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France, KSA sign strategic partnership, call for Lebanon polls

Detailed News On Page-07

Putin is not interested in peace: NATO

Detailed News On Page-07

Chelsea will 'dominate' EPL: Maresca

Detailed News On Page-06



At Riyadh summit

PM urges global action to tackle water scarcity

"We required strong political will and global leadership to overcome water crisis," says premier at Riyadh summit

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has urged the global community to take action to safeguard water resources. Speaking at the 'One Water Summit' in Riyadh, Shehbaz Sharif emphasised that water scarcity is the world's biggest challenge and requires urgent measures. He highlighted the need to preserve water resources, stating that water shortages are exacerbating drought conditions. He also mentioned the devastation caused by the 2022 floods in Pakistan. The prime minister praised Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for his Vision 2030 initiative and other climate-related efforts. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reached Saudi Arabia on a two-day visit to participate in the 'One Water Summit'. Upon arriving at Riyadh's Royal Airport Terminal, the prime minister was warmly welcomed by Prince Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman bin Abdulaziz, the Deputy Governor of Riyadh, along with Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and other senior diplomatic officials. The delegation accompanying the prime minister includes Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi. "Just landed in Riyadh to join Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other global leaders at the One Water Summit, a crucial event to discuss collective strategies for addressing water security challenges," the premier wrote on his official X handle. "Together, we aim to accelerate efforts to combat desertification, tackle water pollution, and promote local, regional, and global action. Let's unite in our pursuit of water sustainability!" he added. During the visit,

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DOM Dar stresses implementation of ECO trade agreement

He urged the member states to redefine the targets and priorities keeping in view the evolving regional and World Order

DNA

MASHHAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday urged the member states to ensure effective implementation of the Economic Cooperation Organization Trade Agreement (ECOTA) to help strengthen regional security and economic prosperity through mutually beneficial intra-regional trade. "However, it is a matter of great concern that the ECO region, comprising an area of 8 million square kilometers and half a billion population - roughly 15% of the World population, has intra-regional trade of, unfortunately, less than 8% of region's aggregate, and only about 2% in global trade, which is in stark contrast to other regional groupings such as the EU where the intra-regional trade stands above 70%, and the ASEAN, where it is around 23%," the deputy prime minister said

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Briefs

ATC grants bail to Omar Ayub

The court instructed him to submit surety bonds of 5,000 rupees for each case

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has granted interim bail to PTI leader Omar Ayub in connection with the cases registered regarding the D-Chowk protest. ATC Islamabad Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra heard the cases against Omar Ayub related to the D-Chowk protest. Omar Ayub appeared in court with his lawyer, Babar Awan. Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra remarked that Omar Ayub was named in case number 540, and once bail was granted, the warrants would be cancelled. The court instructed him to submit surety bonds of 5,000 rupees for each case.

Govt weighs to amend PECA act

Draft amendments to cybercrime law provision establishment of Digital Rights Protection Authority

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has proposed a five-year imprisonment or a fine of Rs1 million for individuals found guilty of deliberately spreading fake news, as part of initial amendments to the cybercrime law. The draft introduces significant changes to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA), including the establishment of a DRPA with extensive powers to block or remove online content deemed harmful to public safety or state interests. According to the draft, spreading false information, inciting fear, or disrupting peace through online platforms could lead to severe penalties.

Spent whole day with soldiers

Army capable of foiling every threat: COAS Asim

The army chief visited Narowal and Sialkot to watch troops training



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir has said that with the support of the nation, the armed forces will foil every conspiracy against the country. According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement on Tuesday, the army chief stated this during a visit to Narowal and Sialkot to watch troops training. The Gujranwala corps commander and the Training IG

welcomed Gen Asim and briefed him on the objectives of the exercise. Gen Asim said that the armed forces are fully capable of safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of "motherland against every threat." The ISPR said that the army chief spent the whole day with soldiers and appreciated the quality of training, professional preparedness and "high morale of the soldiers." The exercise featured integrated fire and manoeuvre operations by various elements, including armour, infantry, mechanised infantry, artillery, air defence, army aviation and anti-tank guided missile units, added the ISPR. It also demonstrated effective employment of electronic warfare capabilities and information operations designed to disrupt enemy communications and counter disinformation strategies in a modern battlefield environment, said media wing of the army. The field exercise is part of the regular training exercises conducted by the armed forces solely as well as with other countries. Last month, Gen Asim Munir visited NCTC to witness the Warrior-VI II joint exercise conducted by the Pakistan Army and People's Liberation Army of China.

Continued on Page 06

South declares martial law amid North Korean threats

President Yeol says martial law declared to protect country from "threat of North Korean communist forces"

AGENCIES

SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday declared martial law in an unannounced late night address broadcast live on YTN television. Yoon said he had no choice but to resort to such a measure in order to safeguard free and constitutional order, saying opposition parties have taken hostage of the parliamentary process to throw the country into a crisis. "I declare martial law to protect the free Republic of Korea from the threat of North Korean communist forces, to eradicate the despicable pro-North Korean anti-state forces that are plundering the freedom and happiness of our people, and to protect the free constitutional order," Yoon said. He did not say in the address what specific measures will be taken. Yoon cited a motion by the country's opposition Democratic Party, which has a majority in parliament, this week to impeach some of the country's top prosecutors and its rejection of a government budget proposal. The surprise move comes as Yoon's People Power Party and the main opposition Democratic Party continue to bicker over next year's budget bill. Opposition MPs last week approved a significantly downsized

Parliament defy president and block martial law

AGENCIES

SEOUL: Hours later, parliament voted to lift the declaration, with the National Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik declaring that lawmakers "will protect democracy with the people." Woo called for police and military personnel to withdraw from the Assembly's grounds. The president's surprising move harkened back to an era of authoritarian leaders that the country has not seen since the 1980s, and it was immediately denounced by the opposition and the leader of Yoon's own conservative party. Following Yoon's announcement, South Korea's military proclaimed that parliament and other political gatherings that could

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NATIONAL DAY OF THAILAND



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Adviser of Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan, Ambassador-designate of Thailand Rongvudhi Virabutr, Heads of Missions of ASEAN States cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Thailand. - DNA

US stands with Pakistan fight against terrorism

Matthew Miller said we want see Government of Pakistan to engage with peaceful protests respectfully

DNA

WASHINGTON: US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller on Monday said that the United States stands with Pakistan in its fight against terrorism. Briefing the media in Washington, Matthew Miller said: "We have said many times, we continue to stand with Pakistan in its fight against terrorism and violent extremism." Replying to a question regarding PTT's recent protests,

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Syrian rebels capture 4 central towns

Syrian government forces reclaim some territory

AGENCIES

BEIRUT: Syrian militants captured four new towns early Tuesday, bringing them closer to the central city of Hama, opposition activists said, while government forces retook some territory they lost last week. The capture of the towns is the latest in the push by militants led by the salafi jihadi Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, as well as Turkiye-backed opposition fighters. Militants now are about 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Hama, the country's fourth largest city. The latest push is part of a wide offensive by forces opposed to Syrian

Continued on Page 06

Curb illegal SIM card usage

Govt to block terrorists' accounts on social media

NACTA, provinces to enhance collaboration with establishment of National Fusion Centre for better coordination

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that comprehensive measures would be taken to curb the activities of banned terrorist organisations on social media platforms, Express News reported. In collaboration with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the government will work to block the accounts of terrorist groups. Provinces are also expected to implement a cohesive strategy to prevent the usage of illegal SIM cards. The decision came during a crucial meeting of the National Action Plan (NAP) Co-ordination Committee on Tuesday. In the briefing, it was revealed that, as of October this year, a total of 7,984 intelligence-based operations had been conducted, resulting in the elimination of 206 terrorists.

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Imran says he 'still holds trump card'

PTI founder directs to register FIR against PM, interior minister over Islamabad "tragedy", says Aleema Khan

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: After the embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) faced an abrupt end to its "final call" protest in Islamabad, Aleema Khan, sister of incarcerated party founder Imran Khan,

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SERENA HOTELS

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Call for more efforts to elevate Islamic finance role

The minister stressed that Islamic finance, unlike conventional systems, ties economic activities to real assets and promotes shared risk, social justice, and poverty alleviation, with global estimates indicating that zakat and waqf contributions exceed \$1 trillion annually

DNA

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, on Tuesday emphasized the critical role of Islamic finance in driving sustainable economic growth and addressing global challenges such as climate change. He was speaking as the chief guest at the 4th World Islamic Finance Forum, organized by the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi here Tuesday, that brought together experts to explore the theme, "Islamic Finance, Innovation, Climate Finance and Sustainable Growth." Ahsan Iqbal noted the projected growth of the Islamic finance industry to over \$6 trillion by 2027, as per the 2023 Islamic Finance Development Report, and highlighted its foundation in the ethical and sustainable principles of Sharia law. These principles, he ex-

plained, ensure an equitable and just economic system through practices such as profit and loss sharing (Mudaraba and Musharaka), the prohibition of interest (Riba) and social responsibility through zakat and waqf.

He stressed that Islamic finance, unlike conventional systems, ties economic activities to real assets and promotes shared risk, social justice, and poverty alleviation, with global estimates indicating that zakat and waqf contributions exceed \$1 trillion annually. Ahsan Iqbal also underscored the growing relevance of Islamic finance in addressing environmental issues, citing the example of Green Sukuk. He pointed out that global issuance of green sukuk surpassed \$20 billion in 2023, financing projects in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and green infrastructure. He referenced Indonesia's issuance of \$2.5 billion in green sukuk and Malaysia's leadership in this sector. The Federal Minister said that Pakistan,

which has suffered significant economic losses from climate-related disasters, is now following suit. The government recently announced its first green sukuk worth \$500 million, aimed at financing renewable energy projects. Iqbal emphasized Pakistan's commitment to increasing its renewable energy share to 60 percent by 2030 in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Highlighting the rise of Islamic fintech, which was valued at \$79 billion in 2023 and projected to reach \$179 billion by 2028, he stressed the importance of innovation, regulatory frameworks, and international cooperation in the future of Islamic finance. Concluding his speech, Ahsan Iqbal commended IBA for hosting the forum and emphasized that Islamic finance, rooted in justice, equity and sustainability, offers a road map for aligning wealth creation with moral and ethical values, benefiting both humanity and the planet.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf exchanging views with Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan H.E Dr Irfan Neziroğlu at Naval Headquarters.

Free glucometers distributed among deserving diabetes patients

PESHAWAR: The Department of Endocrinology & Diabetes at Mercy Teaching Hospital (MTH), Peshawar, organized a Free Glucometer Distribution Event for Type 2 diabetes patients here Tuesday. The initiative aimed at empowering patients with the tools and knowledge necessary for effective self-management of their condition. The event emphasized the importance of regular blood glucose monitoring in managing Type 2 diabetes. Fifty glucometers were provided to deserving patients to promote proactive health management and reduce the risk of complications associated with the disease. Dr Faheemullah, Dr Sajjad Malik and Dr Shehzad, health experts from the Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes, highlighted the significance of such initiatives in raising awareness and improving the quality of life for diabetes patients. The event also featured an educational session where patients were trained on the proper use of glucometers, interpreting blood glucose readings and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Tips on diet, exercise and medication adherence were shared to ensure holistic diabetes care. Mercy Teaching Hospital remains committed to its mission of providing compassionate and comprehensive healthcare to the community.—APP

CM Gandapur asks varsities to focus on students' grooming

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Tuesday asked the public and private universities in the province to focus on students' grooming apart from traditional education to firmly counter the national and international challenges. Addressing the fourth convocation of Iqra National University on Tuesday, he urged students to embrace challenges, remain resilient, and learn from setbacks. "One failure cannot stop your progress; keep moving forward with faith and determination," he added. He

emphasized the importance of celebrating others' successes, calling it a hallmark of great individuals. The CM lauded Iqra National University for its rapid progress and expressed pride in participating in its convocation. Highlighting the role of the private sector, he said, "No government can progress without public and private sector support. I fully support the private sector to groom our youth for national and international competition." Later the CM awarded degrees and medals to graduating students. A total of 438 graduates were conferred

degrees in various disciplines, including 280 Bachelor's, 120 Master's, and 38 PhD degrees. Additionally, 34 students received gold medals for outstanding academic achievements. Gandapur congratulated the graduates, their parents, and teachers. He commended the university's administration for their contributions to the education sector and pledged continued government support. Concluding his address, Gandapur paid tribute to the sacrifices of the province's people and security forces for peace and stability in the region.—APP

Urgent cotton revival policy needed amid 33% decline in production

MULTAN: Cotton production in the country dropped by 33%, and it caused serious concerns among stakeholders and there is urgent need to focus on steps to improve its production. According to Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), 5,190,725 bales were produced as of November 30, 2024. This is a sharp decline from 7,753,473 bales produced in 2023. Punjab saw a 34.19% drop, producing 2,459,684 bales in 2024 compared to 3,736,749 bales in 2023. Similarly, Sindh recorded a 32.01% decrease, with 2,731,041 bales this year against 4,016,724 bales last year. Balochistan contributed only 155,800 bales. Cotton expert Sajid Mahmood attributes the decline to weak policies and practical challenges. He stressed the need for a comprehensive revival program for cotton cultivation. "Conferences and meetings alone cannot resolve the crisis," Mahmood emphasized. He recommended setting a minimum support price of Rs. 10,000 per maund to incentivize farmers. Modern, climate-resilient seeds are crucial to combat pests like whiteflies and pink bollworms. "Farmers need financial stability to prioritize cotton over other crops," Mahmood said. Research institutions like the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC) require immediate funding. Mahmood suggested banning duty-free imported cotton to encourage local growers. "Strengthening research and development is the only way forward," he added. Country's reliance on imported cotton may cost over \$2 billion this year. Effective policies can elevate cotton's status, he added. Sajid Mahmood called for direct market access for farmers, bypassing exploitative middlemen.—APP

EU, WFP to strengthen Sindh's health system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: European Union (EU) in collaborative project with the World Food Programme (WFP) is helping Sindh's health system tackle malnutrition more effectively. With a focus on self-reliance, the initiative equips local health centers to manage acute malnutrition without external aid. In Sindh's Tharparkar district, where malnutrition spikes are frequent, the EU and WFP have implemented the Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) Surge approach. EU, WFP to strengthen Sindh's health system This initiative aims to bolster the local health system's ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to malnutrition cases, particularly during high-demand periods. The project was rolled out in 12 health centers in Chachro, a town grappling with poverty, food insecurity, and limited access to clean water and sanitation. Seasonal infections and droughts often

worsen the situation. The CMAM Surge approach enables health workers to handle increased malnutrition cases without overloading existing resources. Taheem Thammannagoda, who oversees EU humanitarian aid in Pakistan, highlighted the importance of building local capacity. "Frequent climate shocks in Sindh exacerbate malnutrition," she said, adding, "This collaboration aims to help health systems manage surges effectively during crises." WFP Country Director Coco Ushiyama noted that the initiative has set a precedent for cost-effective expansion. "Our partnership with the Government of Sindh and stakeholders in Umerkot and Tharparkar shows that this evidence-based model can be scaled to other districts," she said. The CMAM Surge approach is structured around eight steps. It begins with a situational analysis to identify factors driving malnutrition, such as health challenges and seasonal trends. Health workers are then

trained to manage case spikes, analyze data, and ensure the timely delivery of nutrition supplies. Tools provided to provincial and district health authorities include a real-time e-dashboard. This platform tracks data, detects cases early, and facilitates timely referrals to health facilities, ensuring no delay in care for malnourished individuals. The approach was first piloted in 30 health centers in Umerkot district in 2021. Its success there encouraged the Government of Sindh to consider expanding the program to other vulnerable districts. The next step involves rolling out the approach in Jamshoro district. This expansion reflects the Government's commitment to addressing malnutrition and ensuring better health outcomes across Sindh. The collaboration between the EU and WFP underscores a shared goal: building stronger, self-reliant health systems to combat malnutrition effectively and sustainably.

CDA chief discusses open auction of hotel plots with investors

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, met with a delegation of investors at the CDA Headquarters on Tuesday to discuss the upcoming open auction of prime hotel plots in Islamabad. The meeting was attended by senior officers, including the Member Planning, Member Finance, Member Estate, and other relevant officers from CDA. During the meeting, Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa highlighted the critical need for international-standard five-star hotels in Islamabad to cater to the growing demand for hospitality services. He emphasized that this initiative would play a pivotal role in enhancing the city's capacity to host national and international events, and tourism, thereby boosting the local economy and global recognition of Islamabad as a premier destination. To address this, CDA is offering five-star hotel plots for open auction, marking a significant opportunity to promote the hotel industry and meet the increasing demands for high-quality accommodations in the city. The investors were given the detailed briefing regarding the specific hotel plots being offered for auction, plots number 6 and 8, located in Sector F-5, one of Islamabad's most sought-after and prime location. These plots present an ideal opportunity for investors to develop world-class hotels, commercial centers, and service apartments, which will not only cater to the growing demand for luxury accommodation but also contribute to the expansion of Islamabad's business and tourism sectors. Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa further outlined the investor-friendly terms that have been introduced to encourage participation in the auction. The hotel plots will be available to investors on easy installment plans, with payments spread over two years. Additionally, possession of the plots will be granted upon 75% payment, and an extra 10% discount will be offered for full upfront payment, making this an attractive investment and golden opportunity for both local and international investors. The meeting also provided a platform for investors to share their proposals and suggestions regarding the auction of commercial plots. The investors expressed the need for more facilities to further stimulate participation and encourage more investment in Islamabad's rapidly growing economy. Chairman CDA assured the investors that their suggestions would be carefully reviewed, and viable suggestions would be presented for approval to the CDA Board in the near future. Chairman CDA reiterated that CDA is fully committed to full support to the investors taking part in the auction process. He emphasized the Authority's dedication to providing all necessary facilities and assistance to ensure a seamless experience for investors and to create a business friendly environment which is conducive for investment and economic activities. This initiative is expected to significantly impact Islamabad's hospitality industry, bringing state-of-the-art facilities to the city and further establishing Islamabad as a prime destination for international business and tourism.—APP

ISSI dialogue on "Pakistan and the Evolving Global Order" begins

ISLAMABAD: The 4th edition of ISSI's Islamabad Conclave, with thematic focus on "Pakistan and the Evolving Global Order," commenced today. Former Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani was the chief guest at the inaugural session. In his welcome remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted ISSI's position as a premier think-tank dedicated to informed research and policy advocacy on foreign policy as well as regional and global issues. He also highlighted the Institute's achievements in the arena of multi-stakeholder dialogue, narrative-building, and regional and international outreach. Evaluating the evolving global order, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the

twin processes of turbulence and transformation. He highlighted the growing trend towards multipolarity, the high incidence of wars and armed conflict, genocide in Gaza, erosion of adherence to international law and principles of UN charter, existential threats like climate change, role of Middle Powers and the Global South, and their quest for a just and equitable world order. He underlined that Pakistan – both as a Middle Power and an influential voice in the 'Global South' – espouses important priorities. Averse to bloc politics, Pakistan envisions a world in which cooperation, rather than confrontation, is the primary driver. He added that Pakistan also places greater premium on UN-centered multilateralism, as opposed to creation

of smaller cliques or exclusive groupings. Equally, Pakistan favours such reform of the multilateral institutions that would make them more democratic, transparent, and accountable; not one that further fortifies the existing bastions of privilege, exclusivity, and immunity from reasonable scrutiny. As an elected member of the UN Security Council for the term 2025-26, Pakistan is poised to make its rightful contribution to the issues of peace and security on the global agenda, he concluded. Chief Guest Former Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, in his address, lauded ISSI for transforming the Islamabad Conclave into a vital platform for policy dialogue and its contribution to research and outreach. On the Conclave's theme, he outlined






the challenges posed by major-power contestation, the escalating climate crisis, the ongoing genocide in Gaza and its tragic humanitarian consequences. He emphasized Pakistan's power potential, strategic relevance, nuclear capability and the opportunity offered by its upcoming membership of the United Nations Security Council. Ambassador Jilani outlined four major priorities for Pakistan: unshakable commitment to international law and UN Charter, avoiding bloc politics, building a peaceful neighbourhood, and advocating for a fair and equitable global order. Going forward, he said that for Pakistan, the task is clearly cut out. "Our best way forward remains in pursuing a vision of "comprehensive security" that is human-centered and

helps realize the full potential of our people. Further, we must continue to prudently manage the complex geopolitics and accentuate our pivot to geo-economics. And, to optimally promote these objectives, we must have proactive, imaginative and nimble diplomacy. All this would contribute to Pakistan's emergence as a prosperous and pivotal nation in the 21st century and entail a whole range of opportunities for our spirited and enterprising youth and coming generations." The inaugural session concluded with Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI's Board of Governors, presenting a memento to Ambassador Jilani. The two-day conclave features interactive discussions, expert analyses.—APP

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Briefs

Railways
earn Rs.
33b in five
months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has achieved an unprecedented earning of over Rs. 33 billion during the initial five months of the current financial year 2024-25 with the untiring efforts of the department, despite facing several financial challenges. "The department has earned this revenue from passengers and freight trains, while surpassing the target through the consistent efforts and hard work of the Railway workers," official sources in the Ministry told APP. Pakistan Railways has achieved a historic financial milestone through generating Rs. 33 billion revenue over the past five months, reflecting a 14 percent year-on-year growth compared to Rs. 29 billion during the same period last year. "This marks an incremental gain of over Rs four billion, attributed to enhanced operational efficiency and strategic revenue optimization," the sources revealed. The robust performance follows a record-breaking financial year 2023-24, during which Pakistan Railways earned Rs. 88 billion in revenue, a 40 percent increase from Rs. 63 billion in the previous year. The sources said Pakistan Railways surpassed its initial revenue target of Rs. 73 billion, earning Rs. 47 billion from passenger trains, Rs. 28 billion from goods vehicles, and over Rs. 13 billion from land and other sources. About the Main Line-I (ML-I), they highlighted that groundwork for the ML-1 project, a key infrastructure initiative, is set to commence by next year, signaling long-term growth and profitability for the organization. "This achievement is a testament to the hard work of our employees. We aim to further boost revenue to Rs. One trillion in the next financial year," they added. To a question, the sources said that Pakistan Railways has beefed up preventive measures to reduce passenger train accidents. Only eight minor accidents with no causality took place on the entire railway network in the country. The drastic decrease in accidents has been witnessed due to the efforts being undertaken to reduce trespassing at unmanned level crossings and unauthorized locations, they added. "Our staff is continuously monitoring the railway tracks across the country and conducting thorough inspection of the trains as the safety of the passengers is the top priority of the department," the sources said.—APP

ANF recovers
2621 kg
drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover over 2621 kg drugs worth Rs 190 million and arrested 12 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Tuesday. He informed that 90 grams ice was recovered from a suspect rounded up near a university in Islamabad. 280 grams heroin was recovered from the possession of two suspects arrested near a college on Fateh Jang Road, Attock and three suspects were arrested during the operation. The arrested suspects confessed to selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. A total of 24 kg hashish and 72 kg opium were recovered from a suspect held near Miranji Town in Gujranwala. 6 kg opium and 50.4 kg hashish were recovered in two operations conducted near M-1, Islamabad. Three accused were arrested during the operation. 10 kg ice hidden in a truck was recovered near Ravi Toll Plaza Lahore and two accused were arrested. 2100 kg hashish hidden for smuggling was recovered from Gujistan area of Qilla Abdullah district in Balochistan. 355 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Muslim Bagh in Qilla Abdullah. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of Task force established in view of the recent law and order situation in federal capital.

Pak first electric SUV launched to echo new policy

Not long ago, Privatization Minister Abdul Aleem Khan announced that 30% of vehicles in Pakistan would be converted to electric by 2030, as the South Asian country takes step to combat air pollution and other climate change effects

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Regal Automobiles Industries Ltd, a trailblazer in Pakistan's automotive sector, has made history with the unveiling of the country's first locally assembled electric SUV, the Seres 3. Adeel Usman, Managing Director of RAIL, highlighted that the Seres 3 would redefine the local automotive landscape, positioning the nation as an emerging hub for electric mobility innovation, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday Not long ago, Privatization Minister Abdul Aleem Khan announced that 30% of vehicles in Pakistan would be

converted to electric by 2030, as the South Asian country takes step to combat air pollution and other climate change effects. The minister was echoing the government's New Energy Vehicle (NEV) policy. Hybrid EV sales in Pakistan have more than doubled in the past year.

BYD Pakistan, a partnership between China's giant BYD and Pakistani auto group Mega Motors, said in this September up to 50% of all vehicles bought in Pakistan by 2030 will be electrified in some form. "The new vehicle policy is timely, addressing critical issues like the high oil import bill, underutilized power plants incurring capacity payments, and

transportation-related smog and greenhouse gas emissions," told Dr. Naveed Arshad, associate professor and co-director of the LUMS Energy Institute. "Unlike the earlier policy a few years ago, the updated version is more robust, offering clear targets, tax breaks and government funding for EV projects." Dr Arshad added that traditional automakers must adapt to the changing electric vehicle landscape. The current business model relies heavily on after-sales services such as engine maintenance, which is incompatible with EVs due to their extremely low maintenance requirements.

He suggested that automakers should turn to charging infrastruc-

ture, software R&D and other areas of innovation. In order to fully promote the energy transformation in the transportation sector, new policy emphasizes the establishment of extensive charging infrastructure across Pakistan. Charging stations will be installed in public areas and along major highways, and oil marketing companies are required to set up level 3 charging stations at 10% of their locations. Private charging service providers will receive incentives such as tax exemptions, reduced land costs, and simplified licensing procedures to facilitate installation and power supply. In addition, an important aspect of the NEV policy is the focus on environmental protection.

It introduces safety and recycling standards for batteries and components, while financial incentives will encourage companies to invest in the recycling field and recycling centers will be established across the country. When asked about the potential dominance of Chinese NEVs in the market, Dr Arshad emphasized that "the policy aims to leverage China's strengths in EV technology to benefit Pakistan. While Chinese brands may dominate initially, the policy emphasizes localized production, especially for smaller vehicles such as two-and three-wheelers. Such a targeted approach will increase exports while reducing reliance on imports."

6TH All Pak bilingual declamation contest

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 6th All Pakistan Bilingual Declamation Contest was organized at Cadet College Sanghar (CCS). Senator Qurat-ul-Ain Marri, graced this mega event as the Chief Guest. In the event, 45 x elite institutions from all over Pakistan participated by sending their 90 x best male & female speakers. The contestants delivered impressive speeches on both serious and humorous topics. The jury comprising of experienced panel of judges belonging to reputable institutions of Pakistan evaluated the performance of the speakers. While addressing the audience, the Senator Qurat-ul-Ain Marri emphasized the students to always remain diligent, resilient and optimistic to scale the pinnacle of success as mentioned by one of the speakers, "Rough tides refine the sailor's art." She congratulated the Prize Winning Teams & appreciated CCS efforts for organizing and hosting this mega event in a triumphant manner. Earlier, in his welcome address, Cdr Zeeshan Ali SI(M), Commandant/Principal CCS expressed his profound gratitude to the Chief Guest for gracing the event. He highlighted the significance of Oratory Skills and appreciated contestants for their enthusiastic participation. In English Declamation, Ms Misbah Imran from Isra University, Hyderabad clinched the 1st Position, while Ms Shahnoor Rajpoot from Govt

College University, Hyderabad stood 2nd and Ms Areeba Inman from Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences, Jamshoro secured the 3rd position. While in Urdu Declamation, Cadet Ghazain from Cadet College Ormara achieved 1st position, the 2nd position was won by Ms Mariyam Ameer from NUML University, Karachi & the 3rd position was secured by Ms Zoya Ahmed from Karachi Medical and Dental College, Karachi. The consolation prizes in English Category were awarded to Ms Hareem Fatima from Hayat College Fatima Campus & Mr Abbas Mehdi from Govt Degree Boys College, Nawabshah and in Urdu Category to Cadet Abdul Haseeb from Marine Academy, Karachi & Ms Afaf Sikandar from Tabani's College (PECHS Campus). The Champion Trophy of the 6th All-Pakistan Bilingual Declamation Contest - 2024 was clinched by the team of Cadet College Ormara, while the Runner-up Trophy was won by the team of University of Karachi. To maintain the interest of audience, CCS cadets performed cultural shows in between the declamation sessions. Horse & Buggy Rides, Shooting at CCS firing range, visit of Faiz Mahal Art Gallery, Swimming Pool & CCS Orchards and serving of Fresh Milk Tea at College Dairy Farm were also arranged for Participants & Guests. The teams thoroughly enjoyed their stay and were thankful for great hospitality showed by CCS management.

Khunjerab Pass achieves milestone with year-round operation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Starting December 1, the Khunjerab Pass, a key land border crossing between China and Pakistan at Khunjerab, transitioned from a seasonal gateway to a year-round open land port, marking a significant milestone in facilitating trade and exchanges between China and Pakistan. The Khunjerab Customs reminded travelers that the port will be closed on weekends. Since the resumption of passenger customs clearance on April 1 this year, the Pass has witnessed a steady increase in traffic. By the end of October, it has

recorded over 50,000 inbound and outbound passengers, while the number of inbound and outbound vehicles exceeded 11,000. According to the Khunjerab Customs, it has also overseen an import and export cargo volume of 40,900 tonnes by the end of October, marking a significant year-on-year increase of 42.6% in vehicle traffic and 72.7% in trade volume. Khunjerab Port on the China-Pakistan border is a strategic point on the Karakoram Highway, which links Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China and Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Located around 5,000 meters above sea level, the Khunjerab Pass usually remains open from

April 1 to November 30 every year, and remains closed from December 1 to March 31 of the following year because of cold weather and lack of oxygen at a high altitude, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday. China and Pakistan issued a joint press statement last October, announcing that the Khunjerab Pass will function all year round, and agreed to step up the infrastructure construction and management of the pass and improve its passage conditions. With year-round access now established, the port is expected to further enhance economic cooperation and cultural exchange between the two neighboring countries.

AIOU provides free education to PWDs: VC

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is making every possible effort to bring prosperity and convenience to the lives of persons with disabilities. To help them lead dignified and successful lives, the university offers free education from matriculation to PhD level," said the Vice-Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, in his statement on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Dr. Nasir further stated that the university has also established an "E-Learning Accessibility Center" in its library specifically for visually impaired students. This state-of-the-art center is equipped with specialized computers, headphones, and advanced software, enabling students with disabilities to easily access HEC's digital library, e-books, research articles, journals, and theses. It is a matter of pride that AIOU is the only public-sector university in the country providing free education to persons with disabilities up to the postgraduate level.—APP

Police arrest seven renting rules violators

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police here on Tuesday carried out search operations in the jurisdiction of different police stations and arrested seven renting rules violators. According to a police spokesman, the search operations were conducted in order to maintain law and order and flush out suspects following the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani. He informed, senior police officers and police personnel including women police took part in the search operations. Police checked houses, shops, hotels, tenants and a large number of individuals during the search operations.—APP

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Lost bag handed over to owner

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) officials on Tuesday found and handed over a lost bag to its owner. According to details, the NHMP received a call on helpline number 130 that a person lost his bag near Chakri interchange having Rs 30,000 amount artificial jewellery in the bag. The NHMP North zone officials took immediate action on his request and after searching the area traced the bag and handed over it to him. The owner expressed his gratitude and admiration for the Motorway Police's honesty and dedication to their duty.—APP

Death anniversary of poet Daman observed

ISLAMABAD: Death anniversary of revolutionary Punjabi poet and writer Ustad Daman was observed on Tuesday. Born on September 4, 1911 in Lahore, his real name was Chiragh Deen. He was a tailor by profession and also created precious piece of writings published under the title of "Daman De Moti." Ustad Daman's poetry condemned all sorts of oppression and called for civil rights and a respectable place for Punjabi language. His poems are still widely quoted in Punjab as well as in other regions of Pakistan. Ustad Daman died on December 3, 1984 in Lahore.—APP

MOST EXPERIENCED
MANUFACTURERS &
EXPORTERS OF
MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS
IN
PAKISTAN

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

KARATE

BOXING

KOREAN BOXING

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Seizure of loudspeakers

UNDER the cover of the ongoing bloody war in the Gaza Strip, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir issued orders to police leadership to tighten measures against the use of loudspeakers for the call to prayer in mosques within 1948 occupied Palestine (Israel), particularly in cities inhabited by Palestinians and settlers, such as Jerusalem, Ramla, Lod, Haifa, and Nazareth. Israeli army radio reports that this step responds to complaints from Israelis who find the sound of the call to prayer "disturbing". The directives include the confiscation of loudspeakers used for the call to prayer in mosques, and in cases where confiscation is not possible, financial penalties are imposed as a punitive measure. Ayman Odeh, head of the Arab Joint List in the Knesset, said, "Ben Gvir is a transient figure, no matter how powerful he becomes, and the call to prayer is stronger than all racists and all man-made laws." Odeh confidently affirmed the strength of the call to prayer, warning against efforts to create internal conflict among citizens. He cautioned all institutions that the Netanyahu-Ben Gvir government is methodically and deliberately leading toward this conflict. Arab Knesset member Walid al-Hawashlah said, "Our mosque minarets remain tall, and the voices of the call to prayer resound, no matter how much a fascist minister or a racist official tries to silence them. Ben Gvir and his ilk are incapable of extinguishing the call to prayer. Israeli society today calls for the release of hostages in Gaza, while the Prime Minister and an entire state are hostages in the hands of Ben Gvir and religious fascism." He added that the occupation and its fascist ministers are what the Israeli society wants. In this context, political analyst Yassin Azdine said in remarks to the PIC correspondent that the Israeli government is exploiting the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip to enact Judaizing laws. Azdine added that the occupation desires a war against Islam and Muslims, emphasizing the need to confront these arbitrary laws with more steadfastness and resilience. He explained that the Israeli government aims to seize land and erase identity, killing in the Gaza Strip, confiscating land and areas in the West Bank, and attempting to erase identity and culture in the 1948 occupied Palestine. Azdine said that Ben Gvir and his ilk in the Israeli government see this as the right time to erase the Arab Islamic identity of Palestine, and the war on the call to prayer is one aspect of this declared war. He said, "They estimate that they can pass whatever they want in light of the shameful Arab and Islamic silence and the complicity of America and Europe, especially since the Trump administration includes anti-Islam figures and will thus strongly support such steps." He stressed that Ben Gvir will not stop at banning the call to prayer, which he describes as noise; there will be successive steps that may lead to closing mosques or seizing them. Azdine concluded by recalling that the occupation state demolished three mosques last month, two in Jerusalem and one in the Negev. Hamas warned that the decision by the extremist Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir to confiscate loudspeakers from mosques in the occupied Palestinian territories of 1948 heralds an escalation of a religious war that Israel and its leaders are trying to ignite. Hamas added in a statement on Sunday that Ben Gvir's description of the call to prayer as "noise" is "a serious crime and aggression against our mosques and our people, and a new attack on freedom of worship."

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Malaysia and Asean agency

ON October 11, Laos handed the baton of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) chairmanship to Malaysia during the closing ceremony of the 44th and 45th Asean Summits and Related Summits. Malaysia will officially assume the chair on January 1 next year with the theme "Inclusivity and Sustainability". In 2015, when Malaysia last held the Asean chairmanship, the world was in the throes of violence. From Bamako to Beirut, Paris to the Sinai desert, communities mourned hostages taken, wounded, or killed – sometimes in the hundreds – in various extremist attacks. A few days before Kuala Lumpur welcomed delegates to the 27th Asean Summit, Malaysian Bernard Then's severed head was found in southern Philippines, months after he had been abducted from the Malaysian state of Sabah by Abu Sayyaf militants. Ten years on, the strategic landscape looks decidedly different in Southeast Asia. Myanmar remains locked in intractable civil strife since the junta's 2021 coup, and clashes in the South China Sea threaten to metastasize into a wider regional conflict. With Asean paralysed on both fronts, dialogue partners' preference for multilateral arrangements such as Aukus and the Quad, and an unpredictable US president back in the White House, Asean centrality remains in question despite years of formal community-building since Malaysia presided over the 2015 launch of the Asean Community in Kuala Lumpur. While the cessation of hostilities in Myanmar and in the South China Sea will no doubt remain key priorities for Asean, any expectations of material success on these fronts in 2025 have to be tempered. The rotational, one-year term of the Asean chairmanship means that chairs can only add on to their predecessors' efforts and organisational foundations established in previous years. Still, Asean faces other contemporary challenges, many of which it has identified in the Asean Community Vision 2045. Malaysia's theme of "Inclusivity and Sustainability" is a timely reminder to reprioritise a "people-oriented, people-centred" community. There is gathering momentum to do so. The catastrophic annihilation of Gaza and the brazen impunity of the powerful have once again laid bare what previous social, economic and political inflection points such as the 1998 Asian financial crisis, 2008 global financial crisis, and Covid-19 pandemic had already made clear: the international order needs reordering because it no longer responds to the needs of the majority. The established powers that thumped their chests as architects of multilateralism and international law are themselves actively undermining those very institutions. Asean members have begun to diversify their strategic portfolios in tentative but telling ways. The expansion of cross-border local currency transactions and regional payment connectivity among member states to ensure financial resilience is one example. Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam becoming partner countries of Brics is another. Others include the expected upgrade of the Asean-China Free Trade Agreement in 2025 and last year's establishment of the Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council summit.

Balance of power in the Persian Gulf

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



From Iran's perspective, its military posture and regional ambitions are shaped by a combination of historical grievances, security concerns, and ideological aspirations. The 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War left a lasting impact on Iran's strategic thinking, reinforcing its emphasis on self-reliance and deterrence. This experience, coupled with ongoing threats from the U.S. and Israel, drives Iran's pursuit of asymmetrical warfare capabilities, including its missile program and support for proxy groups like Hezbollah and the Houthis

THE concept of strength and weakness is inherently relative, particularly in geopolitics, where nations must be assessed in the context of their peers rather than global superpowers like the United States. In the Persian Gulf a region characterized by volatile geopolitical dynamics, strategic importance due to its energy resources, and diverse military capabilities the relative strength of nations determines the balance of power and the outcomes of conflicts. Terrain and geography play a constant role in shaping military strategies, yet history has shown that psychological factors, such as fear and determination, often override physical barriers, making war a persistent possibility in human affairs.

Iran occupies a central position in the Middle East, both geographically and geopolitically. It has long been at odds with major global players like the United States and Israel, engaging in a mix of direct confrontations, proxy wars, and strategic deterrence. Iran possesses the largest army in the Middle East, a formidable armored force, and an extensive missile arsenal. These capabilities establish it as a key regional power. Critics have argued, however, that Iran faces logistical challenges in deploying its armored forces effectively due to difficult terrain, long distances to potential battlefronts, and limitations in fuel supply for extended military campaigns. While these concerns merit consideration, they may underestimate Iran's strategic capabilities. As a major oil producer, Iran has sufficient refining capacity to meet its military fuel needs. Additionally, its geographical positioning and infrastructure provide it with multiple avenues for projecting power. For example, Iran's road and transport networks facilitate movement across its mountainous terrain, enabling it to engage neighboring states and adversaries effectively. Iran's missile capabilities significantly enhance its strategic reach. Its arsenal is believed to include ballistic and cruise missiles capable of striking targets across the Middle East, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, and U.S. military bases in the region. This missile program serves as both a deterrent and an offensive tool, compensating for any perceived limitations in its conventional military forces. The Persian Gulf's strategic importance stems from its vast energy reserves, crucial maritime trade routes, and proximity to key geopolitical players like Russia, China, and

the European Union. In this context, Iran's military capabilities and strategic ambitions pose significant challenges to regional stability. Iran's ability to project power extends beyond its immediate neighbors. Its strategic position allows it to strike in multiple directions, potentially including northward into Central Asia and Russia. While an Iranian confrontation with Russia is unlikely given their current cooperative relationship, the potential for realignment or conflict remains an important consideration for regional planners. The risk of a major war in the Middle East cannot be dismissed.

A conflict involving Iran could escalate rapidly, drawing in regional and global powers. For instance, Iran's adversaries, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel, would likely seek external support, particularly from the United States. However, the U.S.'s ability to respond swiftly with a blocking force is questionable due to logistical challenges and political considerations. This creates a precarious situation in which regional powers must increasingly rely on their own capabilities or alliances to ensure security. The United States has long maintained a vital interest in the Persian Gulf, primarily to ensure the free flow of oil and maintain regional stability. However, its ability to intervene decisively in a large-scale conflict is constrained by several factors. First, the U.S. faces logistical challenges in rapidly deploying forces to the region, particularly if faced with simultaneous crises elsewhere. Second, domestic political pressures and war fatigue may limit the extent to which the U.S. is willing to commit resources to Middle Eastern conflicts. These limitations create a strategic dilemma for the U.S. and its allies. On the one hand, allowing Iran to dominate its neighbors could undermine regional stability and embolden other revisionist powers, such as China and Russia. On the other hand, a direct military confrontation with Iran could lead to protracted conflict, significant economic disruptions, and a further erosion of U.S. influence in the region. To navigate these challenges, the U.S. must adopt a nuanced approach that combines military preparedness with diplomatic engagement. Strengthening alliances with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, enhancing missile defense systems in the region, and supporting proxy forces could help counterbalance Iran's influence

without resorting to direct conflict. Simultaneously, efforts to engage Iran diplomatically, such as reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), could help de-escalate tensions and create opportunities for cooperation on shared interests, such as combating terrorism and ensuring maritime security.

From Iran's perspective, its military posture and regional ambitions are shaped by a combination of historical grievances, security concerns, and ideological aspirations. The 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War left a lasting impact on Iran's strategic thinking, reinforcing its emphasis on self-reliance and deterrence. This experience, coupled with ongoing threats from the U.S. and Israel, drives Iran's pursuit of asymmetrical warfare capabilities, including its missile program and support for proxy groups like Hezbollah and the Houthis. Iran's strategic calculus also reflects its desire to assert leadership in the Islamic world and challenge the U.S.-led order in the Middle East. By projecting power and influencing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon, Iran seeks to expand its sphere of influence and counterbalance rival powers, particularly Saudi Arabia. However, Iran's aggressive posture carries significant risks. Its actions have alienated many of its neighbors, increased its economic isolation, and exposed it to potential military retaliation. Balancing these risks with its strategic objectives requires careful calculation and a willingness to adapt its policies to changing circumstances. The prospect of a major war in the Middle East remains a sobering possibility. While Iran's capabilities and strategic position give it the means to initiate conflict, the consequences of such a war would be devastating for the region and beyond. Economic disruptions, humanitarian crises, and the potential for escalation into a broader conflict involving global powers underscore the need for preventive measures. To reduce the likelihood of war, regional and global actors must prioritize conflict resolution and confidence-building measures. This includes addressing underlying grievances, such as disputes over borders, resources, and ideological differences, as well as creating mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation. For Iran, demonstrating a willingness to engage constructively with its neighbors and the international community could help alleviate tensions and build trust.

Pakistan's growing youth unemployment

Shehryar Khan

Youth unemployment has far-reaching consequences.

It fuels social unrest, increases crime rates, and exacerbates mental health issues. The Pakistan Youth Survey 2022 revealed that 43% of unemployed youth experience symptoms of depression or anxiety.

Moreover, the lack of economic opportunities is driving a brain drain, with thousands of talented professionals emigrating annually in search of better prospects abroad. Potential solutions include the reformation of our education system...

YOUTH unemployment in Pakistan is rapidly becoming one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges of the 21st century. With a significant portion of the country's population under the age of 30, the inability to provide meaningful employment to its youth poses a grave threat to Pakistan's economic stability and social cohesion. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the national unemployment rate stood at 6.9% in 2023. Still, the situation is far more alarming among the youth, with an estimated 16% of individuals aged 15-24 unemployed. Unfortunately, we live in a country that is experiencing a demographic dividend, with nearly 64% of its 240 million population below the age of 30, according to the UNDP. This youthful workforce, if utilized effectively, has the potential to drive economic growth. However, failure to integrate these young individuals into the labor market risks turning this advantage into a liability. The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that in 2022, Pakistan's youth unemployment rate was among the highest in South Asia, outpacing neighboring countries like India and Bangladesh. However, numerous factors contribute to this growing crisis. Firstly, our education system often fails to equip students with skills relevant to the modern job market. A 2022 World Bank re-

port highlighted that only 10% of Pakistani graduates are employable in the technology sector, a key driver of global economic growth. This mismatch leaves graduates with degrees that do not translate into job opportunities. Secondly, our economy has faced persistent challenges, including high inflation, mounting external debt, and political instability. These factors discourage both local and foreign investment, stunting job creation. The industrial sector, traditionally a significant source of employment, contracted by 3.6% in FY2023, as per the State Bank of Pakistan. Furthermore, with an annual population growth rate of 2%, Pakistan's labor market is unable to absorb the increasing number of job seekers. Approximately 4 million people enter the job market every year, but the economy generates only 1.5 million jobs annually, according to the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). Youth unemployment has far-reaching consequences. It fuels social unrest, increases crime rates, and exacerbates mental health issues. The Pakistan Youth Survey 2022 revealed that 43% of unemployed youth experience symptoms of depression or anxiety. Moreover, the lack of economic opportunities is driving a brain drain, with thousands of talented professionals emigrating annually in

search of better prospects abroad. Potential solutions include the reformation of our education system to align curricula with market demands. Emphasizing STEM education, vocational training, and digital literacy can help bridge the skills gap. Additionally, simplifying the process of starting a business and offering financial incentives can encourage youth-led startups. Political stability and business-friendly policies also play an integral part in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). Special economic zones (SEZs) under CPEC can be leveraged to create jobs for the youth. Government-led public works programs can provide immediate employment while addressing infrastructure deficits. Programs like the Benazir Income Support Program can also be extended to support job training initiatives. Pakistan's youth unemployment crisis is a ticking time bomb that requires urgent and sustained intervention. The country's future depends on its ability to harness the potential of its young population. By addressing systemic issues in education, governance, and economic policy, Pakistan can turn this crisis into an opportunity for growth and innovation. Failure to act, however, will leave millions of young Pakistanis without hope, and the nation without a prosperous future.

Briefs

Israel continues to pound Gaza

WEB DESK

GAZA CITY: Israel has continued to pound Gaza, killing dozens and issuing new evacuation threats. The Israeli military launched strikes overnight that killed at least 14 people in the north of the enclave, according to reports on Tuesday. Meanwhile, new forced evacuation orders were issued, calling on people to leave areas in the southern city of Khan Younis. Medics reported that eight people were killed in a series of overnight strikes in Beit Lahiyah, while four others were killed in Gaza City. A further two people were killed in attacks in Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps in the northern part of the Strip. Later, the Israeli army ordered residents in the districts of Khan Younis to flee, prompting a westward exodus in the early morning hours. "For your own safety, you must evacuate the area immediately and move to the humanitarian zone," the army said in a statement on X, citing rocket launches by Palestinian groups. Research states that there are no "humanitarian zones" in which people can find safety, and that forced evacuation orders do not help those fleeing to find safety or shelter from harm. The use of these terms by Israel is aimed at bestowing legitimacy on forced displacement and creating the illusion of adherence to humanitarian law, the Action For Humanity nongovernment organisation stated.

PHC grants interim bail to Bushra Bibi

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has approved interim bail for Bushra Bibi, the wife of Imran Khan, until December 23. Justice Waqar Ahmad heard the petition for Bushra Bibi's interim bail. The petitioner's lawyer informed the court that 27 different cases have been filed against Bushra Bibi. The court inquired whether all these 27 cases were filed in the same district and if they were all registered on the same day. Bushra Bibi's lawyer clarified that some cases were filed on the same day, while others were filed on different days. The court remarked that the purpose of granting bail was to ensure that the individuals appear before the relevant courts. Later, the court granted interim bail to Bushra Bibi until December 23. - Agencies



RIYADH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the family photo of the One-Water Summit. - DNA

Tarar: PTI trying to hoodwink masses through false narrative

He said even the PTI Chairman, Barrister Gohar remarked that there were only 12 bodies and all other claims were bogus. He said there was no dead, if the PTI had any dead bodies they should present in front of media

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was trying to hoodwink the people through fake narrative and lies. Lambasting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, in a media talk, he said that the party was creating a false narrative of firing on the protesters. He once again challenged the PTI to present a single piece of evidence showing a law enforcement agencies personnel firing bullets directly on the protesters. "There is not a single video in which law enforcement agencies person can be seen directly firing upon protesters. They have all kinds of videos but there is no video evidence

(of direct firing) as this never took place", he maintained. The minister said that a video of a man running away in which he was saying that he hit by a gunshot, went viral. Attaullah Tarar said the same person in another video was claiming that he had got an injury on his hand. However when in the video, he opened the bandage on his hand no bullet mark was visible on his hand. Tarar stated that the PTI was defaming the state through their concocted stories based on lies. The PTI is spreading lies about bodies and different leaders were giving different figures of fatalities ranging from a dozen to 4000. A senior leader of the PTI Lateef Khosa claimed that over 150 bodies were lying at his residence. He said even the PTI Chairman, Barrister Gohar remarked that there were only 12 bodies and all other claims were bogus. He said

there was no dead, if the PTI had any dead bodies they should present in front of the media. Taking a dig on the PTI, he said these bodies were found on TikTok, Facebook, X, WhatsApp and other social media platforms, but in reality, there were no dead bodies. He said the PTI was trying to hoodwink the nation through its lies and misleading statements. He said that it was unfortunate that such people form political parties who had no sense. He also pointed out four Rangers personnel and a police officer were martyred, but no one from the PTI expressed sympathy with the bereaved families. The PTI misrepresents target security forces and police personnel but later claim of make hue and cry of killing of their party workers. The minister said that on social media, it was claimed that Jam Amanullah, a boy from Khan-

pur was killed in law enforcement agencies firing. Now his father Jam Tahir has issued a video in which he clarified that his son was alive and sitting beside him in his home. He also made it clear that neither United States nor United Kingdom could allow armed rioters to protest outside White House and 10 Downing Street. About the economic situation, the minister said that due to the prudent policies of the government, inflation has fallen to a 70-month low which was a manifestation that Pakistan's economy was growing. He said that foreign exchange reserves have exceeded \$ 11 billion mark and Consumer Price Index was going down every month. He said that the stock market had broken several records and crossed the 100,000 points mark whereas the interest rate had been reduced to 15 percent and the KIBOR rate to 13 percent.

1mln youth to be trained in under Bano Qabil: Naeem

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman Tuesday said that one million youth will be provided free IT training in the next few years under the 'BanoQabil project' of Alkhidmat Foundation. He said that new BanoQabil Centers will also be established in Rawalpindi, following Karachi and Lahore. He was speaking at the Youth Empowerment Session organized by Alkhidmat Foundation on the occasion of International Volunteer Day at Pak-China Center. He congratulated Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan for serving in almost eight major sectors and continuing its mission through projects like earthquake and flood relief, healthcare, education and training of orphans, housing, scholarships, and the BanoQabil program. He praised Alkhidmat Foundation's efforts in providing thousands of orphaned and destitute children with free education, training, and housing, particularly through its premier educational institutions like Aghosh, which cater to the educational needs of underprivileged children. Vice Ameer Mian Muhammad Aslam, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Punjab North Dr. Tariq Saleem, and Alkhidmat Foundation

President Dr. Rizwan were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Hafiz Naeem emphasized on provision of employment and development opportunities to the youth in the IT sector. He called for ensuring uninterrupted internet facility to the citizens and said that there must be ethical guidelines for the use of technology. He said that the Constitution obliges the state to provide free and quality education to all citizens. However, he said that 25 million children in the country are still deprived of education. Hafiz Naeem emphasized on implementing a uniform curriculum and education system. He stressed the need of implementing the economic system of Islam in the country as the interest-based capitalist system deprives people of equal opportunities and concentrates wealth in a few hands. He reaffirmed Jamaat-e-Islami's commitment to strive for an Islamic economic system in line with the spirit of the Constitution of Pakistan. Hafiz Naeem emphasized implementation of Urdu as the national and official language as mandated by the Constitution and upheld by the Supreme Court, calling for all government correspondence, education, and judicial proceedings to be conducted in Urdu.

Taliban close medical institutes to women

Robert Dickson, the Charge d'Affaires of UK Embassy for Afghanistan, condemned the ban on girls' education in medical fields

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: Students enrolled in medical programs at various health institutes in Afghanistan report that they were not allowed to attend classes on Tuesday, December 3rd. Female students studying midwifery and nursing confirmed to Khaama Press that they were informed to stay home until further notice. One student from a medical institute in western Kabul told media that they were prohibited from entering their classrooms,

and the staff vaguely informed them that "classes are temporarily suspended." When students protested, the authorities at the institute explained that the Taliban had issued an order to close the institutes until further notice. This directive from the Taliban regime, which is believed to have been communicated verbally, has sparked widespread reactions. Khaama Press attempted to contact the spokesperson and officials from the Ministry of Public Health of the Taliban for comment, but they declined to provide any responses by the time this report was compiled.

SC seeks report in missing persons case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday issued notices to the interior minister, the Attorney General of Pakistan, and other parties in the missing persons case and sought reports from all relevant institutions. In October 2023, former senator and senior lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan filed a constitutional petition in the SC to "challenge the illegal and unlawful practice of enforced disappearances". A month later, the SC returned the petition for being an "individual grievance" and "not raising any question of public importance". In January, the SC directed the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances to submit a "comprehensive report" on missing persons, along with the details of all production orders issued. A six-member Constitutional Bench headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan heard the case on Tuesday. Advocates Latif Khosa and Faisal Siddiqui appeared on behalf of the petitioner, Ahsan.

UN Women's rolling resistance arrives in Peshawar

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: UN Women Pakistan's Rolling Resistance-a theatre on wheels campaign made its impactful stop in the city at the Institute of Management Sciences (IMS) as part of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The campaign, under the theme #KojawaaZNahi (#NoExcuse), leverages the transformative power of theatre to spark dialogue and mobilize collective action against gender-based violence (GBV). The event brought together leaders from academia, government, and civil society. Zainab Qaiser Khan, Head of Peshawar Office, UN Women Pakistan, reiterated the campaign's transformative vision: "Through innovative platforms like Rolling Resistance, we aim to foster empathy, challenge harmful norms, and inspire action. Gender-based violence is not just a women's issue; it is a human rights crisis affecting every facet of society."

Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong calls on Bilawal Bhutto

The meeting comes more than a month after the Chinese ambassador urged Islamabad to crack down on terrorist groups targeting Chinese nationals in the country



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong arrived at Zardari House in Islamabad to meet Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday. The visiting dignitary and Bilawal discussed bilateral relations between China and Pakistan. The two sides also discussed ways to increase social and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Former foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar was also present during the meeting. The meeting comes more than a month after the Chinese ambassador urged Islamabad to crack down on terrorist groups targeting Chinese nationals in the country. "Top priority should be the security of the Chinese personnel in Pakistan because they come to Pakistan to

participate in Pakistan's development," Jiang Zaidong told journalists at a press conference at his residence at the Chinese Embassy. "They [Chinese] are innocent and they don't deserve this kind of sacrifice and their families do not deserve this kind of tragedy," the envoy added. The Ambassador said during the recent visit of the Chinese premier, the Pakistani leader made commitments that the government would crack down on terrorism and effectively safeguard the security of Chinese personnel, institutions and projects. However, Pakistan called Chinese ambassador's comments "perplexing" and contrary to established diplomatic traditions between the neighbors. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mumtaz Baloch said at a weekly news conference in Islamabad that the government is dedicated to ensuring the security of Chinese nationals, projects, and institutions in Pakistan.

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