted to access obscene websites last Sunday." It is pertinent to mention here that the "virtual tunnel" is widely used to access content that may be inaccessible or blocked for internet users. "VPN are not blocked so far in the country," he added.

CII chairman clears the air about VPN...

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or immoral sites, character assassination is done, statements are being made against national security, or if various incidents of religious blasphemy are being spread through it, then [using] it would be totally un-Islamic." "However, if it is being used for education, communication, or conveying positive messages, then no harm is being considered in that," he clarified. "If you register the VPN and do positive activity or even positive criticism, then there is no harm in it," Naemi further said. The cleric added, "The [VPN] hides location [and] who is working from where. So, basically, when we talk about these technological matters, in reality, its action decides if it is Islamic or un-Islamic."

Section 144 imposed in Islamabad

FROM PAGE 01

Section 144 was previously imposed in Islamabad due to curb air pollution during the ongoing smog crisis in the capital city. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has finalised its strategy for a 'peaceful' protest on November 24, with plans to 'storm' Islamabad from all directions. According to sources, the PTI leadership is determined to reach Islamabad at any cost, and significant responsibilities have been assigned to the party's leadership in Islamabad and Rawalpindi regions. Sources indicate that the protest will begin with regional leadership organising mass demonstrations in Rawalpindi and Islamabad until the convoys from other provinces arrive.

ATC indicts Qureshi...

FROM PAGE 01

the case registered at Race Course Police Station. The court has also summoned witnesses for the next hearing. On May 9 last year, following the arrest of Imran Khan from the Islamabad High Court in the Al-Qadir Trust case, PTI organised nationwide protests. Subsequently, 1,900 individuals involved in clashes, vandalism, and arson across the country were arrested, and cases were registered against Imran Khan, party leaders, and workers.

Briefs

Gold prices
up by
Rs.2,500 per
tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.2,500 and was sold at Rs.269,900 on Monday against its sale at Rs. 267,400, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went up by Rs.2,144 to Rs.231,396 from Rs.229,252 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold increased to Rs.212,113 from Rs.210,148. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3250 and Rs.2,786 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$25 to \$2,587 from \$2,562, the Association reported.—APP

PSX gains
232 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 232 points, a positive change of 0.24 percent, closing at 94,995.67 points as compared to 94,763.64 points on the last trading day. A total of 765,206,618 shares were traded during the day as compared to 893,170,249 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 23.924 billion against Rs.30.811 billion on the last trading day. As many as 457 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 192 of them recorded gains and 220 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 45 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 85,137,088 shares at Rs 9.24 per share, Fauji Foods Limited with 60,498,160 shares at Rs 11.55 per share and K-Electric Limited with 58,382,098 shares at Rs.5.17 per share.—APP

Rupee sheds
19 paise
against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated 19 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.85 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.66. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.40 and Rs 278.90 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by 48 paise to close at Rs 293.01 against the last day's closing of Rs 293.49, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.79, whereas a decline of 96 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 350.58 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 351.54. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 05 and 09 paise to close at Rs 75.64 and Rs 74.02 respectively.—APP

Textile exports
increases by
10.44% in 4
months

ISLAMABAD: Textile exports witnessed an increase of 10.44 percent during the first four months of the current financial year (2024-25) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The textile exports from the country were recorded at US \$ 6,146.105 million during July-October (2024-25) against the exports of US \$ 5,565.058 million during July-October (2023-24).

The textile commodities that contributed in trade growth included cotton cloth the export of which increased by 5.25 percent to \$ 679.427 million from \$ 645.535 million while the export of knitwear surged by 18.69 percent to \$ 1,759.991 million from \$ 1,482.862 million. The other commodities that witnessed growth in trade included bed wear, the export of which rose by 13.17 percent to \$ 1,069.690 million from \$ 945.181 million, towels by 5.47 percent to \$ 356.461 million from \$ 337.987 million, tents, canvas, and tarpaulin up by 7.02 percent to \$ 40.412 million this year compared to the exports of \$ 37.763 million last year.—APP

Maritime equipment conference

Pak showcases potential in offshore wind power sector

Representing Pakistan at the Conference, Ambassador Khalil Hashmi highlighted Pakistan's potential in renewable energy and offshore sector. In his address at a side seminar, he spoke about Pakistan's strategic advantages as a coastal nation and called for enhanced bilateral collaboration in technology, infrastructure, and investment

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan showcased its potential in renewable energy and offshore wind power development at World Maritime Equipment Conference held in Fujian. Representing Pakistan at the Conference, Ambassador Khalil Hashmi highlighted Pakistan's potential in renewable energy and offshore sector. In his address at a side seminar, he spoke about Pakistan's strategic advantages as a coastal nation and called for enhanced bilateral collaboration in technology, infrastructure, and investment. The visit included high-level meetings, a tour of Fujian's urban and maritime advancements, and discussions aimed at deepening ties within the Pakistan-China bilateral framework. Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. Speaking at the Seminar on High-Quality Development of Offshore Wind Power Supply Chain, Ambassador Hashmi emphasized Pakistan's natural advantages, including its extensive coastline of over 1,000 kilometers, and reiterated the country's strong commitment to transitioning to renewable energy sources. Acknowledging China's rapid advancements in the offshore wind industry, the Ambassador stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral cooperation through technology exchanges, infrastructure development, and regulatory support. He invited Chinese investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan's burgeoning offshore wind energy sector. Ambassador Hashmi also met with senior officials from Fuzhou, including the city's top political leader, Ms. Guo Ningning. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing Pakistan-China relations and strengthening ties between



between Pakistan and Fuzhou under the broader bilateral framework. The Ambassador highlighted Pakistan's renewed focus on B2B engagement with China, guided by Pakistani leadership, and expressed his determination to

boost collaboration between business enterprises in the two countries. In addition to participating in the conference, Ambassador Hashmi toured the World Maritime Equipment Conference and received briefings on

urban planning, shipbuilding, and Fujian's cultural and economic landscape. Fujian province, located in Southern China, serves as a hub for China's maritime industry advancements, poverty alleviation efforts, and sustaina-

ble development initiatives. Chinese President Xi Jinping spent approximately 17 years serving in various leadership roles within the province, including in Fuzhou, leaving a lasting impact on its development trajectory.

Bangladesh to
seek extradition of
ousted Hasina

Hasina has been summoned to appear in court in Dhaka on Monday to face charges of "massacres, killings, and crimes against humanity", but she remains in exile in India

DHAKA: Bangladesh will seek the extradition of ousted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina who was toppled in a revolution in August and fled to India, interim leader Muhammad Yunus said. Dhaka has already issued an arrest warrant for 77-year-old Hasina – last seen arriving in neighbouring India after fleeing by helicopter as crowds stormed her palace. Hasina has been summoned to appear in court in Dhaka on Monday to face charges of "massacres, killings, and crimes against humanity", but she remains in exile in India. Yunus said his administration was focused on ensuring those guilty of cracking down on the protests to oust Hasina faced justice. Several of her former government ministers, who were detained and held in custody, are expected in court to face similar charges. "We have already taken initiatives to try those responsible for enforced disappearances, murders, and the mass killings during the July-August uprising," Yunus said. The 84-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner was appointed to lead the government as "chief advisor" on August 9, days after the end of Hasina's 15 years of iron-fisted rule. Yunus, in a speech to the nation marking 100 days in power since a student-led revolution, said he had spoken to Karim Khan, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. "We will seek the extradition of the ousted autocrat from India," Yunus said, referring to Hasina. Earlier this month, Bangladesh said it would request an Interpol "red notice" alert for fugitive leaders of Hasina's regime. Red notices issued by the global police body alert law enforcement agencies worldwide about fugitives. India is a member of Interpol, but the red notice does not mean New Delhi must hand Hasina over.—APP

RCCI organizes Belgian business
contact day, catalogue exhibition

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) hosted the Belgian Business Contact Day and Catalogue Exhibition at the Chamber House. The event was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Belgium, Charles-Idesbald Van Der Gracht De Rommer-

swael, who served as the chief guest. Prominent attendees included RCCI Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, Executive Committee Members, Mr. Laurent de Greef (First Secretary - Political), Mr. Gilles Hachez (First Secretary - Consular), Trade Commissioner Abid Husain, and Commercial Officer Shaukat Niazi, along with other RCCI members.

In his welcome address, RCCI President Usman Shaukat highlighted RCCI's recent activities and upcoming initiatives. He emphasized the importance of Belgium as a key trading partner for Pakistan within the European Union and discussed potential opportunities for joint ventures and investment in Pakistan. He assured continued collaboration with the Belgian Embassy to foster private-sector partnerships. The catalogue exhibition showcased books, magazines, and trade directories, offering insights into major sectors such as tourism, education, services, agro-food processing, chemicals, surgical instruments, paper and paperboard, dairy, and renewable energy. Visitors explored avenues for mutual growth and collaboration through the exhibits.

Cell moot held in Beijing to all-round upgrade biotech industry
CBIC set up forums on cell industry diversification, cell therapy, organoid new drug development and precision medicine, extracellular vesicle research and clinical application, stem cell clinical and industrial transformation, stem cells and regenerative medicine

DNA

BEIJING: The 11th Cell Biology Industry Conference (CBIC) opened in Beijing, attracting more than 3,000 guests from clinical research institutions, hospitals, universities, leading enterprises, biotechnology companies, and investment and financing institutions to attended it. CBIC set up forums on cell industry diversification, cell therapy, organoid new drug development and precision medicine, extracellular vesicle research and clinical application, stem cell clinical and industrial transformation, stem

cells and regenerative medicine. In 2024, the Chinese government work report proposed to vigorously develop new quality productive forces in the field of bioscience, such as gene editing, cell technology, and synthetic biology, with the cell biology industry has attracted great attention, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Meanwhile, Beijing has decided to strengthen the industrial layout of cell gene therapy and synthetic biology manufacturing. Just half a month ago, the world first international standard for stem cell data management ISO 8472-1:2024, led by Chinese experts and jointly

developed by experts from Japan, South Korea, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, France and other countries, was officially released in Beijing. Cell therapy is known as the third revolution in medical history. The market size of China cell medical health industry reached 14.2 billion yuan in 2023, and is expected to increase to 174.5 billion yuan by 2032, with a compound annual growth rate of 32.1%, far exceeding the global average. The reporter learned that in immune cell therapy, the CART is particularly eye-catching. Since the launch of China first CART

product in 2021, 6 CART products have been approved, accounting for more than 50% of similar products worldwide. Just a month ago, the results of a Chinese research team on the world first universal CART cells were published on the headlines of Nature. The researchers used T cells from healthy donors and modified them with CRISPR-Cas9 genetic engineering to prepare a new generation of allogeneic universal CART cells, thereby realizing the mass production of such cells, greatly reducing the waiting time and production costs for patients with difficult miscellaneous diseases. As

of April 2024, more than 100 cell gene, and RNA-related products have been approved for marketing worldwide, as well as more than 3,700 products are in the pre-clinical or clinical development stage. Data from ClinicalTrials.gov showed that China ranks second in the world in the number of cell therapy clinical trials and the number of products registered, only following the United States. Besides, in the past decade, the number of registered cell medicine-related companies in China has continued to grow, reaching 33,000 in 2023, a record high in the past decade.

Yemen rebels
warn German
ships over
Red Sea,
Israeli ports

BERLIN: Yemen's Houthi rebels have threatened to hit vessels of German shipping firms passing near the Red Sea or using Israeli ports, the German shipowners' association VDR said Monday. The Houthis have waged a campaign against international shipping to show solidarity with Hamas, firing drones and missiles at ships in the Red Sea, a vital route for international trade. The emailed warnings sent to the German industry body and cargo carriers in recent months were "attempts at intimidation", VDR executive Irina Haesler said. The threats were "directed against ships that call at Israeli ports, as well as against those that pass through the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean", the association said. "Regardless of their location, ships with supposed links to Israel are considered potential targets," it said. Anger over Israel's campaign in Gaza, which began after an unprecedented Hamas attack on October 7, has stoked violence involving Iran-backed groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. One such email from the Houthis, seen by AFP, warned shipowners of "a naval blockade on the Israeli enemy".—APP

Emergency
declared as
smog in New
Delhi hits
highest level

NEW DELHI: New Delhi was in a medical emergency on Monday as toxic smog engulfing the Indian capital reached the highest level this year, prompting authorities to close schools and urge people to stay indoors. Pollution in Delhi and the surrounding metropolitan area – home to around 55 million people – reached the "severe plus" category as some areas reached an Air Quality Index score of 484, this year's highest, according to the Central Pollution Control Board. On the AQI scale from 0 to 500, good air quality is represented by levels below 50, while levels above 300 are dangerous. Delhi was ranked as the most polluted city in the world on Monday by Swiss group IQAir, with a concentration of PM 2.5, 138.4 times higher than the World Health Organization's recommended levels. "All of North India has been plunged into a medical emergency," Delhi Chief Minister Atishi Marlena Singh said in a press conference, adding that many cities were "reeling under severe levels of pollution." She said farm fires, where stubble left after harvesting rice is burnt to clear fields, were causing the extreme levels of pollution.—APP

Russian
missile attack
on Ukraine's
Odesa kills
10, injures 44

KYIV: A Russian missile attack killed 10 people and wounded 44 in Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa on Monday, local governor Oleh Kiper and national police said. Four children were among the wounded while three people were in serious condition, Kiper said on the Telegram messenger. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Telegram that a Russian ballistic missile had hit a residential neighbourhood, and that an apartment building, a university building and an administrative building had been damaged. "These are not random strikes - these are show strikes. After calls and meetings with Putin, after all the false gossip in the media about supposedly 'refraining' from strikes, Russia is showing what it is really interested in: only war," he said. National police said that seven police officers, a medic and two residents had been killed, and 14 police officers were among the wounded. Russia unleashed its largest overnight missile attack on Ukraine in almost three months on Sunday, killing seven people and further hobbling an already damaged energy system.—APP

Briefs

LHC summons Punjab chief secretary

DNA
LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Monday summoned the Punjab chief secretary in contempt of court petition for not giving special allowance to the corps of Counter Terrorism Department. Justice Muhammad Sajid Mehmood Sethi conducted the hearing on the petition of over 200 officials of CTD. Advocate Hafiz Tariq Nasim appeared on behalf of the petitioner. The lawyer argued that the government didn't pay the special allowance to CTD officials despite the clear orders of the Lahore High Court. The court summoned the Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman in-person to submit the reply in the case. Earlier, the CTD officials had approached the court seeking special allowance from the government.

'Everything is fair in love and Pakistan'

NAZIR SYAL
KARACHI: A Sindh High Court (SHC) judge while hearing a plea against illegal construction of a plaza made an interesting remark that "everything is fair in love and Pakistan". Justice Zafar Rajput heard the case against illegal construction of a plaza near Mazar-e-Quaid. The petitioner's lawyer argued that an illegal plaza being built over Plot 211 in Jamshed Town was a breach of the sanctity of the mausoleum. He said an advertisement had also been published for bookings in the plaza. The court inquired what would happen with the publication of advertisement for bookings. The counsel said a layman could consider the project legal after publication of such advertisements. "How can you believe in mere advertisement," Justice Rajput questioned the lawyer. "Everything is fair in love and Pakistan," he remarked in a lighter vein. The court sought more arguments on the petition and adjourned further hearing for three weeks.

Aleema slams ex-CJP Faez Issa

DNA
RAWALPINDI: Aleema Khan, the elder sister of Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, criticised the erstwhile former chief minister of Pakistan, Justice Qazi Faez Issa for some of his controversial verdicts. Speaking to the media outside Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, where Imran Khan has been incarcerated since August 5, 2023, Aleema Khan said media, judiciary and people are three pillars of democracy and Justice Faez Issa destroyed all three of them. She said the media has been stifled and VPNs have been banned in the country. She said that people's mandate was stolen in the February 8 elections and thieves were brought into the parliament to rule the country. She quoted Imran Khan as saying that people have been enslaved and they should come out on November 24 for their freedom and for the freedom of their children. She said that Imran Khan has not just asked PTI workers and leaders to come out on November 24; he has asked the entire nation to join the anti-government protests. She also said that Imran Khan has called upon the overseas Pakistanis to stage protests in their respective countries for the sake of Pakistan. She said that people should come out against the cruelty they were being subjected to and they should say it loud that this reign of terror is not acceptable.

Pakistan desires to deepen partnership with US: Ahsan

Ahsan highlights climate change, energy sustainability, food security issues

KHAYAM ABBASI
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday highlighted the importance of addressing global challenges such as climate change, energy sustainability and food security while discussing future cooperation between Pakistan and the United States. Addressing an event organized by USAID to mark the longstanding US infrastructure development support to Pakistan, he called for collaborative research in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and modern infrastructure to build a more resilient future. He also stressed the need for engaging the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in the United States to strengthen cultural, academic and economic ties between the two countries, a news release said. "Pakistan, with its strategic location at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, is a natural partner for the United States in promoting regional connectivity and economic integration," Ahsan Iqbal said. The minister expressed optimism about revitalizing the US Pakistan partnership under the new US administration, stating that mutual respect and constructive engagement was the key to addressing shared challenges and unlocking new opportunities for growth. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to building a future of peace, prosperity and progress in collaboration with the United States. He said significant contributions of the United States to Pakistan's infrastructure projects reflected on the enduring strategic importance of



the bilateral relationship, and outlined a roadmap for future cooperation under the leadership of the new US President. The minister highlighted the historical foundation of US-Pakistan relations, which began with defense cooperation and evolved into a robust development partnership. He stressed the importance of fostering a new dimension of collaboration focused on education, infrastructure and economic development to address emerging global challenges. In line with the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he said, Pakistan would establish friendly and cordial relations with all nations, particularly the United States, which always stood for justice and humanity. Ahsan Iqbal lauded the transformational impact of United States supported infrastructure projects in Pakistan, citing the iconic Mangla and Tarbela dams that continued to serve as lifelines for the agriculture and energy sectors. He also mentioned US funded initiatives in healthcare, education and transportation sectors, which significantly improved the quality of life for millions. He viewed these projects not only addressed Pakistan's immediate needs but also laid the foundation for long-term sustainable growth. The minister also recalled the US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor, launched during the PMLN government tenure of 2013-18, describing it as a 'critical initiative' to strengthen academic and research collaborations. He acknowledged the Fulbright Scholarship program, the largest in the world for Pakistan, as a transformative opportunity that empowered thousands of Pakistanis to contribute meaningfully to national progress.

Kundi barred from attending convocation

SHAMIM SHAHID
PESHAWAR: The ongoing discord between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has escalated significantly as the CM barred the Governor from attending the convocation ceremony of Gomal Medical College in his hometown as the chief guest. Sources revealed that the college administration had invited Governor Faisal Kundi to the convocation as the guest of honour. However, under pressure from the Chief Minister, the college administration cancelled the programme at the last minute and informed the Governor not to attend the event. Further intensifying the dispute, the provincial health department allegedly sealed a Red Crescent dispensary located near Governor Kundi's residence. The KP governor was scheduled to inaugurate the facility on Saturday. Governor Faisal Kundi is currently visiting his hometown, Dera Ismail Khan, where he planned to attend various official and non-official events. However, sources indicate that on the Chief Minister's orders, the local administration restricted the Governor from participating in all official events, leading to what many are calling an affront to the Governor's office.

New guidelines issued by Punjab govt

LAHORE: The Punjab Environmental Department has issued new guidelines following a decrease in the severity of smog in the region. As per the reports, the department has announced changes to operating hours for hotels and restaurants. Restaurants and hotels will now be allowed to offer dine-in and outdoor services until 10 pm extended from the previous 4 pm deadline due to the reduction in smog intensity. The Environmental Department has also clarified that there will be no restrictions on home delivery services. The improvement in air quality has been attributed to rainfall and changes in wind speed and direction. Following the review of the November 15 order, the divisional commissioners and DCs have been instructed to ensure the implementation of the revised restrictions. Earlier on November 18, the Punjab government announced that schools in parts of the province will reopen tomorrow after easing in smog situation. - DNA

Plea seeking to declare candidates successful with 50% votes rejected

Constitutional bench dismisses petition seeking mandatory political affiliation for independent candidates
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's seven-member constitutional bench on Monday heard multiple pending cases before the apex court. The bench, led by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, includes Justice Ayesha Malik, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Musarrat Haili. During the hearing today, the court dismissed the petition seeking to declare candidates receiving over 50% of votes as successful in elections. The petitioner, Advocate Chaudhry Akram, was also slapped with a Rs20,000 fine for filing a "frivolous" petition.

Justice Mazhar questioned under which constitutional provision a candidate must secure 50% of votes to win. He emphasised that election outcomes are determined by the votes cast. Justice Ayesha asked which fundamental right of the petitioner was violated and which constitutional provisions were being breached. She added that the Supreme Court does not have the authority to legislate new laws. The petitioner argued that Parliament decides the course of people's lives, to which Justice Khan responded that Parliament does not make such decisions. Justice Haili remarked that everyone has the right to vote but noted that people often watch television on polling day instead of voting. She stated that if voters fail to cast their votes, it reflects their own shortcomings. Justice Mandokhail inquired if the petitioner had cast their vote in the February 2024 election. When the petitioner admitted they had not, Justice Mandokhail remarked

that such behaviour disrespects the Constitution. The bench then imposed a Rs20,000 fine for frivolous litigation, with Justice Khan dismissing the petitioner's suggestion of a Rs100 billion penalty to reduce the national debt, pointing out the petitioner's inability to pay such an amount. The seven-member bench also heard a plea regarding making it mandatory for independent candidates to join political parties. The petitioner appeared before the bench via video link. Justice Khan remarked that the permission granted to the petitioner to appear on court premises should suffice. The petitioner acknowledged that the matter had already been resolved, rendering their appeal ineffective. Subsequently, the constitutional bench dismissed the petition on the grounds of ineffectiveness. During the hearing on a plea challenging the Income Levy Tax Act 2013, the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) counsel said many parties involved in the cases have not received notices.

Australian senator censured for heckling King

SYDNEY: Australian lawmakers have voted to censure an Aboriginal senator who heckled King Charles during his visit to Canberra last month, to express their "profound disapproval" of her protest. Lidia Thorpe shouted "you are not my King" and "this is not your land" shortly after the King addressed the Great Hall of Parliament, in an effort to highlight the impacts of British colonisation. The Senate's censure, which passed 46-12, described Thorpe's actions as "disrespectful and disruptive" and said they should disqualify her from representing the chamber as a member of any delegation. A censure motion is politically symbolic but carries no constitutional or legal weight. Shortly after the Senate vote on Monday, Thorpe told reporters she had been denied her right to respond in the chamber due to a flight delay. "The British Crown committed heinous crimes against the first peoples of this country... I will not be silent," the independent senator said. Her protest last month drew immediate ire from across the political aisle, as well as from some prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders. But it also drew praise from some activists who argued that it highlighted the plight of Australia's first inhabitants, who endured colonial violence and still face acute disadvantages in terms of health, wealth, education, and life expectancy compared to non-Indigenous Australians. Thorpe is among those who have advocated for a treaty between Australia's government and its first inhabitants. - Agencies

G20 leaders gather to discuss wars, climate

Lula da Silva using hosting duties to promote issues like fighting hunger, climate change and taxing super-rich
RIO DE JANEIRO: G20 leaders began arriving for a summit in Brazil on Monday to try reignite deadlocked climate talks and overcome their differences on the Middle East and Ukraine wars ahead of Donald Trump's return to the White House. US President Joe Biden will attend his last summit of the world's leading economies, but as a lame duck leader eclipsed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, the most influential leader at this year's meeting. Brazil's left-wing President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is using his hosting duties to promote issues close to his heart, including fighting hunger and climate change and taxing the super-rich. But the wars which have bitterly divided G20 members are also set to feature prominently in the discussions. A Brazilian foreign ministry source said Monday that some countries wanted to renegotiate a draft summit communique. "For Brazil and other countries the text is already finalised, but some countries want to open up some points on wars and climate," he told AFP. - Agencies

'India should share its concerns if there's any'

"Champions Trophy tour has not been cancelled but rescheduled," says Mohsin Naqvi
BUREAU REPORT
LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has said that Pakistan is ready to address India's concerns about crossing the border to play in the Champions Trophy 2025. "If India has concerns, it should inform us, we will address its reservations," Naqvi, who also holds the portfolio of interior minister, told reporters at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Monday. India has reportedly rejected visiting Pakistan for the mega tournament with Islamabad, which has shown courtage previously, standing firm on its stance of hosting the event as multiple other nations have already visited for matches. The International Cricket Council (ICC) is currently left with limited options after the PCB responded to an email informing Pakistan about India's decision not to travel to the neighbouring country for the Champions Trophy. Sources told Geo News that after obtaining answers from the ICC, the PCB plans to seek legal advice and consult the government for guidance in formulating its next steps. PCB Chairman Naqvi reaffirmed that the Champions Trophy will be held in Pakistan, stating: "We are committed to hosting the tournament in Pakistan as planned." He clarified that the PCB is in direct communication with the ICC and is awaiting their response. Naqvi emphasised the separation of sports and politics, saying: "Sports and politics are entirely distinct matters." He also urged a prompt announcement of the tournament schedule, noting the importance of completing the necessary preparations on time. Speaking about recent developments, Naqvi reassured that the Champions Trophy tour has not been cancelled but rescheduled, adding that Pakistan remains dedicated to hosting the event successfully. The tour of the Champions Trophy had begun in Islamabad two days ago after the itinerary for the Pakistan leg was revised by the ICC following objections from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). The revised schedule includes new stops such as Taxila, Khanpur, Abbottabad, Nathia Gali, and Karachi, replacing the initially announced locations of Muzaffarabad, Hunza, and Skardu.

Israeli strikes kill 18 Palestinians in Gaza

Israeli military targets include tents housing displaced families, say medics
CAIRO: Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip killed 18 Palestinians on Monday, including six people who were killed in attacks on tents housing displaced families, medics said. Four people, two of them children, were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a tent encampment in the coastal area of Al-Mawasi, designated as a humanitarian zone, while two were killed in temporary shelters in the southern city of Rafah and another in drone fire, health officials said. In Beit Lahiyah town in northern Gaza, medics said an Israeli missile struck a house, killing at least two people and wounding several others. On Sunday, medics and residents said dozens of people were killed or wounded in an Israeli airstrike on a multi-floor residential building in the town. The Israeli military, which has been fighting Palestinian militant group Hamas in Gaza since October 2023, said it conducted strikes on "terrorist targets," in Beit Lahiyah. An Israeli airstrike on a house in Gaza City killed five people and wounded 10 others, medics said. Later on Monday, an Israeli air strike killed four people in the Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip, they added. There has been no Israeli comment on Monday's incidents. In Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, relatives of Palestinians killed in an Israeli airstrike on tents housing displaced families sat beside bodies wrapped in blankets and white shrouds to pay farewell before walking them to graves. "My brother wasn't the only one; many others have been martyred in this brutal way - children torn to pieces, civilians shredded. They weren't carrying weapons or even know 'the resistance', yet they were ripped apart into fragments," said Mohammed Aboul Hassan, who lost his brother in the attack. "We remain steadfast, patient, and resilient, and by the will of God, we will never falter. We will stay steadfast and patient," he told Reuters. The Israeli army sent tanks and soldiers into Beit Lahiyah and the nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Jabalia, the largest of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, early last month in what it said was a campaign to fight Hamas militants waging attacks and prevent them from regrouping. Hussam Abu Safiya, the director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiyah, said the hospital was under siege by Israeli forces and the World Health Organization had been unable to deliver supplies of food, medicine and surgical equipment. Cases of malnutrition among children were increasing, he said, and the hospital was operating at a minimal level. "We receive daily distress calls, but we are unable to assist them due to the lack of ambulances, and the situation is catastrophic," he said. "Yesterday, I received a distress call from women and children trapped under the rubble, and due to my inability to help them, they are now among the martyrs (dead)." - Agencies

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