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Verstappen wins in Qatar Grand prix

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After 'decline' in inflation

PM hopeful of further cut in policy rate

Shehbaz Sharif urges ministers to focus on fiscal growth after achieving initial milestones of economic stability

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has lauded a record decline in inflation to 4.9% after almost six-and-a-half years, expressing hope that the remarkable development will lead to further cuts in the key policy rate. Beating official forecasts, Pakistan's inflation slowed to 4.9% year-on-year in November 2024, down from 7.2% in October, marking its lowest level in six-and-a-half years, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Monday. "It is beyond imagination," said the premier addressing a federal cabinet session in Islamabad on Monday, adding that inflation is a tool that can be used to improve the financial condition of the masses, while at the same time the increase in inflation increases the hardship of poor people. Recalling the previous tenure of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), he said that the inflation stood at 3.5% under the leadership of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

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Strategic partnership with KSA expanding PM expresses desire to expand cooperation with Saudi Arabia

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed his satisfaction with the progress in cooperation and investment projects between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, hailing the longstanding friendship between the two nations. Chairing a review meeting, the prime minister highlighted that Pakistan's collaboration with Saudi Arabia continued to grow across various sectors, underscoring the strategic partnership between the two countries. "Saudi Arabia has been a reliable partner in Pakistan's challenging times, and we are committed to deepening this cooperation," Prime Minister Shehbaz said. The meeting also included a briefing on the remarkable progress of bilateral investments. The meeting was briefed about the progress on bilateral cooperation in various fields in the second meeting of the Pakistan Saudi Arabia Joint Task Force held in November. It was informed that within a short span of time,

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs federal cabinet meeting. - DNA

PM leaves for Saudi Arabia today

PM to participate in "One Water Summit"

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to pay a two-day visit to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from today December 3-4 to participate in the "One Water Summit." A joint initiative of Saudi Arabia, France, Kazakhstan, and the World Bank, the summit aims to promote global cooperation and a coherent international approach towards water resource management through high-level political commitments, according to a curtain raiser issued by the Foreign Office.

At the Summit, the prime minister will deliver a keynote address at a roundtable focusing on restoration, preservation, and adaptation in the context of freshwater resources and wetlands. He will also highlight the steps being taken by Pakistan to promote water conservation, strengthen climate resilience, improve water quality, create livelihoods, and conserve biodiversity. Prime Minister Shehbaz will underline the importance of international cooperation to tackle the impact of climate-induced floods, erratic and extreme weather patterns, and heat stress on water resources and ecosystems. He will also call for meaningful international collaboration for sustainable water resource management. On the sidelines of the event, the prime minister is expected to hold bilateral meetings and engagements.

Imran Khan condemns crackdown

PTI rules out further protests in near future

PTI founder expressed sorrow over deaths of protesters, law enforcers during final call protest, he says

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said on Monday that incarcerated party founder Imran Khan expressed sorrow over the casualties during a crackdown on the "final call" protesters in Islamabad and ordered the PTI lawmakers to take up the issue in both houses of parliament. Speaking to the media after meeting jailed PTI founder in Adialia Jail, the party chief said Khan has directed to submit a requisition for the National Assembly and Senate session to discuss and protest over the deaths of protesters. The former ruling party's much-hyped protest in Islamabad, aimed at

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Imran trusts Bushra, not the 'compromised' leaders, says aides

Khan frustrated in prison as he feels his instructions being blocked by senior leadership, says Yousafzai

AGENCIES

LONDON: Two close aides of Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi have said that the imprisoned former prime minister doesn't trust senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership for diluting and manipulating his instructions and for this reason he decided to

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Briefs

PTI makes Changes to JCP

Barrister Gohar or Latif Khosa expected to step in for Omar Ayub

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The PTI temporarily reassigned its representatives to the Judicial Commission, sources within the party confirmed on Monday. According to the sources, Barrister Ali Zafar will replace Shibli Faraz as PTI's Senate representative in the commission's proceedings. Additionally, either Barrister Gohar or Latif Khosa is expected to step in for Omar Ayub. Insiders within the party cited the legal challenges faced by Omar Ayub and Shibli Faraz as the reason for their replacement. Both leaders are dealing with multiple cases and are awaiting bail. Once their legal issues are resolved, they are expected to resume their roles as PTI's representatives in Judicial Commission.

Internet slowdown irks users

The slowdown disrupts activities of students and freelancers

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The internet users in various cities across Pakistan are grappling with persistent connectivity issues, causing a significant inconvenience. In cities like Lahore, the slowdown has disrupted the activities of students and freelancers. WhatsApp users are facing sever difficulties in downloading contents while the Chairman of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) remains unable to provide explanation for the slow speed. Meanwhile, the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad have seen improvement, with better download speed.

Audio leaks case

Government seeks more time on inquiry

"This matter was to be presented in the cabinet, but it could not due to the law and order situation in Islamabad," he went on to say, referring to last week's clashes between security forces and PTI protesters across the federal capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court (SC) on Monday allowed the Additional Attorney General (AAG) Aamir Rehman more time to seek government directives regarding the audio leaks case. On Nov 22, the Constitutional Bench of the SC ordered the government to state whether it intends to continue with the inquiry commission constituted in the wake of audio leaks. On August 19, the SC suspended the IHC's orders in the audio leaks case. Also in August, the top court had observed that a hearing of the three-man inquiry commission formed to probe the veracity of audio leaks was never fixed after its last hearing on May 27, 2023. Monday's hearing was taken up by all members of the Constitutional Bench except Justice Ayesha Malik. At the outset of the hearing, the federal government

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Imran arrested in 7 new cases linked to PTI protests

Rawalpindi ATC sends already incarcerated PTI founder on judicial remand in all cases

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan was arrested in seven new cases linked to the recent protests of the party. The former prime minister was presented before an anti-terrorism court judge at Adialia jail, where he has been incarcerated for months, after the completion of six-day physical remand in a

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Mental health: challenges and misconceptions

Prof. Asad Nizami, a distinguished leader in Pakistan's mental health field, recently granted an exclusive interview to Centreline and Daily Islamabad POST. Below is the complete text of his interview

INTERVIEW

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

1: What inspired you to become a psychiatrist, and what motivate you to continue in this field?

My journey into psychiatry began back in medical college at Rawalpindi Medical College - now Rawalpindi Medical University. Over those five years, I found myself deeply fascinated by the human brain above all one organs. While studying the human body and its various organs, the brain stood out to me as uniquely complex and enigmatic. This brain was unlike any other, holding layers of mystery and the incredible capacity to shape thoughts, emotions, and behavior. My fascination only grew stronger after graduation during my year long house job, where my interest in neurology solidified.

I owe a great deal to my mentor and teacher, Professor Malik Hussain Mubasher, the founder of the Institute of Psychiatry, which he established in 1973. His guidance and the foundation he laid for the field of psychiatry has left an enduring legacy, now completed its 51 years of excellence. Inspired by Professor Mubasher, I realized that psy-

chiatry offered a distinct approach to understand the brain and human behavior. What drew me to psychiatry was the diversity and complexity of the challenges that the human mind presented. Each person brought a new kind of problem, and each required a unique solution. This challenge has kept me engaged and motivated in my specialty; My fascination with the human mind and the constant learning in mental health have become a lifelong commitment.

2: What aspects of psychiatry do you find most rewarding and which do you find most challenging?

Historically, decades ago, people often believed they understood the causes of all kinds of illnesses. If someone had a fever or tuberculosis, there was usually a tangible explanation. However, when someone exhibited unusual behaviors - waking up shouting, being abusive, or acting erratically - people attributed it to a supernatural influence.

Mental health has long been stigmatized. Over time, though, we've progressed from viewing it solely through the lens of psychiatry to a broader understanding of mental well-being. For example, it wasn't until 2001 that the WHO released its first comprehensive report on mental health.



Before that, there was limited understanding of how to support people with mental health issues on a global scale. While the stigma around mental health persists, it has lessened considerably. In Pakistan, the mental health field still faces significant challenges. There are only about 900 psychiatrists in a country with a population exceeding 220 million - far fewer than required. With the rising prevalence of mental health issues, this is a very low ratio. One of the main reasons for this shortage is the career preferences of medical students. Many aspire to become surgeons, medical specialists, or gynecologists rather than choosing psychiatry.

3: What are your primary objectives

for organizing the International Psychiatry Conference 2024 Islamabad?

The Pakistan Psychiatric Society's International Conference occurs biennially, rotating through each of the six regional chapters. This year, from November 22nd to 24th, the Institute of Psychiatry at Rawalpindi Medical University is honored to host this prestigious gathering. One key question we always face is: what are the tangible outcomes of these conferences? Are we producing results that drive meaningful change? This time, we aim to achieve that. The theme I proposed over a year ago, "From Mental Health to Global Mental Health," focuses on building connections and collaboration across sectors. Mental health cannot function in isolation - it requires integrated efforts with Governmental, the World Health Organization, Health and Education sectors, NGOs, and other related organizations. What makes this year's conference unique is its outcome-oriented approach. Each session will culminate in a policy document. For instance, a session on public mental health will not just end with discussions but it will generate recommendations and actionable policies. Each session chair will draft these documents with support from the Ministry

of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, with the goal of embedding these ideas into Governmental Policy. Our sessions will cover diverse topics, from creative and innovative mental health strategies to addressing controversies. We'll explore pressing issues related to legal frameworks, such as sentencing and care for individuals with mental illnesses. Hot-button topics like the impact of mental health on issues of sexual identity, and difficulties faced by marginalized communities, will also be on the table.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of mental health outreach, and we now understand that remote support is vital. This conference seeks to capitalize on these insights, uniting experts to discuss sustainable, effective mental health solutions. We aim for actionable outcomes that the Government can champion and incorporate into long-term Policies. To foster a comprehensive perspective, we've invited Ambassadors from various Embassies in Pakistan, offering them insight into mental health challenges both globally and within our region. With support from the planning division, we aim to implement a 10-year National Mental Health Policy to promote sustained improvements in mental healthcare nationwide.

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Head Constable martyred as police van attacked

Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, strongly condemned the incidents of firing on a police mobile van and a check post in Dera Ismail Khan, resulting in the martyrdom of Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Mir Ghulam and injuries to other police personnel

DNA

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: A head constable was martyred and two cops sustained injuries as a police mobile van was ambushed in Paharpur Tehsil last night. According to a police spokesman, some unknown militants opened indiscriminate fire at a police mobile van near Mardan-bridge in Pir-Ashaab area of Paharpur. Th police promptly retaliated but all the attackers managed to escape. As a result, Head Constable Mir Ghulam was martyred while two constables got injured. The injured policemen were shifted to District Headquarters Hospital. Later, the funeral prayer of martyred policeman Mir Ghulam was offered here at Ejaz Shaheed Police Lines with full protocol which was attended by Regional Police Officer Jehanzeb Nazir Khan, District Police Officer Nasir

Mehmood, SSP Security Abdul Samad, CTD SP Iftikhar, SP Headquarters Nawab Khan and other officers and officials from police and other civil departments besides the bereaved family members. On this occasion, a smartly-turned out contingent of police presented salutes to the martyred policeman. The RPO, DPO and other police officers laid floral wreaths on the coffins of martyred policeman. They also prayed for martyr's high ranks in Jannah. The RPO and DPO also condoled with the bereaved family and said the culprits of the incident would soon bring to justice. Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, strongly condemned the incidents of firing on a police mobile van and a check post in Dera Ismail Khan, resulting in the martyrdom of Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Mir Ghulam and injuries to other police

personnel. Expressing deep sorrow over the loss, the Chief Minister offered heartfelt condolences to the family of the martyred officer and prayed for the elevation of his rank in the afterlife. He also extended wishes for a speedy recovery to the injured police personnel and directed the district administration to ensure the provision of the best medical care for them. The Chief Minister directed senior police officials to take immediate action to arrest those involved in the attacks and emphasized that the sacrifices of police officers in protecting the lives and property of citizens would not go unnoticed. "Police officers who lay down their lives for public safety deserve our highest respect and gratitude," said chief minister. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to maintaining law and order and ensuring justice for the victims.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf exchanging views with RSNF Western Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Mansour Bin Saud Al-Juaid at Naval HQs.

600,000 laptops distributed among students on merit

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that as many as 600,000 laptops have been provided to the students under the Prime Minister Youth Laptop scheme on merit so far. The Chairman PMYP told state run news agency that 334,556 laptops had been given to males while 265,444 females received the laptops. He added that 100,000 laptops were distributed during the year 2024 including 58,000 to females and 42,000 to male students. Giving province-wise details of the total laptops distribution, he informed that 247,389 laptops were provided to the residents of Punjab, 107,034 to Sindh, 76,094 to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 30,513 Balochistan, 112,270 to the Federal Capital area, 9,290 to FATA and 14,312 laptops had been given to the residents of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Mashhood said the government was working with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission on skill development, especially the provision of education, training and IT skills to youth through youth development programs. "This year, we aim to provide direct training to over two lac youth and indirect training to over six lakh youth to meet the demand for skilled labourers abroad which will enable Pakistan to send skilled youth abroad for positive engagement." Pakistan's cuisine Additionally, through the "Laptop for All" scheme, students can obtain any laptop they want on interest-free loans with easy monthly instalments, he added.—APP

PJN, UNDP organize consultative workshop to strengthen DRCs

ISLAMABAD: The Peace & Justice Network (PJN), in collaboration with the UNDP Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, convened a Malakand Divisional Consultative Workshop aimed at identifying actionable recommendations to strengthen Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) in Swat under EU-funded Deliver Justice Project. Pakistan's cuisine The workshop served as a platform for diverse stakeholders, including representatives from the Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) from Swat, Buner, Shangla, Dir, Chitral, Malakand and Bajaur, judiciary, law enforcement, civil society, local government, and community

leaders, to share insights and develop strategies for enhancing the capacity and efficiency of DRCs. The primary objective was to create a comprehensive action plan to empower DRCs as an effective mechanism for resolving disputes and improving access to justice across the region. During opening sessions, Ms. Caitlin Chittenden Rule of Law & Justice Reforms Specialist, Rule of Law Program UNDP Pakistan and Syed Raza Ali CEO Peace & Justice Network highlighted that the strengthening of Dispute Resolution Councils (DRCs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was crucial to enhancing their ability to serve communities

effectively in resolving disputes. By addressing current gaps—such as inadequate resources, limited training for members, lack of inclusivity, and insufficient public awareness—DRCs can become more efficient, accessible, and responsive to community requirements. Strengthened DRCs not only provide timely and cost-effective justice but also play a vital role in reducing the burden on formal courts and fostering social harmony at the grassroots level. DRCs established by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police (KP) are pivotal in addressing the challenges of access to justice, particularly for marginalized communities in KP.—APP

Call for collective action to eliminate gender-based violence

ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) on Monday organized a special event at its office as part of the ongoing 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

The event aimed to highlight the critical need for collective action to eliminate violence against women and girls, which remains a significant global challenge, said a press release. Speaking at the event, the Executive Director of the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), Syed Kausar Abbas stated that violence against women is a global concern that transcends borders and cultures. Speaking on the occasion, he said that such violence not only violates fundamental human rights but also hinders societal progress and economic development.

"Violence against women is not just a private or domestic issue, it is a structural and systemic problem that impacts the development and prosperity of entire communities" he said. Syed Kausar Abbas said that Orange Day should serve as a reminder to all segments of society to take collective action to eliminate behaviors and attitudes that perpetuate violence against women in homes, workplaces and public spaces. He urged the government to prioritize the implementation of existing laws, such as the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act and called for the introduction of more robust policies to address all forms of gender-based violence. Reflecting on the broader impact of gender equality, Syed Kausar Abbas added, "A peaceful and prosperous society can only emerge when women and men are afforded equal rights, opportunities and protections. Gender equality is not merely a symbol of justice.—APP

2nd investment moot to enhance Pak-Saudi bilateral ties: Consul Gen

The speakers presented positive suggestions in tourism, education, medical, civil aviation, power energy, natural resources and other sectors, Sadia Khan, Consul General Trade and Investment, Jeddah

ISLAMABAD: Consul General of Pakistan in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Khalid Majid highlighted the significance of Pakistan-Saudi strong bilateral relations and recent economic developments. He expressed the hope that 2nd Investment Opportunities Summit and Smart Expo would play a significant role in further strengthening the cause. He was addressing the inaugural session of 2nd Investment Opportunities Summit and Smart Expo as keynote speaker in Jeddah, a press release said. The event was organized by Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry. A large number of Saudi and Pakistani business community members attended the event and visited stalls of various Pakistani companies promoting medical tourism, education, real estate and

hospitality industry. The consul general said that presence of 2.7 million Pakistani diaspora in the Kingdom was a true reflection of the strong bond that had been maintained and nurtured by both the nations throughout these years. Khalid Majid shared that Consulate General of Pakistan has recently, established and operationalized Pakistan Investor Forum as an apex body in Jeddah. The forum was expected to vouch for interests of Pakistani investors and develop linkages with Saudi business communities. Ibrahim Baksh Director Jeddah Vision for Expo and Conference was also present. Addressing the event, PAEI Chairman Fahad Barlas thanked the guests and said that he is deeply grateful to Saudi Arabia and Consul General Khalid Majeed for the

success of the successful Investment Summit and Smart Expo. Cooperated fully. And the credit of this success belongs to him. Khurshid Barlas while addressing the ceremony said that with the support of the current government, there has been a positive change in the cooperation and trade policy with Saudi Arabia and there has been a significant increase between the two countries. In his speech, Consul General Khalid Majid said that the second investment conference Pakistan will be an important milestone in Saudi relations, it is very important to have such conferences between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Other speakers including Syed H. Kazmi, Naeem Waraich, Sardar Tahir Mahmood, Atiqur Rahman and other speakers related to tourism.—APP

CDA chief reviews geo-spatial land survey, encroachment issues

ISLAMABAD: A meeting regarding the Geo-Spatial land survey and encroachment issues was held under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting was attended by the Member (Planning & Development), Member (Estate), Director General (Planning), and the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of CDA, Director (DMA) along with the senior officers from the concerned Wings and formations. During the meeting, Chairman CDA was briefed on the Geo-Spatial Technology project, an initiative aimed at addressing the issues of encroachment on CDA-acquired land, the unregulated growth of informal settlements, and the challenges posed by urban sprawl. The meeting was briefed about the recent geo-spatial survey carried out by CDA with the help of the latest technologies including satellite imagery provided by SUPARCO. The survey was done in key commercial areas, including important markets and commercial hubs of Islamabad, to identify encroachment, violations of building by laws and land use planning. Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, directed that a centralized and unified planning approach be adopted to address the issue of encroachment, violation of building laws and urban sprawl. He emphasized the need for enhanced monitoring through drones with advanced tools for continuous surveillance of land use and urban development. The meeting also discussed the real-time images being used from SUPARCO to help track changes in land usage and identify encroachments as well in the city. The meeting further discussed the importance of devising Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to streamline efforts for geo-spatial survey with clearcut timelines. The issue of encroachment was discussed in detail, with a special focus on reporting and monitoring on a daily basis. Chairman CDA directed to carry out operations in complete syn with all formations involved in the anti encroachment drive and to work in close coordination with the district administration. He also directed to devise a mechanism for ensuring non recurrence of encroachment in the clear land. Chairman CDA directed to register FIRs against those involved in illegal encroachments time and again, in order to prevent any recurrence in the future. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa reiterated the need for a comprehensive, coordinated approach to managing land through the use of latest technologies, curbing encroachment, and ensuring the proper land use for the benefit of Islamabad's residents.—DNA

Solo exhibition "Flight of Two Half Birds" by Amna at PNCA

ISLAMABAD: A thought-provoking Travelling solo exhibition, "A Flight of Two Half Birds" by renowned Pakistani-Irish artist Amna Walayat held at the National Art Gallery, Islamabad. The exhibition, which explores the themes of displacement, migration, and identity, will run until 6th December 2024.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Jamal Shah, renowned visual artist and cultural icon, inaugurated the exhibition along with M. Ayoub Jamali, Director General PNCA. The opening ceremony was attended by a distinguished audience, including prominent artists, scholars, diplomats, and art enthusiasts. Mr. Jamal Shah praised



Amna's work, emphasizing its emotional depth and relevance to contemporary global issues. In his remarks,

Jamal Shah said that, "Amna Walayat's work is a testament to the resilience and creativity of artists who






navigate complex personal and cultural narratives. Her ability to convey the anguish and hope of displacement

through the timeless medium of miniature painting is remarkable. This exhibition not only sheds light on the challenges faced by migrants and expatriates but also serves as a bridge to foster empathy and understanding in a divided world." "A Flight of Two Half Birds" is an evocative exploration of the dualities faced by displaced individuals, drawing on Walayat's own experiences as an Eastern Muslim woman and migrant artist. Using Indo-Persian miniature painting techniques, her works incorporate powerful symbolism—such as butterflies, boats, and tulips—to convey themes of longing, resilience, and adaptation.—DNA

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- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

DECEMBER

- Dec 01/Romania National Day
- Dec 02/United Arab Emirates National Day
- Dec 02/Laos Republic National Day
- Dec 05/Thailand National Day
- Dec 06/Finland Independence Day
- Dec 07/India Armed Forces Flag Day
- Dec 09/Tanzania National Day
- Dec 11/Oman Armed Forces Day
- Dec 12/Kenya Independence Day
- Dec 12/Turkmenistan Neutrality Day
- Dec 16/Bahrain National Day
- Dec 16/Kazakhstan Independence Day
- Dec 18/Qatar National Day
- Dec 18/Niger National Day
- Dec 23/Philippines Armed Forces Day
- Dec 23/Japan National Day

Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
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Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
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CAA.....9281092



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



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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Economic diplomacy takes center stage

NUML hosts int'l moot on Pakistan's foreign policy

In the Inaugural session, welcoming remarks were delivered by DG NUML, Brig. Shahzad Munir emphasized Pakistan's transformative potential, stating, "Pakistan is at a defining moment in its history. By setting clear priorities and implementing sound economic policies, we can unlock a brighter future"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Faculty of Social Sciences at the National University of Modern Languages, in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission under the National Research Program for Universities (NRPU), inaugurated a two-day international conference titled "Prioritizing Economic Agenda in Pakistan's Foreign Policy Towards the United States, China, and the European Union." The conference brought together policymakers, academicians, and thought leaders to address the critical role of economic diplomacy in reshaping Pakistan's foreign policy priorities.

Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Former Minister of State and Chairman of Pakistan's Board of Investment, Haroon Sharif delivered the keynote address.

In the Inaugural session, welcoming remarks were delivered by DG NUML, Brig. Shahzad Munir emphasized Pakistan's transformative potential, stating, "Pakistan is at a defining moment in its history. By setting clear priorities and implementing sound economic policies, we can unlock a brighter future". Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Jean Monnet Chair, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Riaz Shad outlined the conference objectives, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for Pakistan in the global economic landscape. Haroon Sharif underscored the importance of redefining economic diplomacy. He called for a pragmatic approach to trade and investment, stating,



"Selling geo-location and cheap labour is no longer viable. Pakistan must focus on value addition, creating competitive exports, and leveraging its human capital." He identified key challenges and fault lines, including low productivity, no trend of value addition to the products, lack of export competitiveness, and insufficient job creation. He urged policymakers to adopt a proactive stance, bringing concrete deals to the table, modernizing infrastructure and making ports independent to boost regional connectivity. The Chief Guest, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri emphasized the need for preparedness in economic diplomacy,

particularly in understanding the nuances of global powers and their priorities. He highlighted upcoming challenges, such as the European Union's 2026 carbon tax policy, and stressed the importance of aligning Pakistan's supply chains with global environmental standards. Dr. Suleri also recommended engaging with the United States on debt sustainability and focusing on the evolving dynamics of geo-economic diplomacy, especially in light of potential shifts in global leadership. He also remarked that Pakistan must also understand the red lines of the US, China and EU before setting an economic agenda in its

Foreign Policy. The first session of the conference focused on "Prioritizing Economic Agenda in Pakistan-US Relations." Experts discussed challenges, opportunities, and policy lessons to strengthen economic ties. Dr Saira Aquil from QAU, Dr Noor Fatima from IUI, Dr Ahmed Ijaz Malik from QAU, and Dr Usman W. Chohan from the Center for Aerospace & Security Studies were among the distinguished speakers. The second session, titled "Prioritizing Economic Agenda in Pakistan-China Relations," featured insightful discussions on challenges and opportunities within the context of the

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Speakers included Dr Khalid Waleed (SDPI), Muhammad Ali Kemal (Ministry of Planning), Dr Mahmood Khalid (PIDE), Dr Muhammad Fahim Khan (Bahria University), and Dr Hassan Daud Butt (former CEO KP-BOIT). The first day of the conference concluded with an engaging Q&A session, providing participants an opportunity to delve deeper into the critical issues discussed. The conference will continue tomorrow with more expert discussions on Pakistan's economic agenda concerning the European Union and strategies for integrating global economic trends into national policymaking.

Women traders get opportunity at CDA's weekly Bazaar

Samira Moeed, who recently set up a stall selling purses and accessories, shared her experience, stating, "I've been running this stall for a month, while the environment is quite safe here. We ensure quality products at slightly lower prices than the market. Female customers feel comfortable shopping with us"

ISLAMABAD: CDA's weekly Bazaar at Peshawar Mor, one of the country's busiest and most vibrant markets, is not just a hub for affordable clothing, food, and groceries but also a beacon of empowerment for women traders. While traditionally male-dominated, the weekly bazaar has Section C, a women entrepreneurs-dominated area for the past few years, where they run stalls selling various products and earn a respectable livelihood. Samira Moeed, who recently set up a stall selling purses and accessories, shared her experience, stating, "I've been running this stall for a month, while the environment is

quite safe here. We ensure quality products at slightly lower prices than the market. Female customers feel comfortable shopping with us." She emphasized the importance of financial independence, urging women to embrace trading as a viable career path. She urged the relevant authorities to enhance security measures especially for women to ensure their safety. Another trader, Rahila, highlighted that the popular business ventures for women in the bazaar include the selling of children's clothes, toys, women-specific stuff and food items. She noted that these items offer good returns and are well-suited for

women entrepreneurs who are looking for a respectable earning opportunity. Another buyer, Farah, visiting the bazaar for the first time, said, "I was initially skeptical about the quality, but I am pleasantly surprised. The products are excellent, and the prices are lower than the local market. I feel comfortable and can enjoy shopping without any hassle. CDA's weekly Bazaar's women traders are proving that entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool for empowerment, demonstrating that with determination and support, women can achieve economic independence and contribute meaningfully to society.—APP

She added, "Seeing these women thrive makes me proud. They are empowering not only themselves but their families, setting an example for others." She also requested the concerned authorities to resolve vehicle parking issues so that all visitors will get the proper parking space and can enjoy shopping without any hassle. CDA's weekly Bazaar's women traders are proving that entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool for empowerment, demonstrating that with determination and support, women can achieve economic independence and contribute meaningfully to society.—APP

Plan to eliminate traffic mess, encroachments

SIALKOT: A comprehensive action plan will be formulated to eliminate traffic flow and encroachments in the city and a joint squad of traffic police, Punjab Transport Authority, Municipal Corporation Regulation Wing and district administration will be formed for it. This was informed in a meeting of local authorities and stakeholders of relevant institutions held at the DC Office under the chairmanship of Members of Punjab Assembly (MPAs) Muhammad Manshaullah Butt, Faisal Ikram Chaudhry, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain Langrial and DPO Rana Umar Farooq. Assistant Commissioner (AC) Anum Babar, Chief Officer (CO) Municipal Corporation Afzal Malik, DSP City Tariq Dhuddi, DSP Traffic Babar, Traffic Inspector Khurram Shahzad, Secretary RTA Muzaffar Mukhtar, former Deputy Mayor Chaudhry Bashir, Nawaz Bhatti, Chaudhry Muhammad Akram, Qaiser Bhatti, Husnain Baig and Hamid Nasir were also present. MPA Muhammad Manshaullah Butt said that traffic is currently the biggest problem of Sialkot city and to deal with the challenge, all departments have to play their role, but it is also the first responsibility of citizens to respect traffic rules and completely avoid one-way violations and wrong parking. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain Langrial and DPO Rana Umar Farooq said that an action squad will be formed under the leadership of Assistant Commissioner Sialkot to combat traffic violations and encroachments, and Traffic Police, City Police, Transport Authority and Regulation Wing of the Municipal Corporation will be part of the squad. MPA Muhammad Manshaullah Butt said that initially, 5 important roads of the city will be made encroachment-free, while a pilot project of walking streets will be started in Muslim Bazaar and Lahai Bazaar, in which entry of all types of traffic will be banned during working hours. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain Langrial said that a notification will be issued soon stating that heavy traffic will remain closed on Defence Road during working hours. He said that motor-rickshaws in the city will be registered and divided into zones and violation of the zones will not be allowed.

Six died in traffic accidents in November

RAWALPINDI :Six people died in 1,727 road traffic accidents were reported to Rescue 1122 in Rawalpindi district during the month of November

According to the details a total of 1,713 people were victims of these accidents, to whom the Emergency Rescue Service (ERS), Rawalpindi provided timely rescue services. The statistics released by the rescue service shows 741 people were seriously injured whereas 966 received minor injuries. There were 1,450 men and 263 women victims of the accidents, with an age group of 11-40 years. Usman Gujjar, the media coordinator ERS informed reached all the accidents on time while maintaining the average response time. The majority of these road traffic accidents are of car and motorcycle riders. He said that over speeding, careless driving, wrong turns, tyre burst and others were among main reasons for the accidents.—APP

China's scholarships programme for Pakistani students

ISLAMABAD: Chinese government has announced scholarships programme 2025-26 for the AJK, Pakistani students to pursue their studies and conduct research in Chinese Universities. According to Higher Education Commission (HEC) the deadline to Submit Online Application is Monday 09, December 2024. Only those applicants are considered under Chinese Government Scholarship Program 2025-26 who have already obtained a valid HAT (score obtained on or after December 09, 2022 is valid) or USAT score (score obtained on or after December 09, 2023 is valid). Applicants must submit a valid score on HEC portal during application submission for consideration. To submit online application on China Scholarship Council's portal under category A (agency No. 5861), please visit Campuschina.org or https://www.csc.edu.cn/laihua . With a view to enhance educational cooperation between China and Pakistan, the Chinese Scholarship Council, Government of China is offering Pakistani students/scholars to study and conduct research in Chinese Universities. On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, HEC is nominating agency for these scholarships in the academic

year 2025-26. China Scholarship Council (CSC), entrusted by the Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China, is responsible for the enrollment and the administration of Chinese Government Scholarship Program. Qualified applicants can apply for scholarship for Undergraduate/Bachelors, Masters & Doctoral/PhD programs in respective field of studies. As per eligibility criteria, applicants must be Pakistani/AJK national. Dual nationality holders are not eligible to apply. Applicants must be in good health. Applicants with incomplete degrees on closing date of application are not allowed to apply. Applicants for Undergraduate/Bachelors program must have intermediate/A-level/FA-FSC (12 years) of education and be under the age of 25 at the time of application. Applicants for Masters program must have a Bachelors degree (16 years) and be under the age of 35 at the time of application. Applicants for PhD/Doctoral program must have a Masters degree MS/MPhil and be under the age of 40 years at the time of application. Meet the application requirement as prescribed on China Scholarship Council website & portal. Meet the admission

requirements of the applied universities in terms of academic eligibility, language proficiency and other relevant criteria. Applicants may not be in receipt of any other types of scholarship currently. All applicants are required to provide HAT or Usat score (HAT for masters/phd and USAT for undergraduate). Applicants must have obtained a minimum score of 50 out of 100 in HAT or USAT test. Without providing minimum HAT or USAT test score (50 out of 100), applications will not be considered for further process. The test validity for HAT is 02 years and USAT is 01 year. For this scholarship, applicant must have already obtained a valid HAT (score obtained on or after December 09, 2022) or USAT score (score obtained on or after December 09, 2023). As per tuition funds details, it will be comprehensively used by the host university. It may cover education, administration costs, health insurance and expenditures to support student activities. Meanwhile, free university dormitory or accommodation subsidy will be provided to each awardee. While stipend will be given as per China Govt. Scholarship policy.—DNA

UN urged to address Kashmiri detainees' plight

ISLAMABAD: The Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) has called upon international leaders, including United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and Organization of Islamic Cooperation Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha, to address the worsening conditions of Kashmiri detainees languishing in jails of India and Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. JKDFP Acting Chairman Mehmood Ahmed Saghar highlighted the systematic mistreatment of Kashmiri political prisoners and human rights activists. Thousands of Kashmiris have been incarcerated under draconian laws before and after the abrogation of occupied Jammu and Kashmir's special status by India's Modi regime on August 5, 2019, said a press release here on Monday. The letter pointed out severe abuses faced by the detainees, including torture, solitary confinement, denial of medical care, and sexual harassment. The health of prominent figures such as Shabir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Asiya Indrabi, and Khurram Parvez has significantly deteriorated due to prolonged detention. The situation has been exacerbated by recent restrictions like the denial of phone and electronic meeting privileges for inmates in Tihar Jail. Saghar said the BJP-led Indian government is weaponizing incarceration to silence dissenting voices and suppress the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people for their political and human rights. He expressed deep concern over the lack of international attention to these violations, despite India's obligations under the Geneva Convention. The JKDFP urged the global community to pressure India to ensure humane treatment of detainees, investigate allegations of abuse, and release all political prisoners. The party also emphasized the importance of protecting the fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people and urged the UN and OIC to play an active role in resolving the ongoing human rights crisis in the territory.—APP

Briefs

IRSA releases
100,300
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 100,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 44,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1491.67 feet and was 93.67 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 21,000 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1155.05 feet, which was 105.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 4,900 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 69,100, 46,600, 36,900 and 6,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Police bust
dacoit gang

RAWALPINDI: Police have busted a dacoit and street criminal gang by arresting five accused and recovered seven stolen motorcycles, two mobile phones, cash Rs 38,000, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Taxila police arrested Arbaz, Usama, Salar, Umar and Fahad, members of Arbaz dacoit, snatching and bike lifting gang and recovered seven stolen motorcycles, cash Rs 38,500, two mobile phones, weapons and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under process. Police are making efforts to net other members of the gang, he added.—APP

Pak regional
exports
increase 4.09%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries increased by 4.09 per cent in the first four months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) compared to the corresponding months of last year. The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$1506.131 million, which is 14.33 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$10.507 billion during July-October (2024-25). State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan carried out its border trade with farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives. Pakistan's exports to China witnessed a decrease of 14.58 per cent from \$952.385 million last year to \$813.441 million during last year whereas exports to Afghanistan surged to \$291.773 million from \$182.616 million. The country's exports to Bangladesh also increased by 28.60 per cent to \$247.313 million this year from \$192.311 million whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 29.22 per cent to \$148.937 million from \$115.256.—APP

Speakers call for focus on
media & information literacy

The participants unanimously recognized the importance of safeguarding freedom of expression as a fundamental right while stressing that it must not be exploited to propagate disinformation or misinformation, which can erode societal trust and disrupt constructive dialogue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a consultation forum on Sunday stressing the importance of a media-literate society said the approach was essential for cultivating a constructive and an informed societal discourse. The second provincial consultation was organized by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in collaboration with Media Foundation 360 at DHA Suffa University, Karachi, which gathered input from key stakeholders for developing Pakistan's Media and Information Literacy (MIL) strategy. The speakers called for

incorporating the MIL into the national curriculum at the primary level, and discussed exploring the delicate balance between media regulation and control. The consultation prioritized inclusivity through diverse representation and brought together policymakers, media professionals, academics, and civil society experts, all contributing insights to the draft MIL strategy for Pakistan. The prominent speakers included Mayor of Karachi Barrister Mur-taza Wahab, Senator Sarmad Ali, Senator Faisal Sabzwari, Group Chief Business Recorder Shahab Zuberi, Managing Director GEO News Azhar Abbas, Analyst Dr. Huma Baqai, Archaeologist Dr. Asma Ibrahim, Resident Editor

Daily Pakistan Karachi Mubashir Mir, Chief Librarian Agha Khan University Dr. Midrar Ullah, Journalist DHA Suffa University Karachi Brig. Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saeed Minhas, Prof. Dr. Savera Shami, Research Lead on the MIL strategy Chairperson of the Department of Digital Media, Punjab University outlined the consultation's objectives, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement in shaping a contextually relevant framework. The participants unanimously recognized the importance of safeguarding freedom of expression as a fundamental right while stressing that it must not be exploited to propagate disinformation or misinfor-

mation, which can erode societal trust and disrupt constructive dialogue. They underscored that robust and effective governance by the State is pivotal in shutting down avenues that enable the spread of misinformation and disinformation. They highlighted that good governance, marked by transparency, accountability, and proactive policy measures, plays a fundamental role in protecting the integrity of the information ecosystem. The event featured three focused sessions, each addressing key dimensions of Media and Information Literacy. The first session, "Building Resilient Societies: Media and Information Literacy as a Pillar of Social Cohesion," explored how MIL can

strengthen social harmony by fostering critical thinking and informed engagement. The second session, "Building a Comprehensive Framework: The Convergence of Media, Information, and Literacy," emphasized the need for an integrated approach to equip citizens with essential skills to navigate the digital landscape. The final session "Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: A Cornerstone for Shaping MIL Policies" highlighted the importance of embedding Pakistan's rich cultural and linguistic diversity into MIL policies, ensuring inclusivity and relevance while empowering communities through culturally sensitive strategi

Efforts afoot
to provide
quality
recreational
facilities to
citizens: DG

RAWALPINDI: Director General (DG) Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi, Ahmed Hassan Ranjha on Monday said that the authority is utilizing all available resources to provide quality recreational facilities to the citizens. He informed that plantation initiatives on part of PHA Rawalpindi played very important role to protect the city from the worst effects of smog. The DG during a visit to Allama Iqbal Park reviewed the arrangements for winter flower plantation and recreational facilities for the public. Ahmed Hassan Ranjha said that Allama Iqbal Park is playing a key role in providing quality entertainment and relevance while empowering communities through culturally sensitive strategi

OEC seeking
services
of CFO on
contract basis

ISLAMABAD: Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) an attached department of Ministry of Overseas Pakistan and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) was seeking the services of Chief Finance Officer (CFO) on the contract basis with the following qualifications and experience. An official source told APP here on Monday, he said that CFO post lying vacant from a long time in the OEC and current administration has decided to fill this important post on immediate basis for smooth working of the office. He said that the CFO shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate advice was given to the Board on all financial matter, for keeping proper financial records & accounts and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control. A member of a recognized body of professional accountants or a person holding a master's degree in finance from a university recognized by the Higher Education Commission. Nature of appointment contract basis for three years (extendable), must have at least 3 to 5 years relevant experience in a reputed organization in case of a member of a recognized body of professional.—APP



ISLAMABAD: An elderly man selling balloons to earn livelihood, unaware of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities - 3 December demanding their rights by the state.

'Syria- Pak connected with
historical, religious ties'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic in Pakistan, Dr. Ramez Alraee on Monday said that Syria and Pakistan are connected by historical, religious and cultural ties, which will help in increasing bilateral economic and trade cooperation. The Ambassador said that Syria has always stood by Pakistan in difficult times and after the 2005 earthquake, Syria helped Pakistan in all spheres. Recently, Pakistan has cooperated fully with Syria and provided humanitarian aid to the Syrian government, which will further strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries, he said. Dr Ramez Alraee said that Syria has huge importance in the Middle East with which Israel has been in conflict for decades and many countries in the region are facing Israeli aggression, including Syria. The envoy said that Syria has a significant role in world peace and the Syrian government is paying full attention to peace, security and economic development in its country. In response to a question, he said that economic and trade relations between Pakistan and Syria

have been established for decades and are developing day by day. The ambassador said that there are huge opportunities for religious tourism between Pakistan and Syria and a large number of Pakistanis come to Syria for the Ziarah tour, who are always welcomed by the Syrian government and people. He said that the Syrian government has provided ample facilities for the people coming for the Ziarah tour visas that are easily available in this regard and more facilities will be created in the future. The envoy said that apart from this, Syria is a beautiful country due to its natural beauty where there are ample opportunities for traditional tourism as well. There are vast opportunities for tourists from Pakistan for which the Syrian government is providing more facilities, he said. Dr. Ramez Alraee said that Syria is an important country in a historical and cultural context, where the heritage of other religions including Islam exists and it is the centre of attention of the whole world. The Ambassador said that the direct flight between Pakistan and Syria started on November 18th and the first direct flight landed in Lahore it will provide facilities to the traders and business

community. Earlier, Syrian Air Line had started its flight operations from Karachi in 2019 and last week this was the first flight of Syrian Airline to Lahore, for which the Foreign Affairs Ministries and Embassies of both countries have made great efforts. The Ambassador said that the first direct flight of Syrian Airlines would promote bilateral relations and people-to-people relations between the two countries. He said that the direct flight between both of the countries would promote economic and trade relations between, and the connections between the people of both countries would be established. The ambassador said that with the start of flight operations, where the business communities of both countries will be facilitated, tourism will also increase and bilateral economic and trade relations will be promoted. Dr Ramez said that at this time, the business communities of both countries need to strengthen bilateral relations so that both sides' economic relations can develop and trade can increase. He said that many people from Pakistan go to Syria for the Ziarah tour and they will also get facilities after this flight operation and this will increase religious tourism.

Pakistan
extends warm
greetings
to UAE on
National Day

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi extended heartfelt congratulations to the leadership and people of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on their National Day, highlighting the deep-rooted ties between the two nations. In a statement issued on Monday, Mohsin Naqvi said, "We share in the joy of our UAE brothers and sisters on this special day, which is a symbol of their progress, stability, and prosperity." He lauded the UAE's leadership for its relentless efforts to secure a prominent position among the nations of the world. Naqvi emphasized the significance of the UAE's National Day for Pakistan, underscoring the mutual respect and shared history between the two countries. "The brotherly relations between Pakistan and the UAE are growing stronger with time. The UAE has always stood by Pakistan in every trial, and we take pride in our enduring partnership," he remarked. He further highlighted the robust trade relations between the two nations as a testament to their growing collaboration and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhancing bilateral ties.—APP

HEC invites
applications
for research
award 2024

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited applications for the Pakistani researchers and scholars to apply for its prestigious "Research Awards 2024". According to HEC, The deadline for online application submission is "December 17, 2024, by 11:59 PM". These awards aim to recognize and reward excellence in research, contributions to intellectual growth, and advancements in social welfare. They also promote high-impact publications. Winners will receive a certificate and a cash prize. Awards will be presented in three broad disciplinary domains, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Law, Education, Management, or Public Policy, Physical Sciences, Engineering, Technology, Computer Science, Statistics, or Mathematics, Life Sciences, Biological Sciences, Health Sciences, Pharmacy, Agriculture, or Veterinary Sciences. The Best Researcher (Cash Prize: Rs. 500,000). This award recognizes researchers whose work is judged to be of the highest quality and has significantly contributed to intellectual and social development. While this is a lifetime achievement award, a single publication with substantial impact may also be considered. Outstanding publications with a demonstrated major impact will be key to the selection process. Similarly, under the Best Young Researcher the Cash Prize is Rs. 500,000. This award is given to early-career researchers under the age of 40 who demonstrate exceptional promise in stimulating further research, addressing or resolving social challenges, and enhancing the quality of research in Pakistan. Both contributions to date and potential for future impact will be considered, with an emphasis on significant discoveries and impactful publications. However, under Best Publication Award the Cash Prize will be Rs. 1,000,000. This award is granted to a publication (book or journal article) that is deemed to have the greatest potential to positively influence human welfare, open new avenues for research, or address critical challenges facing Pakistan and the global community. The award aims to highlight publications with a lasting impact on research and socio-economic development. It is worth mention here that the applicants eligible for both categories (a) and (b) may apply for only one. As per general eligibility criteria, the applicant must not have been blacklisted by HEC. The applicant or publication must not have received the same award previously. None of the applicant's publications should violate HEC's plagiarism policy.

India's potential fragmentation
by 2047: A complex issue

JAVERIA BINT RABBANI



INDIA is continuing to persecute innocent Kashmiris in Occupied Kashmir by resorting to a very clever and hypocritical policy. However, India has now realized

that Kashmir is There is no halwa on a plate. Now the freedom movement in Kashmir is entering a new phase. Along with the youth, women have participated in the movement. The daily martyrdoms of innocent Kashmiris have been going on for years, the mercilessness of women, children, hardly any Kashmiris have been spared from the cruel atrocities of the Indian army. Kidnapping of Kashmiri youth and children has become a routine during the Indian forces worst atrocities were seen in 17-18 years when the Indian army brutally brutalized Kashmiri men women and children who came out of their homes to get freedom and their right to freedom. Martyred, Manipur, Nagaland independence movement from India is going on, calling the Indian army an army is a stain on the name of the army. India on the Verge of Fragmentation by

2047 Since 2014, Hindutva ideology has been strongly promoted at the government level under the leadership of Narendra Modi,* which has strongly linked India's identity with Hindu nationalism. The escalation of this view has resulted in India falling to 75th position in the 2024 Fragile States Index, and being placed in the "Warning" category. In 2023, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended that India be included in the list of "Countries of Special Concern" regarding religious freedom. India's digital laws have put freedom of expression under severe pressure, with 134 violations recorded in the first months of 2024 World Economic Forum names "misinformation" as top threat in India. The abrogation of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 has further strained relations with Pakistan, "which Con-

gress leader Rahul Gandhi strongly criticized as an "abuse of power" Pakistani cuisine China's objection to India's highest tunnel project in Arunachal Pradesh has made the relationship between the two countries more fragile. India's internal stability faces serious threats from separatist movements of various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups The Khalistan movement in Punjab is fighting for an independent Sikh state The US Commission on International Religious Freedom has highlighted increasing pressure against religious minorities in India Northeastern regions like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura have long been hotbeds of separatist movements. As 2047 approaches, India's various regional and ethnic conflicts are intensifying, making the prospects for India's unity and geographical structure intact.

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

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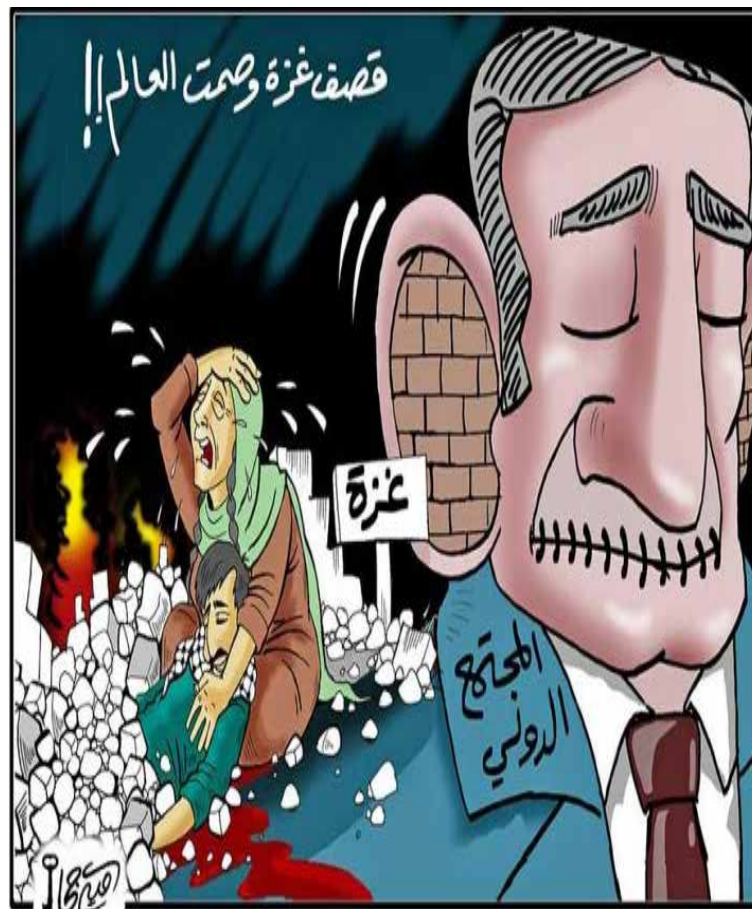
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Global silence and Arab helplessness

MORE than a year after Israel began its campaign of genocide against the innocent residents of Gaza, the world seems to have grown desensitized to the sight of massacres. Protests that once filled the streets in solidarity with Palestine and against Israeli aggression have dwindled into silence over the past year. The Arab response has been no better. Arab nations, particularly their governments, appear impotent in the face of Israeli arrogance. Some Arab populations, too, have shifted to the sidelines, leaving Gaza's people and resistance fighters to face their fate alone on the battlefield. Journalist and researcher Hesham Jaafar, in an article, attributed Arab inaction on Gaza's genocide to a fractured and disoriented official Arab stance. He explained that some Arab regimes not only failed in their duty to support the Palestinians but actively provided material and moral support to the Israeli regime—sometimes overtly. Jaafar argued that these regimes prioritized narrow national and economic interests over shared values, justifying this under the guise of pragmatism, thereby disregarding the aspirations of their people. Despite this, Jaafar pointed out a stark contrast between the actions of Arab governments—limited to verbal statements and modest aid—and the general solidarity of Arab populations with the Palestinians. However, he noted a parallel inability of Arab citizens to provide meaningful support for Palestine, attributing this to their governments, which suppress public expression of solidarity. Economic and political pressures also compel many Arabs to focus on their immediate needs, leaving less room for activism, especially amid internal conflicts and wars that divert attention from the Palestinian cause. While global silence continues over the genocide of Gaza's innocent, some countries have gone beyond passive observation to actively supporting Israeli aggression. Chief among these is the United Kingdom, which journalist Matt Kennard described as the third partner in the assault after Israel and its primary backer, the United States. Kennard highlighted evidence of Britain's involvement, such as military flights from the UK to Cyprus early in the conflict. These flights carried heavy weaponry and intelligence equipment, with missions over Gaza lasting up to six hours daily to gather intelligence shared with Israel. Reports, including a leak published by The New York Times last summer, revealed that Britain sent a spy team to assist Israel in its war on Gaza. Palestinian political analyst Farhan Alqam attributed global inaction to complicity, stating, "The world is not merely silent; it is a partner in these crimes, providing Israel with financial, military, and political support while silencing Palestinian narratives." Alqam criticized the U.S., Europe, Australia, and Canada for sustaining Israeli aggression. The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor issued a statement warning of the catastrophic Israeli campaign in northern Gaza, accusing Israel of seeking to empty the area despite its official denials. The statement cited leaflets dropped by the Israeli military urging evacuation from shelters in Jabalia and Beit Hanoun to the south.



West is reaping what it has sown

FOR more than two years, we were told the Russian invasion of Ukraine was a challenge not only to Europe, but the West itself – and even a threat to the whole world by undermining fundamental political, security and moral principles. A victory for Moscow would be an existential threat to civilisation itself. This is, they said, a global problem. And so, if you don't join us in our fight against evil, you are evil, too. Those "universal" messages warning against the new Hitler from Moscow were duly repeated, refined and amplified by the West's leading media outlets. Now, though, those same holier-than-thou publications are running a very different message. There is a new party line from their paymasters. The new headlines read: "The least bad deal for Ukraine: How to make a success of peace talks with Vladimir Putin – The key is robust security guarantees for Ukrainians"; "Trump's push for Ukraine peace finds growing acceptance in Europe"; "Zelensky: I'll give up Ukrainian territory to Russia to achieve peace: President says for first time that his country could cede land temporarily in exchange for protection of a 'Nato umbrella'". To the last statement from the Ukrainian leader, the same British newspaper runs the following rhapsodic op-ed: "This is a political masterstroke by President Zelensky – Kyiv is signalling to Trump that it is willing to talk under the right conditions". It may be worth pointing out that the same or even better peace settlement could have been obtained less than a month after war broke out in late February 2022 if only the United States and Britain didn't scupper it. So many lives and suffering could have been spared. But no, both countries and their European allies thought the war could be an opportunity to collapse the Russian economy and oust Vladimir Putin. The economy actually expanded after the initial shocks from Western economic warfare, and Putin became even more powerful and popular at home. Since the West insisted the war was everyone's problem, now that it is changing its tune, of course the rest of the world will judge it harshly, as a propaganda disgrace and a geopolitical failure. Meanwhile, almost immediately after the Hamas terrorist attacks in October last year, Israel was determined not only to exact revenge times 100, but to remake the Middle East and realise the Zionist dream of "greater Israel", first by destroying Gaza and making it uninhabitable for Palestinians, and also rapidly and violently taking over lands in the Palestinian West Bank. Israel has calculated correctly that it has a blank cheque from Washington. And also much of the West – and the West's disgraceful mainstream news media – will reliably provide diplomatic cover and propaganda to rationalise and excuse whatever crimes, however intolerable to common human decency, Israel commits. To do so, leading Western governments have suppressed free speech and the right of public protest at home and are undermining international law of which they have always claimed to be its champion. The arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court, repeatedly delayed by outright interference by the US and spying and threats from Israel, not only target Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence chief Yoav Gallant for suspected war crimes and crimes against humanity,

Syria: The dangers of open conflict and the need for the state

Ghassan Charbel

The Russian-Iranian-Turkish triangle in Syria is formed of wounded countries haunted by memories of their respective fallen empires. Russia dreams of its former Soviet glory and wants to expand its influence beyond its own borders. Ankara and Tehran also dream of winning something of the legacy left over from the Soviet collapse. Over the past decade, Türkiye tried to lead a major coup in the region through the so-called "Arab Spring". It believed that it boasted an ideal model that could be replicated in or inspire other countries. Its warm relationship with Bashar al-Assad's regime turned into an attempt to overthrow him. This was no secret. Years later, I met with ISIS fighters imprisoned in Iraq who spoke frankly of how they entered Syria through the Turkish borders

IT is as if this difficult part of the world is destined to live with constant bloodshed. Countries break apart, wars are never really resolved, and peace is only really just a truce. We have witnessed the horrors in Gaza and later, Lebanon. The barbarity of the Israeli attacks demonstrated that the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation was greater than what Gaza can bare. The "support front" in Lebanon also had consequences that were too great for the country to bare. Then came the surprise in Aleppo that will pave the way for more bloodshed in Syria. "Surprise" may not be the right word here given reports that said the forces in control of Idlib would rather go on the offensive than wait for the Syrian army to attack. The relative calm in Syria achieved through the Sochi and Astana processes was never meant to last. It was difficult for Damascus to admit that the borders drawn between the various statelets in Syria would be permanent. It was clear that Syria was victim of wars that are greater than it and that changing these borders would pit it against major players inside the country. The Syrian state started to break apart in the 2010s. It turned into an arena for delusions, dreams and regional and international meddling. Setting aside Israel's well-known ambitions and America's ever-changing policies, let us examine the roles played by each of Russia, Iran and Türkiye. In 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin revealed his long-hidden intentions and reclaimed Crimea, saying it was just an unjustified Soviet gift to Ukraine. The tepid international response to his move encouraged him to pursue more ambitions. A year later, the world awoke to Russia's military intervention in Syria, which was said to have taken place after then Iranian Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani warned the Russian leader of the risk of Syria falling in the hands of extremists and the region in the hands of America. The Russian-Iranian

cooperation altered the course of the war in Syria and survival of the Syrian regime became a fact that could not be ignored when discussing solutions to the conflict there. However, those banking on the rise of a "Russian Syria" at the expense of an "Iranian Syria" were left disappointed after a few years. Russia failed in leading a major political solution that would pave the way for a broad reconciliation that would ensure the return of the displaced and rebuild the country. The Russian intervention in Syria was just one step because Putin had set his sights on launching a major coup a decade later in Ukraine and on European soil. The Russian-Iranian-Turkish triangle in Syria is formed of wounded countries haunted by memories of their respective fallen empires. Russia dreams of its former Soviet glory and wants to expand its influence beyond its own borders. Ankara and Tehran also dream of winning something of the legacy left over from the Soviet collapse. Over the past decade, Türkiye tried to lead a major coup in the region through the so-called "Arab Spring". It believed that it boasted an ideal model that could be replicated in or inspire other countries. Its warm relationship with Bashar al-Assad's regime turned into an attempt to overthrow him. This was no secret. Years later, I met with ISIS fighters imprisoned in Iraq who spoke frankly of how they entered Syria through the Turkish borders. Türkiye's ambitions, however, collided with the Russian-Iranian cooperation in Syria. The Arab Spring ended in failure and Ankara shifted its focus in Syria to combating the "Kurdish threat". Now, its forces are still in Syria and in some areas of Iraq. For its part, Iran grew restless within its own borders. It has waged a major coup in the region, allowing it to play a decisive role and have the final word in Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad and Sanaa. Syria was vital for Iran, especially with the route from Tehran to Bei-

rut now open and passing through Baghdad and Damascus, which was made possible after the ouster of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Syria is of vital importance for the great Iranian project, amid talk of the so-called "major strike" it may deal Israel. Hamas' late leader Yehya al-Sinwar was probably banking on this strike when he launched his Al-Aqsa Flood Operation. We are now confronted with a new reality in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. Israel's war on Lebanon and its strikes on Syria have weakened Hezbollah and pro-Iran militias in Syria. This new reality may have been among other factors that prompted the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham to launch its offensive on Aleppo and beyond. The Syrian authorities will in no way agree to this new reality. Neither will Russia. Türkiye, meanwhile, has little room to maneuver in Syria. Syria is not an island. It is located in the heart of the region. Its stability will undoubtedly ensure the stability of its neighbors without exception. Syria's stability is a unanimous Arab demand. It is demanded by Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and the Gulf. It is not in any Arab country's interest for Syria to be plunged again in the horrors of the not-so-distant past. An imperiled Syria is a danger to itself and the region. It cannot afford to drown again in its own wars and the wars of others as the world waits on Donald Trump to be sworn in as US president. An "Iranian Syria" and "Turkish Syria" are no longer possible, while the "Russian Syria" is not high on the Kremlin's list of priorities as it focuses on Ukraine and Trump's return to office. Syria has no choice but Syria itself. It needs a normal state to be established. A political solution that isolates the "terrorist" groups and rebuilds bridges between various communities is necessary. The solution will pave the way for the return of the displaced and launch a reconstruction process that will be embraced by the Arab world.

Will the markets check Trump's power?

Jeff Sommer

But the markets weren't troubled. The S&P 500 hit another record on Tuesday. It's calm on Wall Street right now, yet investors will need to hedge their bets. Bessent is a hedge fund billionaire and a Yale graduate who speaks the pragmatic, nonideological language of the markets. He once ran money for George Soros, the Republican bête noire. Of course, Bessent says he supports Trump's policies. Such fealty is a prerequisite for a high-level administration post

THE president-elect follows the markets closely. He bragged frequently about how well stocks performed in his first term in office, and said they had boomed this year in anticipation of his return to the White House. Since Election Day, a great deal of financial analysis has been devoted to one central question: How will the new Trump administration affect the markets? But another important question isn't being asked as frequently: To what extent can the markets serve as a check on the power of the president? With Republican control of the House and Senate and a conservative majority on the Supreme Court, Donald J. Trump will face fewer curbs from the nation's political institutions than he did in his first term. Given this vacuum, it's reasonable to wonder whether the markets will play an outside role. I'd say that in this stage of the presidential transition, the evidence is mixed. Yes, in a tenuous and unpredictable way, the markets are likely to influence the next administration's decision-making and, occasionally, serve as a check on some of Trump's most immoderate behavior. But I wouldn't go far with this. For one thing, financial markets have come to discount – you might say "normalize" – actions and statements that would set off strongly negative reactions if made by other public figures. And Trump's more pugnacious statements are often viewed as initial bargaining positions. Still, from the standpoint of the markets, Trump can probably go quite far in enacting his campaign promises as long as corporate profits rise and the economy grows. The events of the last week or so are a case in point. Trump set out to calm the mar-

kets with appointments of urbane experts known for a nonideological approach to finance, but also unleashed a global storm with the announcement that he planned to impose new 25 percent tariffs on Canada and Mexico and add a 10 percent tariff on China. Trump seems intent both on mollifying the markets and on disregarding their message when it is inconvenient. So far, this tactic is working. Late last Friday, Trump designated Scott Bessent, a familiar figure in finance, as his choice for Treasury secretary. Stocks and bonds rallied on the news on Monday. But later that day, Trump declared on social media that he would impose the new tariffs as soon as he returned to the White House. These measures, as well as deeper and broader levies promised during his campaign, are a negative development in the estimation of most economists. All else equal, tariffs tend to raise prices, hurt consumers, impede economic growth and disrupt global trade and foreign currency markets. But the markets weren't troubled. The S&P 500 hit another record on Tuesday. It's calm on Wall Street right now, yet investors will need to hedge their bets. Bessent is a hedge fund billionaire and a Yale graduate who speaks the pragmatic, nonideological language of the markets. He once ran money for George Soros, the Republican bête noire. Of course, Bessent says he supports Trump's policies. Such fealty is a prerequisite for a high-level administration post. In manner, he is being compared to Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary in the first Trump administration. Despite chaotic conditions elsewhere in the executive branch and criticism from both the left and right, Mnuchin, a

veteran banker and film financier, and also a Yale graduate, was generally esteemed in financial markets. Similarly, the markets have greeted Bessent with undisguised appreciation. Take "In Bessent We Trust," a brief note to the clients of Yardeni Research, an independent financial markets research firm headed by the veteran economist Edward Yardeni. The note quoted Bessent extensively because Bessent agrees with Yardeni's optimistic outlook. In January, Bessent wrote to his hedge fund clients that a great economic boom was probably ahead of us. This is a positive gloss on the outlook for Trump's economic proposals, which I think are likely to swell the budget deficit and disrupt the economy if higher tariffs and mass deportations of undocumented immigrants actually take place. But if you accentuate the positive side of Trump's promises of lower taxes and a lighter regulatory hand on businesses, and minimize the negatives, then the current bull market, which began under President Biden, could well continue under President Trump. No doubt, Kevin Hassett, whom Trump has chosen to head the National Economic Council, will do what he can to ensure that the stock market rises. Hassett is a traditional, credentialed economist who served in the first Trump administration. Yet he has said that tariffs can be negative for economic growth and that, by expanding the labor supply, immigration tends to help the economy. I expect the new administration to try to help the markets rise. And if Trump's policies interfere with the ability of companies to make profits and of investors to prosper, I expect course corrections.

Briefs

Imran trusts
Bushra,
not the...

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field his spouse to convey the true message to the masses in letter and spirit. Bushra Bibi's spokesperson and aide Mashal Yousafzai and the former first lady's sister Maryam Riaz Wattoo spoke to a British newspaper about Bushra Bibi's role, the controversy surrounding her participation in the "final call" protest and its outcome. Both of them said Bushra Bibi was acting on Khan's instructions and acting only for his interest. "Khan has been very frustrated in prison as he feels his instructions are not reaching the grassroots and instead they are being blocked or manipulated by senior leadership in the party," said Yousafzai. Yousafzai, who was sacked from her role in the KP govt by Ali Amin Gandapur three days ago over an interview, told the paper: "So Khan has told Bibi she needs to be his direct messenger. She doesn't have any political experience so he has given her precise instructions, from A to Z, on everything that needs to be done with the party workers and the leadership, to demand his release from jail. It's all very clear cut." Yousafzai said it was Khan who had told Bibi to convey to his supporters that last week's "final call" protest was a "do or die situation", and that people needed to reach Islamabad and demand his release "by hook or by crook". "Bibi has no political ambitions of her own, she is a very quiet spiritual person," Yousafzai added. "She is just acting as a bridge between Khan and the people." Bushra Bibi's Dubai-based sister Maryam Riaz Wattoo told the paper. "The actions of Khan's close aides are suspicious and it seems they are playing both sides for their own benefit. They put so much pressure on Bibi not to take the protest to the heart of Islamabad but she went ahead as Khan had suggested. She won't give up until Khan is released." It was Maryam Wattoo who first introduced Khan and Bibi in 2015. Bushra Bibi married Khan in 2018 after divorcing her husband. Wattoo said Bibi was deeply religious and had been "completely misrepresented by media propaganda". The paper wrote about Bushra Bibi's powerful role and her personality. It said Bushra Bibi, Khan's third wife, had always been deemed an apolitical and somewhat mysterious spiritual figure. Her marriage to Khan had generated wild gossip for years, but she kept herself largely shielded from the public gaze - even as she found herself jailed alongside her husband in January.

PM hopeful
of further
cut in...

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He said that the positive development would reduce the financial burden on the common man. He was optimistic about further relaxation in key policy rate by the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its next meeting.

Strategic
partnership
with KSA...

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both the countries had signed of 34 memorandums of understanding (MOUs), seven of which have already been formalized into agreements. These agreements, valued at \$560 million. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musaddik Malik, and National Coordinator of the Special Investment Facilitation Council Lieutenant General Sarfaraz Ahmed.

Syria, Russia
step up air
onslaughts

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the city of Aleppo, Istanbul-based opposition leader Hadi al-Bahri stated: "We are ready to negotiate starting tomorrow."

Verstappen wins in Qatar,
McLaren suffer penalty blow

"Karma is a wonderful thing. You definitely did not drive unnecessarily slowly today. Great job," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner over the radio after Verstappen took the chequered flag

DOHA: Red Bull's Max Verstappen won the Qatar Grand Prix on Sunday, a day after being stripped of pole position, as McLaren and Ferrari took their constructors' title duel down to next weekend's last race of the season in Abu Dhabi. The win was the Dutch driver's ninth of the Formula One season, second in a row in Qatar and the first since he wrapped up his fourth successive title in Las Vegas a week earlier. "Karma is a wonderful thing. You definitely did not drive unnecessarily slowly today. Great job," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner over the radio after Verstappen took the chequered flag. Stewards had handed the champion a one-place grid drop on Saturday for driving too slowly, with Mercedes' George Russell the beneficiary but making a poor start from the top slot and finishing fourth. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finished runner-up, 6.031 seconds behind, after McLaren's Lando Norris was handed a surprisingly tough 10 second stop/go penalty for speeding during yellow warning flags. That dropped the Briton from second, a position seized at the start, and challenging for the lead to 10th at the chequered flag with the consolation of fastest lap for a bonus point to double his meagre score. Saturday sprint winner Oscar Piastri finished third for McLaren in a race punctuated by crashes and three safety car periods. McLaren's lead was trimmed to 21 points with 44 remaining to be won, and a first constructors' title since 1998 beckoning, while reigning champions Red Bull were mathematically out of contention. "Lan-



do and I were within 1.8s of each other the whole time, pushing each other and honestly, it was a lot of fun out there," said Verstappen. Norris, now only eight points clear of Leclerc, saw a missed opportunity as others questioned the harshness of the penalty. "I don't know if I've missed it or just been dumb, but the rule is, if you don't slow down under the yellow that's the penalty, so it's fair penalty," he said. "I've made the job of the team much harder than it needs to be. The team are doing a

great job but I've let them down." Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was also slowed by a puncture and long pitstop, finishing sixth with Alpine's Pierre Gasly an impressive fifth to send the Renault-owned team back up to sixth overall. Fernando Alonso was seventh for Aston Martin and China's Zhou Guanyu scored Sauber's first points of the season with eighth. Kevin Magnussen was ninth for Haas, who dropped back behind Alpine. Seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton collected a five second penalty for a

false start, then a puncture and finished only 12th in his penultimate race for Mercedes before moving to Ferrari. As a final blow of the night, he was also handed a drive-through penalty for speeding in the pit lane. "The car and I don't get along really that well," said the Briton, who at one point asked to retire. "We were very far off at the beginning. We didn't have enough wing to start with, the cars were quite different and it wasn't really great to drive. But it's my fault so apologies to the team for the false start and the pit lane incident." Verstappen's team mate Sergio Perez also had a dismal time, failing to finish. The safety car was deployed initially when Alpine's Esteban Ocon collided with Nico Hulkenberg's Haas, with the Frenchman then taking out the Williams of Argentine rookie Franco Colapinto on the rebound. Hulkenberg made it back to the pits with the remains of the rear left tyre flailing but eventually retired. Williams' Alex Albon and Aston Martin's Lance Stroll also clashed, with the latter pitting for fresh tyres before being told to retire. Albon's wing mirror flew off his car at the halfway point and landed on the track, where it lay until Sauber's Valtteri Bottas ran over it and scattered sharp debris across the track that may have caused Sainz and Hamilton's punctures. Race control reacted with the yellow flags that were to catch out Norris, waiting seven laps before then deploying the safety car again. Bottas, who finished 11th, and RB's Liam Lawson also tangled on lap five after the safety car came in. -Agencies

Jansher Khan inducted
into PSA Hall of Fame

HONG KONG: Pakistan's legendary squash player and former champion Jansher Khan has been inducted into the Professional Squash Association (PSA) Hall of Fame in a glittering ceremony here on Sunday. Besides Pakistan's legend, Malaysian female player Nicol David was also honoured and thus became the third and fourth players, respectively, to be inducted into the PSA Hall of Fame, introduced earlier this year. Notably, the only two male players inducted into the Hall of Fame thus far are from Pakistan. The first and second general inductees were Jahangir Khan and New Zealand's Susan Devoy. Jansher Khan won a record eight World Open titles and six British Open titles. He played the most 118 finals in the professional career while winning a record 99 titles. He also has the honour of being world number one for 97 months throughout his career. Jansher said he felt very happy because Hong Kong was his second home and he played the Hong Kong Open for many years and won eight titles. "I feel very happy because Hong Kong is my second home

and I played the Hong Kong Open for many years and I won eight Hong Kong Opens, so Hong Kong is really, for me, it is the best place. And I'm very happy to come to Hong Kong see my old friends. It's an honour to get this award," Jansher was quoted as saying by the PSA. PSA Chief Executive Alex Gough praised the newest inductees, stating that the duo left a lasting legacy in the sport. "Nicol and Jansher are two of the most iconic figures in the history

of squash and have both left a lasting legacy in the sport," Gough said. "Nicol inspired so many squash players - in Malaysia and across the globe - and her record of nine unbroken years at the summit of the world rankings will surely never be bettered. She is a fantastic ambassador for the sport and it was fantastic to see her honoured with the title of Deputy Chef de Mission at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games this summer. - Agencies

PBBF distances itself
from illegal trials
for Dubai event

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has declared the trials held in Lahore for the Dubai Basketball Championship as illegal. PBBF Secretary General Khalid Bashir has called on the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to take immediate action and prevent the unauthorized team from traveling abroad. Bashir emphasized that, according to PSB regulations, any team wishing to participate in international events must obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC). He accused certain individuals of deliberately attempting to form illegal teams under the name of Pakistan and sending them overseas. He stressed that this unauthorized team has no official affiliation with the PBBF. Similar attempts to misrepresent Pakistan by forming illegal teams have occurred in the past, he noted. The PBBF Secretary General clarified that the federation is officially affiliated with both the PSB and the Pakistan Olympic Association, making it the responsible authority for selecting and sending teams to international championships. He further stated that the trials held in Lahore for the Dubai Basketball Championship were completely illegal, and urged the FIA to prevent the team from traveling abroad.

Pakistan sink UAE to qualify
for U19 Asia Cup semis

DUBAI: Opener Shahzaib Khan continued his purple patch with the bat, recording his second successive century to guide Pakistan U19 to a comfortable 69-run victory over the United Arab Emirates U19 in a Group-A match of the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Monday. The UAE were also punished by No.3 batter Muhammad Riazullah, as Pakistan U19 amassed 314 for three in the allotted 50 overs after being sent into bat. Later in the afternoon, fast bowler Abdul Subhan delivered a player of the match performance, decimating the middle-order with exceptional figures of 10-0-57-6. His spell saw the home side collapse from 170 for three to finish at 245 for eight. Shahzaib, who had scored 159 against India on Saturday, smashed 11 fours and six sixes in a 136-ball 132. Riazullah was equally impressive, hitting nine fours and three sixes in a well-crafted 91-ball 106. Shahzaib and Riazullah put on 183 runs for the second wicket in just over 27 overs. Their partnership followed a strong 94-run opening stand between Shahzaib and Usman Khan (41). After Shahzaib was dismissed on the final delivery of the 46th over, Riazullah added 37 runs in the last four overs with Faham-ul-Haq (20 not out). Chasing a stiff target, the UAE stumbled to 57 for three before Ethan D'Souza and Muhammad Rayan stitched together a 113-run partnership for the fourth wicket. However, Rayan's departure at 170 marked the end of UAE's resistance, as they eventually finished at 245 for eight. D'Souza, the seventh batter to be dismissed, scored a 102-ball 84 with 11 fours, while Rayan contributed 50 off 66 balls, including three sixes and one four. The victory places Pakistan atop Group-A, followed by the UAE, India and Japan. In Group-B, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have won two matches each, while Afghanistan and Nepal remain winless. The top two sides from each group will progress to the semifinals. Pakistan will face Japan in their final league match on Wednesday at the Dubai International Sports Stadium. Scores in brief: Pakistan U19 beat UAE U19 by 69 runs, Dubai International Cricket Stadium. Pakistan U19 314-3, 50 overs (Shahzaib Khan 132, Muhammad Riazullah 106, Usman Khan 41; Noorullah Ayobi 2-68. UAE U19 245-8, 50 overs (Ethan D'Souza 84, Muhammad Rayan 50, Uddish Suri 29 not out, Aryan Saxena 24; Abdul Subhan 6-57, Mohammad Ahmed 2-45). Player of the match: Abdul Subhan (Pakistan U19). - APP

Liverpool favourites for Premier League title

Manchester City have lost four consecutive Premier League matches for the first time since August 2008; Liverpool are now nine points clear at the top, their biggest margin as leaders in the competition since the final day of the 2019-20 campaign

LONDON: Gary Neville says Liverpool are now "strong favourites" to win this season's Premier League title after a 2-0 win in Sunday's showdown with champions Manchester City, who he believes must now undergo a rebuild under Pep Guardiola. Arne Slot's side are nine points clear at the top and 11 ahead of champions City, who have now lost four successive league games in the same campaign for the first time since August 2008. Liverpool were straight out of the blocks to dominate and Cody Gakpo turned in Mohamed Salah's cross for a 12th-minute lead. City were fortunate not to concede more before Salah - who had missed his last spot-kick against Real Madrid in midweek - converted a 78th-minute penalty. Arsenal and Chelsea trail Liverpool by nine points, while City have now gone seven games with-

out a win in all competitions and have lost six of those. It's an unbelievable performance from Liverpool. The people who have appointed [Slot], the people who've created the stability, the players, most of all, in the sense of getting behind him. It's really incredible what we're watching. We're in a completely different position than we thought we would be at the start of the season. A completely different position than we thought we would be probably about six to eight weeks ago. It's incredible what's happened to Manchester City and Liverpool have been so smooth. It's gone from being a very good start to putting in real high quality, authoritative performances that are looking really dangerous when you think of a Premier League title. To be 11 points clear of Manchester City and nine points clear of Arsenal is dream-

land for Liverpool, for Arne Slot. And with that comes a level of pressure that now there'll be an expectation that they will win the title. It will be a slightly different mentality, but it's a big week for Liverpool. They've got Newcastle away on Wednesday. They've got the Merseyside Derby next week as well away at Everton, the last ever one at Goodison Park so that'll be quite special. There's a job still to do. I don't think it's a time to get carried away and there's many points to play for, but that was a brilliant performance. I thought Liverpool would win today. City have been awful. They looked beaten. The team selection of Pep Guardiola...we can say he's a genius, he's amazing, he's one of the greatest minds of all time and say, I don't think he got it right, without being disrespectful. Just an observation. We saw Rico Lewis play in front of Kyle Walker last weekend at Tottenham. It didn't work. How was Nunes going to work on this left-hand side in a flat midfield four? Again, it didn't work. He substituted them both after an hour so it's obvious it didn't work. There were things that were wrong for City from the very, very start of the game. I was amazed how they set up. But today Liverpool become huge title favourites. Rodri, we'll

keep on mentioning it until the cows come home, but then all of a sudden the weariness, the fatigue, you get a couple of bad results, then the confidence starts to go. From weariness and fatigue, losing players, injuries, confidence, belief, before you know it, everything looks like it's gone, and that's why I don't think anybody at this moment is really ploughing into Pep Guardiola or Manchester City. These are proven serial winners, these guys that we're watching out on the pitch in those blue shirts today, don't have anything to prove in respect to the fact they've got five and six Premier League titles some of them. There just comes a point where you've climbed mountain after mountain after mountain, and it just hits you, and that's what's happening, we're just seeing a group of players who just, at this moment, can't do any more than what they're doing, and it looks humbling. - Agencies

Government
seeks more
time on...

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sought more time in the audio leaks case, with AAG Rehman requesting the court to provide a short date for the hearing. "The question is, does the government want an inquiry into the audios or not?" the AAG asked. "This matter was to be presented in the cabinet, but it could not due to the law and order situation in Islamabad," he went on to say, referring to last week's clashes between security forces and PTI protesters across the federal capital. "Give time, the audio leaks matter will be presented at the next cabinet meeting," Rehman said. "The court will be informed of the cabinet's decision on the audio leaks." PTI lawyer Babar Awan noted that the SC's decision regarding the legal status of the audio leaks was available. "Let the Attorney General's office take instructions from the government," Justice Aminuddin Khan said. "The matter will be looked into after the government's instructions [to the AAG]." On May 29, IHC's Justice Babar Sattar had barred telecom companies from recording phone calls and data for surveillance purposes.

Imran
arrested
in 7 new...

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separate case pertaining to PTI's September 28 protest in the garrison town. The prosecution team did not seek extension in the physical remand. The case lodged at the New Town police station, alleges Khan of issuing a call for the demonstration, which led to violent incidents in Rawalpindi. During the hearing, the Pindi police arrested the former premier in the new cases, pertaining to the more recent protests staged by PTI on October 5 and November 24, besides a separate case linked to the Rawalpindi demonstration. However, the prosecution did not seek physical custody of the high-profile suspect in the new cases as well. At this, ATC Judge Amjad Ali Shah, who was hearing the matter, sent Khan on judicial remand in all the cases, including the fresh cases. The new cases have been registered against Khan in various police stations for giving calls of protests that resulted in violent incidents.

PTI rules
out further
protests...

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securing Khan's release who has been behind bars for more than a year, had started on November 24 and "postponed" abruptly in the wee hours of Wednesday, November 27, with nearly 1,000 supporters being arrested by authorities. He said that it was the first meeting between the PTI leaders and Khan after the conclusion of the "final call" protest in which they briefed him about the happenings in the demonstration, including the deaths of 12 PTI workers, as well as Rangers and police personnel. On the other hand, the incumbent government had categorically denied that law enforcement agencies (LEAs) opened fire on PTI protesters or that any fatalities occurred. Gohar said that the PTI founder was unaware of what happened during the party's protest due to the non-availability of any newspaper or television in jail. "PTI founder would announce the party's next strategy," said Gohar, adding: "Bullets shouldn't be fired regardless of our presence in Sangani or somewhere else. We condemn the firing [during Islamabad protest] no matter who was involved in it." He added that the PTI founder asked the party leaders and workers to maintain unity in their ranks as the opponents were continuously trying to divide them. Amid contradictory statements regarding the exact venue of the "do-rdick" demonstration, Gohar said that protests have to be held at "impactful places". However, the PTI was neither aiming to reach D-Chowk nor leaders were told to go there, he added. The decision to reach D-Chowk in Islamabad instead of holding a sit-in at Sangani came under sharp criticism by many PTI senior leaders.

Briefs

PSX stays
bullish, gains
1,917 more
points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1,917.63 points more points, a positive change of 1.89 percent, closing at 103,274.95 points as compared to 101,357.32 points on the last trading day. Pakistan's cuisine A total of 1,556,252,523 shares were traded during the day as compared to 915,509,804 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 47.097 billion against Rs. 35.978 billion on the last trading day. As many as 462 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 339 of them recorded gains and 85 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 38 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 213,514,857 shares at Rs 1.46 per share, Energyco PK with 196,907,321 shares at Rs 5.72 per share and Fauji Foods Limited with 68,325,507 shares at Rs.13.62 per share. —APP

Rupee gains
08 paise
against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Monday appreciated by 08 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.97 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.05. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.60 and Rs 279 respectively. Pakistan's cuisine The price of Euro decreased by Rs 2 to close at Rs 291.99 against the last day's closing of Rs 293.99, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.85, whereas a decrease of 79 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 352.70 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 353.49. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 paise each to close at Rs75.68 and Rs73.99 respectively. Pakistan's cuisine. —APP

Gold price
dips Rs.1,700
per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.1,700 and was sold at Rs.274,500 on Monday against its sale at Rs. 276,200, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went down by Rs.1,457 to Rs.235,340 from Rs. 236,797 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs.215,728 from Rs. 217,064. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3,400 and Rs.2,914.95, respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$17 to \$2,633 from \$2,650, the Association reported.

Baerbock
urges China
not to support
Russia's war

BERLIN: German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock pressed China on Monday to use its influence to help end Russia's war in Ukraine, warning that Beijing's support for Moscow would damage its relations with Europe. During her one-day visit to Beijing, Baerbock held extensive discussions with her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, focusing on Ukraine war and ongoing efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to the conflict. "Every permanent member of the United Nations Security Council has a responsibility for peace and security in the world; they must not fuel conflicts that threaten the security of us all with its support," Baerbock told reporters after the meeting. "Drones from Chinese factories, and North Korean troops attacking peace in the middle of Europe, violate our core European security interests," she added. —APP

77th anniversary of Pak, Turkiye
diplomatic ties celebrated

Speaking on the occasion, Former Turkish Foreign Minister, MP Mevlut Cavusoglu highlighted the historic brotherhood and unparalleled friendship between Pakistan and Turkiye. He stated that Pakistan and Turkiye face multiple challenges from terrorism to regional instability

ANKARA: An event was organized today at Pakistan House Ankara to commemorate the 77th anniversary of the establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Pakistan and Turkiye. Former Turkish Foreign Minister, currently Member Parliament Mevlut Cavusoglu, Chairperson Human Rights Investigation Commission of Turkish Parliament, Member Parliament Derya Yanik, Former Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Recep Akdag, Member Parliament Burhan Kayaturk, members of parliament representing all Turkish political parties and dignitaries from academia, business and media attended the event. Speaking on the occasion, Former Turkish Foreign Minister, MP Mevlut Cavusoglu highlighted the historic brotherhood and unparalleled friendship between Pakistan and Turkiye. He stated that Pakistan and Turkiye face multiple challenges from terrorism to regional instability. There is a need to further strengthen collaboration in all fields and on all international platforms for productive results to the benefit of both countries. While appreciating the role of ambassador Dr. Yousaf Junaid in enhancing Pakistan Turkiye partnership, he emphasized on the continuation of joint efforts to realize the true potential of Pakistan Turkiye cooperation from trade and economy to defence and security. In her speech, Chairperson Human



Rights Investigation Commission of Turkish Parliament MP Derya Yanik underscored the importance of strategic partnership between Pakistan and Turkiye. She said that Pakistan Turkiye friendship is nourished by our mutual affection and is vital for a prosperous secure future of both countries. She reiterated Turkish support for the legitimate Kashmiri demand for the right of self-determination. In his remarks, Former Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Recep Akdag reiterated that the strength of Pakistan-Turkiye relationship is

anchored in affection and solidarity among the peoples of the two countries. Pakistan and Turkiye relationship has stood the test of times and continues to grow deeper and higher with each passing day, he added. Highlighting the historic Pakistan Turkiye friendship, Member parliament Burhan Kayaturk stated that support from the Muslims of the subcontinent, now Pakistan is still fresh in the minds and hearts of the Turkish people. Both countries have supported each other in good and difficult times and this friendship will grow stronger in

years to come based on our shared values and mutual interests. In his remarks, Ambassador of Pakistan to Turkiye Dr. Yousaf Junaid stated that Iki Devlet, Tek Millet (Two States-One Nation) best describes the fraternal Pakistan Turkiye relationship, founded on common religious, cultural and linguistic affinities, shared history and a spiritual heritage. Our bilateral relations have continued to grow from strength to strength. There are robust institutional mechanisms in place - like the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC)

and the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) which provide a leadership-driven, people-centric and future-oriented focus to steer our partnership across the entire gamut of bilateral relations, ambassador added. While emphasizing on further solidification of cooperation between Pakistan and Turkiye, Ambassador Junaid stated that the interests of Pakistan and Turkiye are intrinsically linked and we look forward to working closely with Turkish brethren towards advancing the mutually reinforcing goals of security, peace and prosperity. —DNA

Israeli army bombards homes in
north Gaza, airstrike kills 15

CAIRO: Israeli forces bombarded houses in overnight attacks in the northern Gaza Strip, killing at least 15 people in one of the buildings in the town of Beit Lahya, Palestinian medics said on Monday. Several others were wounded in the attack and others were missing after a house providing shelter to displaced people was struck, with rescue workers unable immediately to reach them, the Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said. The three barely operational hospitals in the area were unable to cope with the number of wounded, they added. Clusters of houses were bombed and some set ablaze in Jabalia and in Beit Lahya and Beit Hanoun, where the Israeli army has been operating for several weeks, residents said. They said Israeli drones had dropped bombs outside a school sheltering displaced families, suggesting this was intended to scare them into leaving. The Palestinians say Israel's army is trying to clear people out of the northern edge of Gaza with forced evacuations and bombardments to create a buffer zone. The Israeli army denies this. Israel's military campaign in Gaza has killed more than 44,400 people and displaced most of the population, Gaza officials say. Vast swathes of the enclave lie in ruins. Egypt has proposed that a committee made up of non-partisan technocrat figures, and supervised by Abbas's authority, should be ready to run Gaza straight after the war ends. Israel has said Hamas should have no role in governance. An official close to the talks said progress had been made but no final deal had been reached. Israel's approval would be decisive in determining whether the committee could fulfill its role. Egyptian security officials have also held talks with Hamas on ways to reach a ceasefire with Israel. A Palestinian official close to the mediation effort told Reuters Hamas stood by its condition that any agreement must bring an end to the war and involve an Israeli troop withdrawal out, but would show the flexibility needed to achieve that. Israel has said the war will end only when Hamas no longer governs Gaza and poses no threat to Israelis. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said on Sunday there was some indication of progress towards a hostage deal but that Israel's conditions for ending the war had not changed. —APP

Lebanon says two
killed in Israeli
strikes despite truce
The Israeli government did not
immediately comment on the
reports

BEIRUT: At least two people were killed on Monday in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon, Lebanese authorities said, as a ceasefire ending more than a year of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah appeared increasingly fragile. The truce, which came into effect early on Nov. 27, stipulates that Israel will not carry out offensive military operations against civilian, military or other state targets in Lebanon, while Lebanon will prevent any armed groups, including Hezbollah, from carrying out operations against Israel. Lebanon and Israel have already traded accusations of breaches, and on Monday Lebanon said the violations had turned deadly. One person was killed in an Israeli air attack on the southern Lebanese town of Marjayoun, about 10 km (six miles) from the border with Israel, Lebanon's health ministry said. Lebanon's state security said an Israeli drone strike had killed a member of its force while he was on duty in Nabatieh, 12 km from the border. State security called it a "flagrant violation" of the truce. There was no immediate comment from Israeli officials. Public broadcaster Kan and other Israeli media outlets said on Monday that US envoy Amos Hochstein, who brokered the ceasefire after weeks of shuttle diplomacy, had warned Israel against alleged violations. The Israeli government did not immediately comment on the reports. —DNA

Georgia's PM hits back as protests
and resignations intensify

TBILISI: Georgia has seen a fourth night of street demonstrations and a string of public resignations, triggered by the ruling party's decision to suspend a push to start talks on joining the European Union. As tens of thousands of Georgians headed back to the streets of several cities, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze said they had fallen victim to opposition lies and he rejected calls for new elections. He confirmed reports that Georgia's ambassador to the US, David Zalkaliani, had become the latest senior diplomat to stand down, explaining that he had come under considerable pressure. But Kobakhidze sought to deny the reason for the protests, saying on Sunday that "we have not suspended anything, it's a lie". Only three days before, his party Georgian Dream had accused the EU of using talks on joining the union as



government had decided not to put that issue on the agenda until the end of 2028. Pro-EU protesters were out in big numbers again on Sunday night, and when fireworks were aimed at the parliament building as well as riot police, the police responded with water cannon. Large groups of riot police huddled in side streets beside parliament, and it was not until early on Monday that the protests on the main Rustaveli avenue were dispersed. As demonstrators fled the area, a number of people were detained, in-

Iran says it will
keep 'military
advisers' in Syria

TEHRAN: Iran said on Monday that it plans to keep military advisers in Syria after its ally's second city Aleppo was overrun by militants in a surprise offensive. The Islamic republic, which has backed President Bashar Assad since Syria's civil war broke out in 2011, says it only deploys military advisers in the country at the invitation of Damascus. "We entered Syria many years ago at the official invitation of the Syrian government, when the Syrian people faced the threat of terrorism," said foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaie. "Our military advisers were present in Syria, and they are still present" and would remain in the country "in accordance with the wishes" of its government, he told a news conference in Tehran. Baqaie did not specify whether or not Iran would be increasing its forces in Syria in the wake of the lightning militant offensive. His remarks come a day after Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with Assad in Damascus to show support for the Syrian president. —APP

cluding Zurab Japaridze, one of the leaders of opposition alliance Coalition for Change. Georgia's interior ministry said later that 21 officers were injured in clashes overnight, while the pro-opposition president, Salome Zourabichvili, said arrested protesters had been subjected to beatings and cited lawyers who said the majority of them had sustained serious injuries. Georgia's increasingly authoritarian government has been accused by the EU and US of democratic backsliding. On Saturday, the US took the significant step of suspending its strategic partnership with Georgia. Kobakhidze insisted that Georgian Dream was still "committed to European integration... and we are continuing on our path to the European dream". And yet an increasing array of public officials do not appear to believe that is the case. Several ambassadors have resigned, and hundreds of civil servants and more than 3,000 teachers have signed letters condemning the decision to put EU accession on hold. Many Georgians have been shocked by the level of violence directed at Georgian journalists as well as protesters. Dozens of reporters have been beaten or pepper sprayed and some have needed hospital treatment. Georgia's human rights ombudsman Levan Ioseliani said "this is brutality", and he appealed to police not to abuse their power. The prime minister said it was opposition groups and not the police that had meted out "systemic violence". Georgian ex-ambassador to the EU Natalie Sabanadze, now at Chatham House in the UK, believes the level of violence, the string of resignations and civil disobedience indicate a "qualitative change" to the protests now taking place. "Maybe [the government] thought people would be scared, but it's not working out like this," she told the BBC. "Yesterday civil society activists and artists went to the public broadcaster and took it over and forced their way into the live stream. —APP

Shared vision meets ambition as
Macron begins Saudi Arabia state visit

RIYADH: French President Emmanuel Macron's arrival in Riyadh for a three-day state visit is a testament to the deepening ties between France and Saudi Arabia. His visit, which follows an invitation from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, reflects the shared ambition to enhance cooperation across various sectors and to align with Saudi Vision 2030 and France 2030. The state visit underscores a partnership rooted in mutual respect and long-term collaboration. It is the latest of several high-profile exchanges, including Macron's Gulf tour in December 2021, which concluded in Jeddah, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Paris in June 2023, accompanied by a ministerial delegation. These meetings set the stage for France's endorsement of Saudi Arabia's successful bid to host Expo 2030, marking a milestone in bilateral

relations. Macron's schedule includes high-level meetings, a visit to Riyadh Metro, the Saudi-French Economic Forum and cultural stops in Diriyah and AIUla. Elysee Palace views Saudi Arabia's ongoing modernization and reforms as vital to the strengthening of the Kingdom's position as a central player in a

more interconnected Middle East. Accordingly, it supports Saudi bids for major global events, such as hosting Expo 2030, 2034 football World Cup and Winter Olympics, considering them as opportunities for deeper cooperation. The historical relationship between the two nations predates the Kingdom's

establishment. France opened its first consulate in 1830 in Jeddah in a part of the Arabian Peninsula that would later emerge as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was also one of the first countries to recognize Saudi Arabia as a sovereign state in 1926. Nearly a century later, the two countries share common values in international relations, including sovereignty, non-interference and respect for international law. This partnership has evolved to address contemporary challenges. At the Summit for a New Global Financial Compact in June 2023, Saudi Arabia and France emphasized the need for an inclusive financial system to combat inequality, fund green transitions and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Their shared vision highlights the alignment of priorities between the two leaders, united in their

commitment to development and innovation. Through the centuries, France has positioned itself as a global power in defense, energy, engineering, diplomacy, art and culture. But modern France is also undergoing a transformation aimed at adapting its economy to new emerging industries, collectively termed the Fourth Industrial Revolution, empowering its youth, and addressing climate-related challenges. This transformation into a greener, more technology-driven economy aligns with Saudi Arabia's ambitions under Vision 2030. Both countries have prioritized clean energy, with Saudi Arabia emerging as a significant player in renewable energy. Its investments in solar, wind, and hydro projects are matched by its leadership in the circular carbon economy, all key pillars of its Saudi Green and Middle East Green Initiatives. —Agencies

UN chief says
situation
in Gaza
'appalling and
apocalyptic'

CAIRO: The United Nations chief said Monday the situation in war-torn Gaza was "appalling and apocalyptic", warning conditions faced by Palestinians in the territory may amount to the "gravest international crimes". In remarks read out on his behalf at a Cairo conference aimed at increasing humanitarian aid, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged the international community to "build a foundation for sustainable peace in Gaza and across the Middle East". The war in Gaza broke out when Palestinian group Hamas attacked southern Israel on October 7, 2023, resulting in 1,208 deaths, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Hamas says delegation discussed Gaza ceasefire with Egyptian officials. Guterres highlighted the devastating toll of the conflict and the urgent need for international action. "Malnutrition is rampant... Famine is imminent. Meanwhile, the health system has collapsed," he said. The UN chief added that Gaza now has "the highest number of children amputees per capita anywhere in the world", with "many losing limbs and undergoing surgeries without even anaesthesia". The secretary-general also criticised the severe restrictions on aid delivery, calling the current levels "grossly insufficient". According to UNRWA's count, only 65 aid trucks per day had been able to enter Gaza this past month, compared to a pre-war average of 500. International aid organisations have repeatedly raised alarm over the deteriorating conditions in Gaza, warning that civilians are on the brink of famine. They have said aid shipments reaching the enclave are now at their lowest since the start of the war. Israel, which early in the conflict imposed a complete siege for a period on the Hamas-ruled territory, has blamed aid issues on what it says is the inability of relief organisations to handle and distribute large quantities of aid. —Agencies

'Foreign
interference'
not behind
Syria flareup:
Turkiye

ANKARA: Turkiye, which backs militant factions in Syria, rejected Monday any suggestion that "foreign interference" was behind the offensive launched by Islamists in the country's north. "It would be a mistake at this time to try to explain the events in Syria by any foreign interference," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said at a joint press conference in Ankara with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi. The recent flare-up which saw Damascus losing swathes of territory in northwestern Syria, including Aleppo, during a lightning offensive by militants, was due to the government's failure to engage in dialogue with armed opposition groups, he said. "The lack of talks between [Damascus] and the opposition has brought the problem to this point," he said, describing it as "a mistake to ignore the legitimate demands of the opposition." "Damascus must reconcile with its own people and the legitimate opposition," he added. Turkiye did "not want an escalation of the civil war," said the minister who told US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a phone call Sunday that Ankara would support moves "to reduce tension" in Syria. Araghchi said it was crucial "to protect the achievements of the Astana process" to end Syria's civil war, which groups Ankara, Moscow and Tehran, and pledged to convene fresh ministerial talks in the Kazakh capital "soon." The last such meeting took place in mid-November. "Syria must not become a center for terrorist groups," warned Araghchi in reference to the militant factions that staged last week's attack. Fidan also said it was "important that terror organizations do not take advantage of the instability. —APP

Briefs

Dr Aafia case: Govt to send delegation to US

PM approved a summary to provide financial assistance to the delegation

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was informed that PM Shehbaz approved sending a delegation to the US in a petition regarding the recovery of DrAafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani citizen imprisoned in the United States. Justice SardarJazalshaq Khan heard the petition filed by DrFowzia Siddiqui, the sister of Aafia Siddiqui. The court proceedings were attended by Additional Attorney General Munawar Iqbal Dogal, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Dr Fowzia's legal counsel, Imran Shafiq. Judicial assistant ZainabJanjua was also present.

During the session, the Additional Attorney General informed the court that the Prime Minister had approved a summary to provide financial assistance to the delegation tasked with advocating for Aafia's release. A representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs revealed that visa applications for the delegation had been submitted and were likely to be approved within a week. The ministry assured the court of its full support for DrFowzia Siddiqui in her efforts. While Senator Irfan Siddiqui could not join the delegation due to personal reasons, it was said that Senator Bushra would represent the government in the US discussions.

Bilawal for intra-party dialogue

DNA

KARACHI: Expressing concern over increasing incidents of terrorism in the country as well as different decisions taken by the government of late, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday stressed the need for a dialogue between political parties so that consensus could be developed on these issues. Chairing the party's coordination committee meeting, Bilawal directed the committee members to reach out to political parties and discuss these matters with them. "The task should be completed ahead of the PPP's Central Executive Committee meeting," he directed. The meeting had a detailed discussion on the country's political situation. It was decided to approach the federal government in order to bring to its notice the issues confronting the people in Sindh, Balochistan and south Punjab, including those related to water distribution, agriculture and rehabilitation of flood victims.

ICC chief lashes out at US, Russia

WEB DESK

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: The president of the International Criminal Court lashed out at the United States and Russia for interfering with its investigations, calling threats and attacks on the court "appalling." "The court is being threatened with draconian economic sanctions by another permanent member of the Security Council as if it was a terrorist organization," Judge Tomoko Akane, in her address to the institution's annual meeting, which opened on Monday. Akane was referring to remarks made by US Sen. Lindsey Graham, whose Republican party will control both branches of Congress in January, and who called the court a "dangerous joke" and urged Congress to sanction its prosecutor. "To any ally, Canada, Britain, Germany, France, if you try to help the ICC, we're going to sanction you," Graham said on Fox News. This marks the first time the global court of justice calls out a sitting leader of a major Western all.



ISLAMABAD: A view of Pakistan Monument decorated with colorful light in connection with United Arab Emirates (UAE) 53 National Day, in the Federal Capital. - Online

KP designates elements inciting violence in Kurram as terrorists

CM Gandapur's cabinet briefed sectarian provocateurs to be treated as terrorism and placed on Schedule IV; 65 FC checkpoints to be established in area

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has formed a high-level parliamentary jirga to ensure sustainable peace in Kurram, a region plagued by sectarian tensions. The decision was announced during the provincial cabinet's 18th meeting, presided over by Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. The cabinet was briefed on a 22-point agenda, focusing on addressing unrest in Kurram. A grand jirga, comprising local elders, will remain in Kurram until peace is fully restored. The jirga is tasked with identifying disruptive elements and fostering unity among communities. Officials revealed that provocateurs fuelling sectarian hatred will be treated as terrorists and placed on Schedule IV. Additionally, 65 checkpoints will be established along the Kurram Highway by Frontier Constabulary platoons to secure the area. The meeting highlighted significant human and economic losses: Casualties: 133 deaths and 177 injuries reported so far. Compensation:

130 dead as ceasefire brokered in Kurram

DI KHAN: As clashes between rival groups continued for 11 consecutive days in the Kurram tribal district, reports have emerged of a ceasefire between the warring tribespeople. In the latest incidents, six more people were killed and eight injured, bringing the total death toll to 130, with 186 injured. Deputy Commissioner Kurram, JavedullahMehsud, reported that police and security forces have been deployed in various areas of Lower Kurram to enforce a ceasefire, while efforts to negotiate peace in other regions were ongoing. According to a Pakistani news channel, a ceasefire has been achieved, following which police and security forces were deployed in the area. Deputy Commissioner KurramJavedMehsud stated that police and security forces have been stationed at various locations in Lower Kurram to enforce the ceasefire. Efforts to establish peace in other areas are also underway. He further added that due to the unrest in Kurram, all routes, including the main Peshawar-Parachinar highway, remain closed. Transportation along the district's main roads and at the Pak-Afghan Khartachi border is also suspended. The road closures have caused severe shortages of fuel, food supplies, and medicine, worsening the situation for the local population. Previously, the Kurram tribal district had been witnessing continuous clashes and gunfire for 11 days. In the most recent incidents, six more individuals lost their lives, and eight were injured. This has brought the total death toll to 130, with 186 people injured. - DNA

380 million PKR allocated for victims, with more funds available if needed. Weapons Collection: Heavy arms will be confiscated, and illegal bunkers dismantled. The cabinet also decided to provide financial aid to the families of victims and compensate for property damages. Efforts are underway to facilitate the dignified return of displaced families, with a dedicated parliamentary committee formed to oversee the process. To bolster security, bulletproof and bomb-proof vehicles are being provided to civil administration and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) units in Kurram and other sensitive districts. Speaking at the meeting, CM Gandapuremphasised that the unrest in Kurram is not a terrorism issue but a result of deliberate sectarian provocation. "Those spreading hatred are terrorists and will be dealt with accordingly," he said, urging local leaders to cooperate in identifying these elements. The Chief Minister stressed the importance of road safety, adequate medical supplies, and immediate relief for displaced families. He assured that the jirga will play a pivotal role in resolving the issue peacefully.



MASHHAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar arrived in Mashhad, Iran to attend the 28th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers. - DNA

2nd FIR filed over attack on Chinese nationals

BLA commanders named in Karachi explosion case after Chinese engineers targeted near airport

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Monday lodged another first information report (FIR) for suicide bombing outside the Karachi Airport which claimed the lives of three people, including two Chinese nationals. According to the police, the case has been filed under charges including murder, attempted murder, use of explosives, and terrorist funding at the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station, Express News reported. The case was registered on the complaint of Inspector Kaleem Khan Musa of the Airport Police Station under sections 302, 324, 353, 186, 427, 34 of the Pakistan Penal Code, along with provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) 1997. After interrogating the arrested suspects, authorities identified BLA commanders Bashir Ahmad Baloch and Abdul Rahman Gul as masterminds behind the

attack, naming them as accomplices in the bombing near the airport. Last month, Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar claimed that four suspects, including a mastermind behind the suicide bombing near Karachi airport that targeted a convoy of Chinese engineers, have been apprehended. Speaking at a press conference in Karachi alongside Sindh Inspector General (IG) Police, Ghulam NabiMemon, Minister Lanjar provided details of the attack. The main suspect behind the attack was identified as Javed, who coordinated the operation, including reconnaissance and providing information about the Chinese nationals' movements, Lanjar said. He confirmed that two Chinese engineers were among the three individuals killed in the attack, while 11 others were injured. The outlawed separatist group, Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), claimed responsibility for the bombing. Minister Lanjar identified the suicide bomber as Shah Fahad, whose body was mostly destroyed in the explosion.

FCDO commends Pak's reform, pledges full support

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue holds meeting with FCDO delegation

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue chaired a meeting with Ms. Melinda Bohannaon, Director General for Humanitarian and Development at the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). Ms. Bohannaon was accompanied by Ms. Jo Moir, Development Director, and Mr. Louie Dane, Senior Economist. Senior officers from Finance Division also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the Federal Minister apprised the delegation of the government's stabilization and structural reforms program. He outlined key initiatives, including the privatization agenda, rightsizing of the federal government, pension reforms, and reforms in state-owned enterprises (SOEs). He highlighted that the quarter 1 tax revenues (YOY) increased by 25.6% in FY 25. Ms. Bohannaon appreciated the government's comprehensive reforms program and assured the full support to FCDO.

Mahmood Achakzai vows to protect Pakhtuns' rights

STAFF REPORT

QUETTA: Pakhtunkhwa MilliAwami Party (PkM-AP) chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai has reiterated his party resolve to continue his 'party's struggle' for the rights of Pakhtuns. "All human beings are equal. Like the rights of Punjabis, Balochs, and Sindhis in Pakistan, Pashtuns are too entitled to their rights," Achakzai said while addressing the participants of a ceremony on the 51st death anniversary of Khan Abdul Samad Khan. He criticised, what he called, the deprivation of the Pakhtuns from political power, despite their significant sacrifices for the country's independence. Achakzai stated, "The way elections were held in Pakistan is before the world. People voted for Imran Khan; he should be released.

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