

strict action to curb human trafficking

"Recurrence of such incidents is due to sluggish actions against people involved," says premier 40 more Pakistanis feared dead

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Following the Greek boat tragedy which claimed the lives of five Pakistani nationals, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed the authorities concerned to take concrete actions against human trafficking bringing defame to the country. The premier, while chairing a meeting to discuss the death of Pakistani nationals in the incident and the measures to curb human trafficking, called for strict action against the people involved in the trafficking of innocent people to other countries. He also sought a report on the incidents of human trafficking during the last year involv-ing Pakistani citizens. A day earlier, Ambassador to Greece Aamar Aftab Qureshi confirmed that more than 80 Pakistanis, including minors, were aboard the unfortunate vessels which capsized near the European country on Saturday.

"The rescue operation is underway. [However] prospects of survival of those missing are low," said the diplomat while underscoring the dozens of Pakistanis - who were travelling illegally from Libya on multiple boats - are still missing.

The Foreign Office said that its Crisis Management Unit (CMU) had been activated to assist Pakistanis in Greece. Pakistani nationals in Greece and their families are urged to contact the CMU via telephone at 051-9207887 or by email at cmu1@mofa. gov.pk. Families of the missing Pakistanis can reach the Embassy of Pakistan in Greece to provide details at +30-6943850188. Speaking during the meeting today, PM Shehbaz recalled that 262 Pakistani nationals had lost their lives in another incident in the same area last year and expressed his displeasure over inaction against those responsible. "The recurrence of such incidents is due to the sluggish actions against the people involved," he added. The prime minister instructed the immediate implemen-

UNGA adopts Pakistan sponsored resolution on self-determination

It stresses that the full realization of this right is essential for the protection and advancement of human rights worldwide

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: United Nations General Assembly Unanimously Adopts Pakistan-Sponsored Resolution on "Universal Realization of the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination" The United Nations General Assembly has adopted the Pakistan-sponsored flagship resolution on the "Universal Realization of the Right of the Peoples to Self-determination". Adopted by consensus, the resolution was supported and co-sponsored by a large number of countries from different regions around the world. The resolution reaffirms the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination, including those living under foreign occupation, colonial domination, and alien subjugation. It stresses that the full realization of this right is essential for the protection and advancement of human rights worldwide. For over four decades, Pakistan has tabled this annual resolution to draw attention to the ongoing struggles of peoples denied their right to self-determination, particularly those living under oppressive occupations. The resolution

Continued on Page 06

meeting' He will also participate in the special meeting

of D-8 on the situation in the Middle East

DNA

CAIRO: Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif arrived today in Cairo on an official visit to Egypt to lead the Pakistan delegation at the 11th Summit of the Developing Eight (D-8) countries being held in Cairo from 18-19 December. Minister for Public Business Sector of the Arab Republic of Egypt H.E. Mr. Mohamed Shimi along with senior Egyptian and officials of the Pakistan Embassy in Cairo received the Prime Minister upon arrival at the airport. The theme of the 11th D-8 Summit is "Investing in Youth and Supporting SMEs: Shap-ing Tomorrow's Economy."

Continued on Page 06 Anti-CPEC designs to fail: Ahsan

Says, Pakistan has further stepped up security arrangements

DNA



highlighting enhanced security of Chi-

Special Ini-

tiatives Pro-

fessor Ah-

san Iqbal on

Wednesday



CAIRO: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is being received by Minister for Public Business Sector of the Arab Republic of Egypt Mohamed Shimi at Cairo's International Airport. - DNA

'Office open 24 hours'

Ready to play role in govt, PTI talks: NA speaker "My office and home are always

available for talks," says NA speaker

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: As uncertainty continues to shroud the possibility of negotiations between the government and the Pakistan

'PTI forms negotiation committee

Continued on Page 06

Briefs **'People** clap for judges'

CJP Yahya Afridi pledged to maintain dignity of court at any cost

DNA

GHOTKI: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Yahya Afridi said that people should not clap for the judges as it harmed what he called their mindset. Talking to the Ghotki Bar Association, the CJP said that the issues raised by the bar association would be settled as per commitment. The CJP pledged to maintain the dignity of the court at any cost. He said that the Sindh High Court CJ informed him about all the problems they faced. On the occasion, the CJP Afridi said that district Ghotki was better compared to many districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

11 Khwarij sent to hell in KP

DNA

RAWALPINDI: On 17-18 December 2024, eleven Khwar ij were sent to hell in three separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. An intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces in Tank District on reported presence of Khwarij. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location, as the result of which seven Khwarij were sent to hell. Another intelligence based operation was conducted in general area Datta Khel, North Waziristan District. In ensuing fire exchange, two Khwarij were sent to hell by the security forces. In third encounter that took place in general area Mamad Gat, Mohmand District, after an intense fie exchange two Khwarij were sent to hell.

£190m settlement case Verdict reserved against should not Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi Accountability Court Judge Nasir Javed

COURT REPORTER

pleting the trial in 190 million pound refer-

ence against PTI founder Imran Khan and his

wife Bushra Bibi. According to Dunya News,

Judge Nasir Javed Rana conducted the trial

tation of the Integrated Border Management System (IBMS) to highlights the plight of people in Indian Illegally

Rana will announce verdict on Dec 23 Nothing important' RAWALPINDI: An accountability court on than national security Wednesday reserved the verdict after com-

"Our priority is to protect our citizens and their data," says Minister for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja

MEHTAB PIRZADA

of the 190 million pound reference at Adiala Jail, and the decision was reserved after the ISLAMABAD: Minister for IT Shaza Fatima defense lawyer's arguments were concluded. Khawaja on Wednesday emphasised that The final hearing of the trial lasted for ap- nothing is more paramount than national proximately 8 hours and 15 minutes, during security, as lawmakers raised concerns over which PTI founder and Bushra Bibi were the persistent internet disruptions. "Nothing present in court. The accountability court is more important than national security, will announce its decision on Monday, De- the IT minister told her fellow lawmakers in cember 23. It is worth noting that the NAB the National Assembly, but at the same time. lawyer had completed their arguments in she acknowledged that there were speed isthe 190 million pound reference the pre- sues and that they were being addressed. vious day. The court reserved the decision Her response came after Pakistan Peoples after final arguments in case, the trial con- Party (PPP) MNA Abdul Qadir Patel raised cluded in one year. The £190 million case questions about the internet speed, saying involves a reference filed by NAB against that he could not even load photos online. former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife "Online businesses have come to a stand-Bushra Bibi, and others in December 2023. still. Children's education is also suffering.

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

nese nationals in Pakistan resolved that the terrorist handlers poised to roll back the tremendous progress achieved under CPEC would not succeed. The minister, who is currently on a visit to China, in a meeting with the top brass of Power China company conveyed condolence over the killing of

Continued on Page 06 Govt to impose stricter rules on non-filers Finance minister

introduces bill in NA aimed at amending tax laws for the non-filers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday introduced a bill aimed at amending tax laws, seeking to bar non-filers from purchasing cars above 800cc and opening bank account. The proposed **Continued on Page 06**

Yalda: the panoramic mirror of friendship, coexistence



REZA AMIRI MOGHADAM

E are on the eve of the last evenings of the au-E are on the eve of the last evenings of the au-tumn of the year 2024. This year we are highly honoured to celebrate the ancient Iranian event of Yalda in our friendly, brotherly and neighbourly country of Pakistan along with the other countries with which we share civilizational commonalities and links.

The Yalda Night, or as called in the Iranian folklore, Chele, is the longest night of the year and the beginning of the light and the rebirth of brilliance. Yalda is a turning point in the beautiful nature, at the moment of the winter solstice, which connects the leafy autumn to the ermine winter.

During the millennia and throughout the old history, at the very beginning of the cold winter, this night has been regarded as an opportunity to seize the treasure and warmth of the family gatherings and friendly circles to bring hearts closer together looking forward to the coming of the green spring and the growth of nature. In our common culture, Yalda symbolizes friendship, coexistence, kindness, love and hospitality. Yalda is the starting point of a cycle where the dormant nature, in transition from the cold winter, promises the resurrection of the spring, and we will celebrate the ancient Nowruz in this place, along with the nature, at the end of the winter. As a shared and common heritage, Yalda is a celebra-

tion that has been held since ancient times throughout the common civilization area of all of our countries. I am pleased to announce that in 2022, this cultural event was included in the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO. UNESCO describes this ancient event as a panoramic mirror of cultural identity, hospitality, friendship, peaceful coexistence and cultural diversity, highlighting its unique features that have had a significant and positive impact on world culture. In these joyous moments of happiness, I pray that May Allah Almighty bestows peace, security and prosperity to our countries, and to our people, health, happiness and welfare. - The writer is the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic or Iran to Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led opposition, National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has expressed readiness to play his role in prospective parleys between the treasury and opposition benches. "I am ready to play a role in talks on any issue, including political ones, [....] My office and home are always available for government-opposition talks," said Sadiq in a video statement on Wednesday. Welcoming yesterday's exchanges between the government and the PTI leaders in the lower house, the speaker underscored the significance of talks for ending the persisting bitterness between the two sides. The remarks come against the backdrop of prevailing ambiguity surrounding

Government has not made any contact regarding negotiations

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan stated that a committee, headed by Omar Ayub, has been formed for negotiations. Speaking to journalists in the Parliament, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that the government had not made any contact regarding negotiations. He further clarified that no

Continued on Page 06

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NATIONAL

PPP to continue struggle for masses' welfare: Kundi

The governor also criticized the provincial government of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stating that the province had been left at the mercy of terrorists

DNA

02

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has reiterated that PPP would continue its struggle to serve the people and resolve their issues. He was speaking at a dinner ceremony hosted in his honour by former Provincial Assembly candidate from the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Nawabzada Azizullah Khan Ali Zai here. The event was attended by a large number of party workers, officials, and local dignitaries. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi highlighted ongoing development projects in Dera Ismail Khan and his efforts to resolve peoples issues. The governor shed light on projects such as the Chashma Lift Canal, the gas expansion project. the installation of new TBS, and the provision of modern facilities by NAD-RA and the Passport offices, assuring their timely completion. The governor also criticized the provincial government of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stating that the province had been left at the mercy of terrorists.

He said the government had failed to address the public problems. Other prominent PPP leaders present at the event included Divisional President Qaizar Khan Miankhel, former District Nazim Nawabzada Azizullah Khan Alizai, PPP District General Secretary Malik Aabid Awan Advocate, District President Malik Farhan Afzal Dhup, former MPA Nawabzada Tahir Bin Yameen Khan, and member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council Sardar Hashmat Nawaz Sadozai. At the conclusion of the event, Naw bzada Azizullah Khan Alizai thanked Governor Faisal Karim Kundi for his efforts regarding uplif of Dera Ismail Khan. Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has directed the SNGPL authorities to resolve all issues being faced by inhabitants of Dera Ismail Khan on priority basis. He issued these directions during a meeting held with SNGPL officials here at his residence which was also attended by SNGPL Area Incharge in DI Khan Shehzad Saleem. Distribution Officer Ian Muhammad. Engineer Hafiz Mohibullah. Sales Of-

ficer Barkatullah Kundi besides PPP District President Malik Farhan Afzal Dhap and renowned political and social figure Mubashir Khan Kundi. The SNGPL officials briefed the governor about installation of five new TBS, gas expansion work and other matters.

The governor instructed the officials to address all gas related issues on priority including low pressure and loadshedding. He said that timely completion of the new TBS installation should be ensured as it would reduce the load on the existing TBS and improve gas distribution. He emphasized resolving low-pressure issue on priority addressing public grievances related to gas load-shedding. Furthermore, Governor Kundi directed for early initiation of gas expansion work in Kotla Saidan. He mentioned that efforts were being made to lift the ban on new connections which was imposed during the previous PTI regime. He instructed the gas officials to coordinate with the C&W Department in areas where there are issues and to take all possible steps while prioritizing public interest.

fertilizers, seeds and other

agricultural inputs worth

billions of rupees with

Kissan Cards. She said that

farmers were being led on

the path of development

and prosperity through ag-

ricultural mechanization,

farmers were being provid-

ed with green tractors on

113 couples approved for 'Dhee **Rani'program**

SARGODHA: The Deputy Director(DD) Social Welfare,Zaiba Andaleeb said on Wednesday that the Tehsil verification committees approved the documents of 113 couples for Chief Minister 'Dhee Rani' program in all four districts. According to a spokesperson, She said total 40 couples from Sargodha ,23 from Khushab and 25 each from Mianwali and Bhakkar districts approved for 'Dhee Rani Program'. The DD Social Welfare further stated that the data for Sargodha division were forwarded to the provincial committee.In Punjab,the proposal for the first phase involves arranging weddings

for 1500 couples with an

No stone to be left unturned in serving farmers

LAHORE: Punjab Chief nutritional needs ofpeople. Minister Maryam Nawaz The Punjab government Sharif said on Wednesday was taking steps for the that she would leave no development of agriculstone unturned in serving ture sector and ease of the the farmers. In her mesfarmers, she said and addsage on National Farmers' ed that Kissan Cards had Day, Maryam Nawaz said been issued and productive that she pays tribute to the loans were being given to farmers for their prosperifarmers who grow grains from the bosom of the

ty. The Chief Minister said interest-free easy install-ments.-APP earth day and night to fulfill that farmers had purchased 33% decline in cotton produce, reforms suggested

MULTAN: Pakistan's cotton produce witnessed a sharp decline, with figures from the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) revealing a 33.11% drop in output as of December 15, 2024.A total product stands at 5,367,334 bales compared to 8,023,707 bales in 2023. Punjab, the primary cotton-produce region, experienced a 34.44% decrease, with production falling from 3,956,880 bales in 2023 to 2,593,949 bales in 2024. Sindh saw a 31.80% reduction, with output decreasing from 4,066,827 bales to 2,773,385 bales. Meanwhile, Baluchistan contributed 156,400 bales. The decline was attributed to climate change, water shortages, and a lack of investment in research and development. Sajid Mahmood, an expert on cotton, emphasized the need for immediate action to mitigate the crisis. "Reviving the cotton sector requires a national effort, with a focus on research and development," he said. Sajid Mahmood recommended significant reforms to the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC), including resolving the eight-year-long cotton dispute between the textile sector and PCCC. He noted that a robust and modernized PCCC could unify efforts to develop pest-resistant, high-yield seeds and climate-smart cotton varieties. He further suggested policy measures to encourage domestic production, such as abolishing the 18% sales tax on locally produced cotton and imposing it on imported cotton. "These steps would reduce dependency on imports and incentivise local farmers," Mahmood added. With cotton imports expected to cost \$2 billion this year, Mahmood stressed the financial burden on the national exchequer. -APP



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq with Chairman of Shura Council of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, Former Speakers of National Assembly, Asad Qaiser and Raja Pervez Ashraf also present on the occasion. -DNA

Industries faces challenges due to gas shortage

SARGODHA: President Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Khawaja Yasir Qayyum on Wednesday said that industries faced challenges due to the shortage of gas supply. He emphasized that providing necessary facilities to industrialists would not only boost industrial growth in the region but also create employment opportunities and improve the national treasury. The president raised these concerns during the visit of Sui Gas Regional Manager Binyamin Shahid to the Chamber. Addressing the gathering, Khawaja Yasir Qayyum highlighted that Sargodha had immense potential for industrial development, but the unavailability of basic utilities has driven entrepreneurs to shift their focus to other businesses. He highlighted that Beco light industry was facing multiple challenges due to shortage of gas supply. Responding to these concerns, Regional Manager Binyamin Shahid acknowledged the growing challenges and suggested

provincial economy PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Wednesday emphasized the importance of further developing the province's energy sector to boost the economy and enhance national energy security. He was presided over a meeting of the KP Oil and Gas Company Limited (KPOG-CL) to discuss progress in the province's oil and gas sector, said an official communique issued here. The Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Energy, the Secretary for Energy, the CEO of KPOGCL, and

other officials attended the meeting. During the meeting, officials briefed the CM on the company's corporate business strategy, the province's oil and gas potential, recent discoveries, and investment prospects. They reported a major achievement in the exploration and production phase at the Miran Block, adding that the bidding process for the block had been completed, with 49 percent of its shares sold to investors while KPOGCL retained 51 percent of the shares without any financial risk. The project was set to

KP CM for developing

energy sector to boost

attract direct investment of Rs 22 billion into the province, and the respective consortium would bear all expenses for the exploration phase. Regarding the leading role in oil and gas production, the CM was informed that KP continued to play a significant role in the country's energy sector. The province produced 30,000 barrels of oil daily, accounting for 42 percent of the national output. Additionally, it produced 410 million cubic feet of gas per day which was 13 percent of the national production and a significant share of LPG.-APP

Islamabad **POST**

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Taxpayers' rights protected under federal tax laws: FTO

LAHORE: Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah said on Wednesday that taxpayers' rights were fully protected under the federal tax laws of income tax, customs and sales tax for redressal of their genuine grievances. Speaking to members of Advisory Committee here that relocating the Beco inon Wednesday, he emphasized the importance of understanding these rights to ensure the prompt addressing their tax related issues. He noted that the existing legal framework provides sufficient safeguards to protect taxpayers against arbitrary decisions or unfair treatment. He urged taxpayers to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the law, which were specifically designed to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability in tax matters. He underscored that a collaborative approach was necessary, where both taxpayers and tax authori-

ties work together to build trust and promote compliance. By understanding their rights and responsibilities, taxpayers can not only protect themselves but also contribute positively to the country's taxation system. President Lahore Chamber Mian Abuzar Shah also joined as guest of honour. Dr Asif Jah further highlighted the role of the FTO in resolving taxpayers' complaints efficiently and impartially. He reassured that his office remained committed to addressing issues such as maladministration, undue delays, and misapplication of tax laws. He urged taxpayers to report their grievances with confidence, as mechanisms are in place to provide relief without any external pressures. He said economy of any country depends upon its tax system and its was rightly well said that tax was byproduct of the econo-

my. He said the professional understanding of complete tax laws was challenging for general public especially tax payers.He said understanding their rights by the tax payers was crucial so that they may not be deprived by the tax collectors due to ignorance. Dr Waqar Ch Arain Advisor on the occasion suggested that all federal tax laws also be translated into Urdu for better understanding by the tax payers and be uploaded on websites of FBR, FTO, FPCCI and regional chambers across the country. FTO Coordinator for south Punjab Saif-ur-Rehman offered to host awareness workshop with business community at Multan while another FTO Coordinator from Faisalabad Muhammad Farhan Munir said he will host a seminar on the rights of tax payers under the chairmanship of FTO next month.-APP

other 1,500 planned for the second phase, she said. Zaiba Andaleeb further said over 3,000 applications were received and a ballot system would be used to finalize participants. The "Dhee Rani" program would be held in the second or third week of February 2025 across the four districts of Sargodha di vision, she added.-APP

Court Notice

مرالت جناب شنمراده كامران صاحب فيملى بحج راوليند دعوى دلايا نے خرچہ نان ونفقہ وغيرہ سماة مريم نسادغيره بنام ذيثان نواز ولدمحد نوازساكن بن نمبر 3 محلَّه قائد اعظم كالوني ، دهميال كيم براوليندأ ہرگاہ مقدمہ عنوان بالامیں مدعاعلیہ کی تقمیل سمن ۔ دنى مشكل بےلہذا بذريعہ اخبار اشتہار آپ كو مطلع تا ہے کہ آپ اصالتا وکالتا یا بذریعہ مختار از مور 23-12-202 وقت صبح 9 بج حاضر عداله ویں ورندکاروائی حسب ضابط ممل میں لائی جائے گی بحكم عدالت مهرعدالت

بعدالت جناب شنراده كامران صاحب فيملى يج راوليندى دعوى دلايا في خرچه نان ونفقه وغيره ام كلثوم وغيره بنام حسنين قريثي ولدتخي محدساكن ذعوك کھوکھراں، ڈاکنانہ خاص جھنگی سیداں اسلام آباد ہرگاہ مقدمہ عنوان بالا میں مدعاعلیہ کی تقیل سمن سے مونی مشکل ہے لہذا بذر یعہ اخبار اشتعار آپ کو مطلع کیا جاتا ب كداب اصالاً وكالاً يا بذريعه مخار از مورده 20-12-2024 بوقت في 9 بج حاضر عدالت آ ویں در ندکار دائی حسب ضابط ممل میں لائی جائے گی۔ بحكم عدالت مبرعدالت

dustry to a dedicated zone could facilitate uninterrupted gas supply. He stated, "It is not feasible to supply gas to scattered industrial units for 24 hours". During the meeting, members raised various issues, including the unavailability of gas connections, increasing gas prices, disconnection of meters without prior notice for late bill payments, and low gas pressure.-APP

Call for multisectoral interventions to tackle nutrition challenges

LAHORE: Health experts emphasized the urgent need for multisectoral interventions to address maternal, child, and adolescent nutrition challenges in Punjab, highlighting the importance of improved health outcomes across the province. These discussions took place during a workshop organized by 'Save the Children' with support from UNICEF at a local hotel on Wednesday. The event brought together representatives from government departments, UN agencies, media professionals, and social sector organizations, aiming to foster collaboration and innovation for advancing nutritional outcomes. Moderating the event, Dr. Shiza Hameed, National Nutrition Coordinator at Save the Children International, presented alarming statistics on malnutrition in Punjab. She said, "The province faces a triple burden of malnutrition(under nutrition), micro nutrient deficiencies, and over nutrition affecting women, children, and adolescents in South Punjab." Citing the National Nutrition Survey 2018, she highlighted that 34.8 per cent of children under five are stunted, 16.2 per cent are wasted (very thin), and 24 per cent were underweight. Over half of these children suffer from anemia, and only 14.2 per cent meet dietary diversity standards. Among women of reproductive age, 41.7 per cent were anemic, while obesity rates had risen to 37.8 per cent . Adolescents were similarly affected, with over 56 per cent of girls anemic and more than 10 per cent of boys and girls overweight. Speakers and panelists, including Dr. Muhammad Mohsin Watto (Additional Director Health Services), Dr. Khalid Mehmood (Director MIS), and Najma (Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF), stressed the critical role of media in raising awareness about nutrition. They called for media professionals to combat misinformation, promote balanced diets, advocate for exclusive breastfeeding, and influence policy changes. Panel discussions underscored strategies to address stunting and wasting, promote micro nutrient supplementation, and improve maternal and child nutrition programs through effective policy making and resource allocation. Success stories from public-private partnerships and community-driven initiatives were shared as models for wider implementation. Recognizing the media's power to drive behavioral change, the event urged media houses to play a proactive role in sensitizing the public about malnutrition risks and preventive measures. Journalists were encouraged to amplify success stories, debunk myths, and hold stakeholders accountable for ensuring stronger policies and programs. In his closing remarks, Muhammad Azam, National Project Manager at Save the Children International, commended the participants for their commitment. He emphasized that collaborative efforts across various sectors would lead to healthier families, resilient communities, and a more productive Punjab.-DNA

COMSATS industrial connect- career expo held

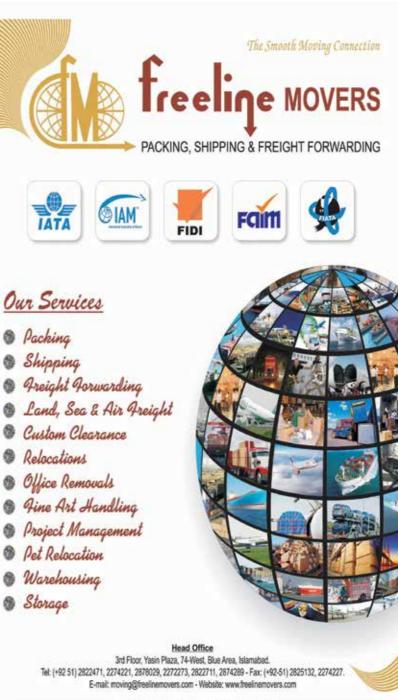
DNA

ISLAMABAD: The event was inaugurated by Member IT Higher Education Commision Mr. Jameel Ahmed and was attended by 60 prominent Companies of Pakistan including State Bank of Pakistan, Habib Bank Limited, Askari Bank Limited, S&p Global, Ibex, Haideri Beverages, Gourmet cola, Cheezious, Tapal Tea, Roots Education Consultancy, Times Consultancy, SI-UK, Jin Technologies, Plus W, Devsinc, Speridian, Splenify, Alachisoft, Cybernet, Nayatel, China Gezhouba Mechanial and Electrical Construction

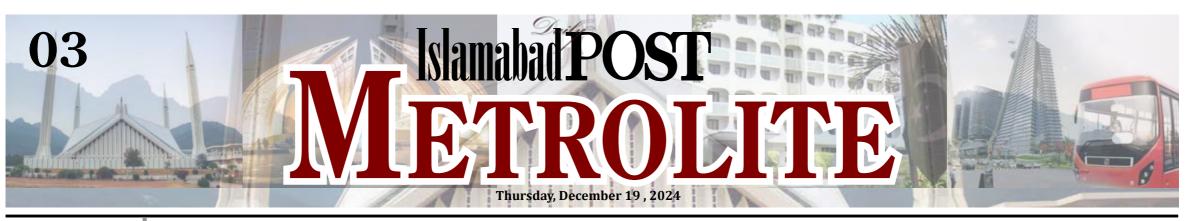


Co Pakistan Branch, Kakushin, Hero Boss, Hikvision, D4 Interactive, Teach for Pakistan, Professional Career and Recruitment Training and many more companies.

The event also displayed final year projects of students of different Programs of Computer Science (including Software Enginnering, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security and Data Science) as well as final year projects of Departments of Management Sciences, Physics, Chemistry and Bio-Sciences. The event was a huge success as Industry leaders visited the Expo for hiring of atudents and took great interest in their Final Year Projects.



	— Branch	Offices	
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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

Dec12/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**

Hotels & Restaurants



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



UAE, Pak share deep-rooted friendship: Amb. Alzaabi

The ambassador further said, we see huge potential for collaboration in various sectors, including renewable energy, artificial intelligence, sustainability, economic diversification and agricultural innovations



DNA

regional peace and development. Looking ahead, the UAE is com-ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE mitted to further strengthening Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaaour partnership with Pakistan. He bi has said the UAE and Pakistan expressed these views on the occashare a deep-rooted friendship, sion of the National Day reception, built on mutual respect, shared which was attended, among oth-

values, and a common vision for

ers, by the President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The ambassador further said, we see huge potential for collaboration in various sectors, including renewable energy, artificial intelligence, sustainability, economic diversification and agricultural innovations. Together, we can create new opportunities for our youth and drive innovation that benefits not just our two countries, but the entire region. Th ambassador further said, as we celebrate this historic occasion, let us reaffirm our commitment to the values that have guided our nation: uni-

ty, determination, and compassion. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for their warm hospitality and continued support. 'May the friendship between the UAE and Pakistan continue to grow for generations', he concluded.

Irfan Nawaz Memon. During the meeting, the DG Excise emphasized the importance of timely payment. He stated that heavy penalties, including the cancellation of vehicle registration, will be enforced on those who fail to pay the

tax by the given deadline. This move aims to ensure more people have access to the facility and can fulfil their tax obligations conveniently, he added. APP

E&T extends

counter hours

for token tax

submission

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to fa-cilitate vehicle owners in the

Federal Capital, the Excise

& Taxation (E&T) Depart-

ment has extended operating

hours for token tax submis-

sions. The counters at the

department will remain open until 8:00 pm to accommo-

date residents. This decision

comes ahead of the January 1 deadline for the payment of

the vehicle token tax, which

is a mandatory requirement for all vehicle owners, this

was stated in a briefing at the

recent performance review meeting chaired by the Di-

rector General (DG) Excise,

NBF to host creative workshops for writers. illustrators

ISLAMABAD: The National Book Foundation (NBF), in collaboration with Idarae-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) and the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, has announced a series of workshops to foster creativity in children's literature in Pakistan. The Writers workshop will take place from January 14-17 followed by the Illustrators Workshop from January 20-23. Both workshops will be held at the Ahmed Faraz Auditorium, National Book Foundation (NBF). According to the NBF official, the workshops aim to equip writers and illustrators with the skills

Energy issue eases in Gwadar with growing use of solar system

FAISAL SHEIKH

my store have increased by

and systems has also shown ISLAMABAD: Energy isan astonishing growth sue is getting resolved in momentum," Baloch list-Gwadar with growing pubed. Majid Baloch, another lic tendency of using solar shopkeeper at the Airport system. "Throughout 2024, Road Market, agreed. "By sales of solar systems in

dar region, and the public lar sets, he said that the perpetual power failure has feedback was very good, so the public's tendency to become pain in the neck. choose to buy solar panels "Going solar is the sole solution to get rid of such dilemma." "Power outages are no longer a problem now, the Chinese solar system is providing excellent service to the people of Gwadar, we are saved," Abusing solar energy to power dul Rasheed, a fisherman their homes, homeowners in the Ghazalwan area near the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the old city of Gwadar, who benefited from the solar system donated by China, told Gwadar Pro. The Chinese Embassy in Pakistan cooperated with the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China to donate 4,000 solar photovoltaic systems and LED lights to the local area in 2021. Then, China Communication and Constructions Company and Consulate General of China in Karachi jointly carried out the project to light up main streets and the public places of Gwadar. Raheem Buksh, a social worker told Gwadar Pro that according to his information, these solar donation reached in 42 regions in Gwadar City. Pakistan's pace of solar energy adoption is rapidly accelerating, driven largely by an open market. As a result,

Pakistan is now the world's sixth-largest solar market and the third-largest buyer of Chinese-made solar panels, with imports set to surge to 13 gigawatts (GW) in the first half of 2024. With grid electricity costs skyrocketing, consumers, industries, and businesses are turning to solar power as a more cost-effective and reliable solution. This shift is reshaping the country's energy landscape. Meanwhile, the Pakistani government plans to partner with Chinese companies to produce solar panels in Pakistan, a major milestone in Pakistan's efforts to produce green energy and increase its footprint in a climate-smart global world. The plan will also help Pakistan cut its annual import bill of \$27 billion. The Alternate Energy Development Board has finalized a 10 years policy on the solar panels and allied equipment manufacturing policy. With the help of China, solar panel's manufacturing will contribute government effort to install about 9.7GW of renewable energy power generation systems throughout Pakistan by around 2030.

Islamic Economics conference Islamic Economics gaining prominence as conventional models struggle to address global shifts

> ISLAMABAD: The School of Economics at Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), in collaboration with the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, organized the 2nd International conomics Conference with the theme of Islamic Social Fi-

> **QAU-IPS hold 2nd Int'l**

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



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Cantt Hospital	.9270907-11	
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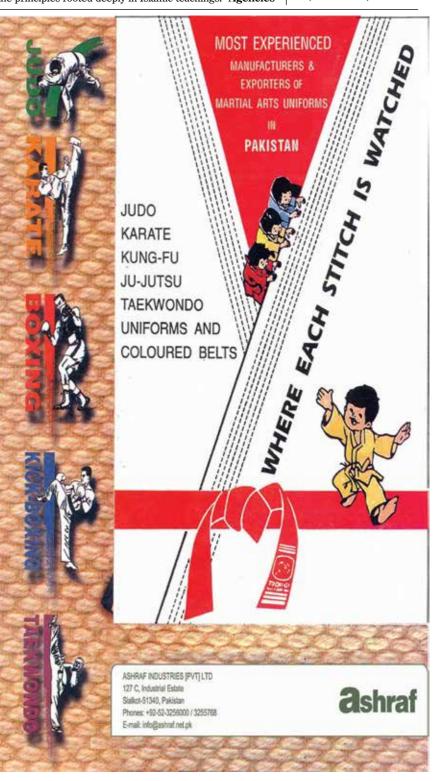
Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480

the Gwadar region," said Muhammad Baloch running business at Dashti market, one and only trading hub of electronics and solar systems in the Gwadar city, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. "This growth trend did not appear suddenly in one or two weeks. The Gwadar region has long suffered from energy shortages, but now there is an adequate supply of high-quality solar panels, equipment, kits and batteries in our local market, so sales growth is an inevitable trend. In 2021, the Chinese government donated a batch of solar systems to the Gwa-

about 60 percent, as well can reduce their reliance on as revenue has been on the unstable grid and signifan upward trend. Chinese icantly reduce their monthbrands are particularly poply utility bills." Years back, ular because they are good solar panels, batteries and value for money compared operating systems were not to other foreign brands in available in these markets. After China announced to popularize solar systems among the neediest sections of society in Gwadar, the people of Gwadar began to realize that off-grid solar systems are the key to solving the electricity problem. According to an official with Gwadar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, business of selling China-made solar panels and systems is in high gear. "Compared with past, residential and commercial buildings are also being solarized with solar apparatus," he added. When asked to Noor Muhammad, a customer at Airport Road Market about his reason to purchase so-

nance and Economic Development. Held within the University's premises, the conference brought together distinguished scholars, practitioners, policymakers and academicians from various relevant institutions across Pakistan as well as abroad, discussing the pivotal role of Islamic finance in fostering sustainable economic growth. The inaugural session of the conference featured prominent speakers including Dr Humayun Dar from the Cambridge Institute of Islamic Finance, Justice Dr Syed Muhammed Anwer, judge, Federal Shariat Court (FSC), and former senator Hafiz Hamdullah. The event was also enriched by the participation of Dr Muhammad Tariq Majeed, director of the School of Economics, and former Dean Dr M Idrees. Dr Humayun Dar emphasized the relevance of Islamic Economics and Finance in modern times, pointing out that the conventional economic models are losing credibility due to their inherent weaknesses in the face of emerging global challenges. On the other hand, the focus is shifting fast towards sustainable and responsible consumption, which are the principles rooted deeply in Islamic teachings.-Agencies

needed to craft high-quality children's storybooks that reflect the society and culture of Pakistan. The workshops will also focus on fostering creativity, enhancing storytelling techniques, and refining illustration skills for children's storybooks. Led by seasoned professionals, the sessions will focus on creative storytelling and illustration techniques to inspire impactful literature for young readers. Interested participants can register through the provided link or contact the organizers including Murad Ali (0315-7171712).--APP



PNCA, Nomad Gallery host exhibition at photographic journey

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) and Nomad Gallery successfully hosted the grand opening of A Symphony of Light, a captivating photographic journey by renowned photographer Has-

identity, and initiatives like these play a pivotal role in preserving and promoting them. Hassan Kausar's work is a testament to the transformative power of photography, and we are proud to support such endeavors that



san Kausar, at PNCA. Islamabad. The exhibition, inaugurated by Mr. Irfan Sheikh, Managing Director of Bestway Cement, drew art enthusiasts, photographers, and members of the cultural community to celebrate the transformative power of photography. Mr. Irfan Sheikh, in his opening remarks, emphasized the importance of art and culture in shaping national identity. He remarked, "Art and culture are integral to our national

celebrate creativity and talent. The street photography and the use of light in these photographs is remarkable; as a photographer myself, I can understand how difficult it is to do street photography." The exhibition howcased Hassan Kausar's journey as an artist, highlighting his mastery of street photography-a genre that captures fleeting moments and candid expressions of everyday life. Attendees were mesmerized by his ability

traordinary visual narratives through his keen eye for light and shadow. Hassan's philosophy, "For me, photography is all about the play of light. I see the world in terms of light and shadow," resonated deeply with the audience as they explored his work. His images, ranging from the poetic interactions of strangers to the quiet dignity of solitary figures, showcased his ability to find beauty and complexity in the mundane. The event also featured an exclusive photography workshop on December 19th, where Hassan shared insights into his creative process. Participants had the unique opportunity to learn techniques for harnessing light, composition, and storytelling through the lens, gaining valuable knowledge from the master photographer. Nomad Gallery and the artist thanked Bestway Cement for their sponsorship, underscoring their dedication to promoting visual arts and cultural heritage in Pakistan. The event successfully celebrated the intersection of art, culture, and community, leaving attendees inspired by the power of photography. The exhibition was well attended by many diplomats, artists, students, and members of the general public, reflecting its wide appeal and significance. Hassan Kausar, an award-winning photographer, architect, and interior designer, continues to captivate audiences with his multifaceted creative journey. -DNA

to transform ordinary scenes into ex-

04

TWIN CITIES

Islamabad **POST** Thursday, December 19, 2024

Briefs

Islamabad sets new record with underpass construction

ISLAMABAD:In a groundbreaking achievement, an underpass at the Jinnah Avenue F-8 Exchange Chowk Interchange is set to be completed in a record 42 days, as per directives from Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has confirmed that 75% of the work has been finalized, and the project is on track to open for traffic on December 25. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa conducted an early morning surprise visit to the project site to assess the ongoing construction. He expressed satisfaction with the pace and quality of the work, emphasizing the need to maintain the momentum for timely completion. "We are committed to delivering this project within the record timeframe. Work on both the flyover and underpass is progressing simultaneously to ensure on-time completion," said Chairman Randhawa. The CDA chairman also directed consultants and resident engineers to uphold high standards of construction while adhering to the set deadlines. During the visit, he was briefed by project officials, who highlighted key milestones that 70 out of 74 piles for the interchange have been completed. Work on the underpass girders is in its final stages whereas concrete work for the underpass bed is expected to finish shortly. With construction progressing rapidly on all fronts, the Jinnah Avenue Interchange is poised to become a symbol of efficiency and innovation in urban infrastructure development.-APP

ANF recovers 122 kg drugs in 7 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while con-

Al-Shifa Trust launches operations in Gilgit to help underserved people

The inauguration of this hospital marks a new chapter for Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital's legacy of excellence and service. The hospital continues to expand its footprint across Pakistan to provide accessible and quality eye care to all

FAISAL SHEIK

RAWLPINDI: Responding to the increasing demand for quality eye care services, the Al-Shifa Trust started providing free services to the people of remote areas before the completion of the cutting-edge hospital in Gilgit. The move, which results from a joint venture between the Al-Shifa Trust and the Rupani Foundation, will benefit millions of underserved people, many of whom cannot afford quality services. Doctors have already begun helping many patients in this still-under-construction portion of the hospital, a significant advancement. In this regard, a ceremony was held in which the Minister of Health Gilgit-Baltistan, Raja Azam Khan, participated as the chief guest. He lauded the trust's efforts in bringing advanced eye care services to faraway areas. The minister said that previously, residents of Gilgit-Baltistan had to travel to other provinces for eve treatments, incurring significant financial and emotional costs. We are grateful for the considerable reduction in these challenges. The groundbreaking of the stateof-the-art hospital took place just five months ago, in July 2024. Al-Shifa Trust has prioritized the commencement of its operations, recognizing the urgent need for quality eye care in the area despite its scheduled completion in 2026. The newly inaugurated facility has already started offering Outpatient Department services and eye surgeries, with fully trained and highly skilled doctors and support teams now on the



ground. All services will be free to the community, reinforcing the trust's commitment to eradicating preventable blindness and improving access to specialized eye care in underserved regions like Gilgit-Baltistan. Abdul Rehman Mithani, advisor to Rupani Development Initiatives, illuminated the Rupani Foundation's evolution, goals, and ongoing projects at the ceremony. He stated that the foundation focuses on improving people's lives through quality education, community development, and superior healthcare facilities. Mithani emphasized that the Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital is a remarkable gift for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, offering free treatments, medicines, and surgeries. Ministers, senior government officials, and other dignitaries also attended the in-

augural event and commended Al-Shifa Trust for its visionary approach and timely action in addressing healthcare gaps. After completion, the facility will be the region's first. It will offer advanced medical care and ensure that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan receive world-class eye treatment close to home. Participants said that enhancing healthcare access in remote areas is a noble cause.

This initiative aims to revolutionize healthcare delivery by offering cutting-edge medical services to underprivileged communities. The inauguration of this hospital marks a new chapter for Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital's legacy of excellence and service. The hospital continues to expand its footprint across Pakistan to provide accessible and quality eye care to all.

East African community summit in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Commerce & High Commission of Rwanda has jointly proposed to hold the Pakistan East African Community Summit and Exhibition in Pakistan. The event aims to facilitate interaction and exhibition opportunities between the business communities of Pakistan and the East African countries. Both communities will be given the platform to exhibit and engage with each other, facilitating valuable business connections and collaborations.It was proposed to hold the event in Expo Center, Karachi, with an expected participation of 300-400 buyers/delegates from the East African countries. In this regard, TDAP requests business community to suggest potential areas, products, or sectors that should be displayed at the event, to effectively showcase Pakistan's strengths and elevate its global trade presence.

Iftikhar Ali Malik's services for the SAARC region are unparalleled

DNA

ISLAMABAD 18th December 2024: A delegation led by the President of SAARC Chamber of Commerce, Muhammad Jashim Uddin, met with former Presi-dent of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and FPCCI, Iftikhar Ali Malik. The delegation included SAARC Chamber Vice Presidents Chandi Raj Dhakal (Nepal), Shafquat Haider (Bangladesh), and Anjum Nisar (Pakistan); SCWEC Chairperson Hina Mansab Khan; SCWEC Executive Committee members Ms. Sathi Yasmeen and Ms. Tania Wahab; SCCI Executive Committee member Umesh Lal Shrestha; SCCI Secretary General Zulfigar Butt; SCCI Director Badar Munir: and SCWEC Executive Com members Ms. Robina and Ms. Tahir (Pakistan). The purpose of this meeting was to acknowledge Iftikhar Ali Malik's services and contributions to the business community of South Asia. On this occasion, SAARC Chamber President Muhammad Jashim Uddin stated that Iftikhar Ali Malik served for a long time as both President and Vice President of the SAARC Chamber and made extensive and successful efforts to unify the business community of SAARC member countries. He described Malik's contributions as unparalleled.

A drop in interest rates is good for economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPC-CI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, on Wednesday welcomed a cut in the interest rates.

that the economic situation country's foundations. The is improving rapidly, so there value of the rupee had been was scope for a reduction in lost, and the highest inflainterest rates of up to five tion in the country's history hundred basis points instead had taken away the desire of two hundred basis points. to live for millions of people. At that time, everything was becoming expensive daily. The prices of many items had increased manifold, but people's incomes had not increased, which made it difficult for millions of people to manage food. He noted that when Pakistan was rapidly going towards bankruptcy, the change of government and the determination of the military and political leaderof reforms and not allow anship changed the situation. yone to derail it. Mian Zahid With their hard work, the Hussain further said that rupee's decline was stopped, the economic deterioration smuggling decreased significantly, and tax revenue incaused by incompetent rulers' policies had shaken the creased, which increased the

confidence of domestic and foreign investors and important institutions. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the reform process should be continued so that things can improve and the people can get some relief. He noted that the central bank shows unnecessary caution in reducing interest rates, disappointing some business segments. Some sections of the business community are calling the 2% reduction in interest rates disappointing. He said that if the interest rate is brought to 13%, keeping in mind the continuous decline in inflation, it will not positively impact the economy. However, if interest rates are brought to single digits, not only will economic activities accelerate. (LNG) increased by 5.22 percent from \$ 1,466.417 million last year to \$ 1.542.914 million while the import of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) went up by 56.25 per cent in the first five months and stood at \$427.556 million as compared to \$273.641 in the corresponding period in 2023-24. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed a decrease of 1.24 percent during the month of November 2024 as compared to the same month of last year, from \$ 1,424.902 million to \$1,407.281 million. On a monthon-month basis, the petroleum imports into the country increased by 32.69 percent during November 2024, as compared to the imports of \$ 1,060.601 million in October 2024, said the data.-APP

RDA seals 15 flats, restaurant in Mid City **Apartments for illegal** commercial use

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of the Director General (DG), Kinza Murtaza here on Wednesday sealed 15 flats and a restaurant in the Mid-City Apartments on Old Airport Road. According to RDA spokesman, the RDA Enforcement squad conducted an operation and sealed the

ducting 7 operations across the country managed to recover over 122 kg drugs worth Rs 10 million and arrested 5 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that 190 intoxicated tablets were recovered from a parcel sent from Peshawar at a courier office in Hyderabad. 100 kg hashish was recovered from a deserted area of Turbat in Balochistan. 16.8 kg hashish was recovered concealed in a rickshaw near a park on Ring Road Peshawar and a suspect was arrested during the operation. 1.2 kg hashish and 2.2 kg ice were recovered from the possession of a woman arrested near a petrol pump on Okara Road Kasur. In 5th operation, 980 grams ice was recovered from a suspect held on Sakhi Sarwar Road in Dera Ghazi Khan. In 6th operation, 610 grams ice was recovered from the possession of a suspect netted near Shah Pul Multan. 150 grams opium was recovered from the possession of a drug peddler nabbed near Burhan Toll Plaza Attock. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.-APP

He said that the policy rate reduction proves that the government focuses on the economy and that the country is coming out of problems, not due to statements but practical steps. Mian Zahid Hussain said

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the interest rate should be in the single digits so that businesses grow, people get jobs, and the government gets taxes. The business leader said that the confidence of the local and foreign business community is continuously increasing, so the government should continue the series

POL import bill up

by 1.04% to \$6.520b

in 5 months

ISLAMABAD: The imports of the over-

all petroleum group increased by 1.04

percent during the first five months

of the current fiscal year (2024-25)

as compared to the corresponding

months of the last year, the Pakistan

Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the petroleum

group during July-November (2024-

25) stood at \$ 6,520.898 million

against the imports of \$ 6,453.910

NUML celebrates UNESCO Turkic Languages Day

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages organized an event to commemorate UNESCO Turkic Languages Day and the Shab-e-Arooz of Maulana Rumi. This unique celebration highlighted the rich cultural and linguistic heritage of Turkic civilizations alongside the spiritual wisdom of Mevlana Rumi, fostering a deeper appreciation of shared traditions and values. The program was honoured by the presence of the Education Attache, Dr Mehmet Toyron, who praised the event as more than just a celebration, describing it as a workshop that transported participants through the history of the ancient Turks and back to the present. He commended the event's meticulous organization, its focus on Türkiye's linguistic and cultural diversity, and its meaningful acknowledgement of UNES-CO's Turkish Language Day. The program was lauded as a shining

example of cultural engagement and thoughtful execution. The celebration featured inspiring video messages from Turkic countries, documentaries on ancient Turkic leaders and heroes, reflections on Maulana Rumi's timeless teach-

ings, and an exploration of the Turkish language family and its dialects. A unique highlight of the event was a beautifully decorated wish tree, symbolizing an ancient Turkic tradition predating modern customs, with participants

million during the same months of

last year. Among petroleum com-

modities, the import of petroleum

products declined by 10.34 percent,

from \$ 2,661.231 million last year to

\$ 2,386.131 million during the peri-

od under review year whereas the

import of petroleum crude surged by

5.44 percent from \$ 2.052.542 mil-

lion to \$ 2,164.143 million. Similarly,

the imports of Liquefied Natural Gas

tying their wishes on white paper with colourful ribbons. Guests also experienced the flavours of Turkic cuisine, enjoying homemade Özbek Pilav, Revani dessert, Turkish tea, and Ayran, a traditional Turkish drink lov-

ingly prepared by faculty members. The event also underscored the deep-rooted brotherhood between Pakistan and Türkiye, a bond strengthened by mutual respect, shared history, and cultural affinity. This enduring relationship serves as an example of international solidarity, with both nations cherishing and promoting their common heritage. The event left participants inspired by the richness of Turkic heritage and the universal teachings of Maulana Rumi, reinforcing the university's role as a hub of academic and cultural excellence.

residential flats and a restaurant in the Mid-City Apartments in Moza Gangal located on Old Airport Road. The action was taken as part of the crackdown on the illegal conversion of residential flats into commercial properties, the RDA spokesperson informed. The flats were being used for commercial purposes in violation of RDA regulations, which prohibit such activities in residential zones. The operation was conducted under the supervision of the Director Land RDA, Ghazanfar Ali Awan, Building Superintendent Fahad Bhatti and Building Surveyor Malik Aamir Mahmood. This operation is part of RDA's ongoing efforts to enforce zoning laws and maintain the integrity of residential areas within Rawalpindi, he said adding, the RDA is committed to ensuring that the properties within the city adhere to the approved land use and building regulations. He informed that the DG had directed the authorities concerned to continue operation and take strict action against the rules violators.-DNA



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Rohingya genocide

IN Aung Hlaing, Myanmar's de-facto military ruler, was the com-mander in chief during the 2017 Rohingya genocide. It was under his watch that Rohingya Muslims were subject to a horrific ethnic cleansing campaign that entailed rape, mass murder, and demolition of villages. Scores of children were beaten to death, and mosques were targeted. Now, about seven years after the genocide took root, it is critical for one of its chief architects to get the treatment he deserves: be held for criminal responsibility for the crimes committed against humanity. To this end, the International Criminal Court (ICC)'s request for an arrest warrant is a much-needed reminder that military brutalities against innocent Rohingya will not be brushed aside. The warrant matters for several reasons. First, consider the scale of atrocities committed against innocent Rohingya Muslims. These have gone unpunished for too long. The military has pursued gang rape, forced disappearances, and has also employed sexual slavery. The UN concluded in 2018 that crimes committed by Hlaing's army "amounted to the gravest crimes under international law." But since then, there has been a blatant disregard for the same international law that was supposed to hold Hlaing accountable for the blood and suffering of Rohingya Muslims. It shows in the calls by the UN Human Rights Council in 2018 to have Hlaing and other top generals prosecuted for genocide. The ICC warrant request should be seen as a small but critical step to realize those demands and help bring the chief architect of the 2017 genocide under the ambit of the law.

The suffering inflicted on Rohingyas for years also underscores the importance of the warrant. Legions of Rohingya - who escaped murder and witnessed widespread destruction in their native state – were forced to live as refugees in Bangladesh. This meant a life without dignity, equality, and a sense of security. Hlaing is directly to blame for the forced prostitution and sex trafficking faced by women in these overcrowded refugee camps. Meanwhile, Hlaing has strengthened political influence in Myanmar, put up a shield of impunity around his military, and welcomed more murders against Rohingya in the Rakhine state. Given the unspeakable brutality, condemnation, and injustices directed toward Rohingya Muslims, a warrant against Hlaing is a bare minimum of what ought to follow. Look no further than the other Myanmar military personnel involved in the genocide. From Vice Senior-General Soe Win to Brigadier-General Than Oo, these figures have helped advance a campaign of systemic annihilation and ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya. For any semblance of accountability to prevail, a warrant against Hlaing - Commander-in-Chief of the military in 2017 - has to come through. "After an extensive, independent, and impartial investigation, my Office has concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Senior General and Acting President Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Defence Services, bears criminal responsibility for the crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution of the Rohingya, committed in Myanmar, and in part in Bangladesh," said ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan recently. It is clear that the genocidal military won't stop at anything.

Islamabad POST

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Under siege and flames

s the fuel and cooking gas crisis in northern Gaza persists, thousands of Palestinians face worsening daily struggles without necessary alter-<u>/</u>_ natives. Many families resort to cooking food using firewood, paper, and cardboard-an exhausting and hazardous solution that exposes them to severe health and environmental risks. Since the genocidal war in Gaza began over 14 months ago, Israel has strictly and completely banned the entry of cooking gas into the northern areas of the Gaza Strip, which continue to endure a brutal campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Residents who refused to flee their homes in northern Gaza, despite relentless bombing and the occupier's cruelty, began searching for substitutes for cooking gas, turning to burning wood, paper, and whatever else they could find. Ahmed Daloul told the PIC reporter: "No cooking gas has entered here at all. We've been forced to use wood, paper, and anything that can burn, but even that is no longer available." He questioned with despair: "What do we burn? How do we cook? We've burned doors, bedroom furniture, plastic, and trees. We're in a real crisis." Ahmed emphasized that they are now desperately searching for alternatives to their previous alternatives, but everyone is left helpless. In his words: "There's simply nothing left to burn." Since the start of the genocide, Israel has weaponized cooking gas as a tool to punish civilians. It completely bans gas entry into northern Gaza and restricts its availability in central and southern areas, leaving all residents caught in a cycle of uncertainty and despair. Sabreen Afaneh, who is displaced at a school west of Gaza City, told our reporter that she and her children search every morning for pieces of plastic, nylon, and anything flammable to cook what little food they have. Sabreen admits she is fully aware of the dangers of using waste to prepare food but adds with resignation: "We have no choice. What do we burn? How do we cook for the children?" She continued: "Many times, we're forced to eat food without heating it, and we've drastically cut down on using fire at all because of this suffocating crisis and the absence of alternatives." Reports from Gaza's Government Media Office indicate hundreds of respiratory disease cases in the enclave's hospitals due to the toxic fumes emitted from burning fires for cooking amid the worsening gas crisis. Every day, Sabreen takes over the task for her injured husband, searching the streets of the destroyed city for anything to burn while under the constant noise of aircraft and explosions. "I feel fear and terror daily, but I have no choice. We have nothing to burn to prepare food," she explained. Sabreen appealed to the world to intervene to stop the genocide and hold the occupiers accountable for their crimes, criticizing the global inaction and complicity in Israel's ongoing atrocities. "The smoke from these fires suffocates me every day as I cook. I fear developing respiratory diseases-or perhaps I already have," she added. Hassan Abu Zayed, a resident of Sheikh Radwan, said there's nothing left to burn in his area-not wood, not paper, nor nylon. "Some people have been forced to burn waste, fully knowing how dangerous it is to their health and the health of their children," he told our reporter. He described the situation with sorrow: "Can you imagine? Cooking gas hasn't entered northern Gaza at all. People here have burned everything they can.

Innovation and security in the era of uncertainty

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The mysterious nature of unidentified aerial phenomena further underscores the possibility of sophisticated technologies that remain beyond the understanding of even the highest levels of U.S. officials. As Senator Marco Rubio of Florida recently emphasized, Anything that enters an airspace that's not supposed to be there is a threat. The entrenched political dynamics in Washington exacerbate these security challenges, with the Pentagon, benefiting from a considerably larger budget than the State Department, finding

HE advent of new technologies has significantly heightened the risks posed by adversarial states and revisionist actors, thereby expanding the spectrum of potential threats to national security. Information and communication technologies, for example, not only augment military capabilities but also serve as potent instruments for propaganda and disinformation campaigns. Furthermore, advancements in the biosciences, while offering lifesaving interventions on the battlefield, simultaneously elevate the risks associated with biological warfare. The mysterious nature of unidentified aerial phenomena further underscores the possibility of sophisticated technologies that remain beyond the understanding of even the highest levels of U.S. officials. As Senator Marco Rubio of Florida recently emphasized, Anything that enters an airspace that's not supposed to be there is a threat. The entrenched political dynamics in Washington exacerbate these security challenges, with the Pentagon, benefiting from a considerably larger budget than the State Department, finding it easier to secure funding for security initiatives over diplomatic efforts. In an era of constrained budgets, policy entrepreneurs frequently frame their concerns as national security issues to access resources from the Department of Defense, a process widely recognized in international relations as securitization. At the turn of the century, U.S. officials classified HIV/AIDS as a national ng that the disease under ireat, argu mies and threatened the stability of governments in Africa. Although this rationale may have been overstated, it succeeded in channeling substantial resources to combat the epidemic, notably through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. which has been credited with saving millions of lives in Africa since its inception during the George W. Bush administration. Economic and technological concerns often garner bipartisan support in national security debates. Since the Soviet Union's launch of the Sputnik program in 1957, U.S. policymakers have been preoccupied with the fear of losing technological supremacy to other great powers. Initially, this concern centered on Moscow, shifted to Japan during the 1980s and 1990s and more recently, has focused on China. This apprehension has driven policymakers to prioritize technologies considered critical to maintaining economic dominance. In recent years, the spotlight has been on semiconductors and for the foreseeable future, artificial intelligence is expected to dominate national security discussions. These trends contribute to an ever-expanding list of national security priorities. As more issues are added to this agenda, it becomes increasingly difficult for policymakers to prioritize the most pressing threats. During the Cold War, U.S. officials were able to assess global issues through a simplified lens, allowing them to distinguish the most significant foreign policy concerns. However, the recent tendency of administrations to declare a wide range of issues as national security concerns has the potential to obscure the most critical dangers. One approach to refining and clarifying national security doctrine lies in the shifting balance of power between the two major political parties. During the Cold War, presidential candidates often emphasized missile gaps or windows of vulnerability as central national security concerns. Republicans have traditionally highlighted threats from malevolent actors, while Democrats have focused more on diffuse threats such as climate change and pandemics. These differences often lead to conflicting views on key national security issues. For instance, conservatives tend to downplay the threat of climate change, whereas progressives argue that

failing to address it poses a significant risk. Similarly, House Republicans contend that reducing U.S. production of coal, oil and natural gas undermines national security, while progressives warn that ignoring climate change is the greater danger. A shift in political power would likely lead to a corresponding change in Washington's national security priorities. However, in practice, even with a new administration, the list of national security concerns tends to expand rather than contract. For example, the 2002 National Security Strategy under the George W. Bush administration went beyond the Clinton administration by identifying poverty, pandemic diseases, biological and genetic threats and environmental degradation as significant national security concerns. While the Bush administration's strategy prominently addressed terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, it also retained many of the Clinton administration's priorities. More recently, the Trump administrations focus on great-power competition, as articulated in the 2017 National Security Strategy, might have been viewed as an anomaly. However, the Biden administration's 2022 strategy continued to prioritize competition with China and Russia, explicitly stating that the People's Republic of China harbors the intention and, increasingly, the capacity to reshape the international order in favor of one that tilts the global playing field to its benefit. Political prudence often prevents administrations from downplaying their predecessors' national security concerns. Exaggerated threats can be justified as precautionary measures, while underestimating potential threats can lead to severe consequences if they escalate into crises. For example, the Trump administration's inadequate response to the COVID-19 pandemic was partly due to its disbanding of the National Security Council's Direcal Health, Security and Biodefense in 2018, a d reflected a different perception of pandemic threats compared to many experts. Additionally, bureaucratic politics play a significant role in maintaining national security priorities. Issues that have been categorized as national security concerns continue to receive funding and bureaucracies are resistant to downgrading these priorities as it would impact their core missions and expertise. The perspectives of elites on future geopolitical developments can influence their willingness to downplay threats. When optimistic about the future, elites may propose long-term solutions to mitigate threats, as seen in the 1990s with the belief that the liberal international order would integrate Russia and China into a more U.S.-aligned framework. Conversely, when pessimistic, any potential threat is amplified, leading to an all-encompassing focus on national security. Given the current geopolitical climate, characterized by increased conflicts, rising protectionism and democratic recessions, it is impractical to expect a reduction in the list of national security priorities. Several factors have contributed to the proliferation of new issues within the realm of national security. The continuous addition of threats has diluted the concept of national security, as evidenced by recent iterations of the National Security Strategy. This document often functions merely as a procedural formality for executive branch agencies, thereby limiting its utility in shaping foreign policy. This shortcoming has been evident in recent years, with successive administrations neglecting issues outlined in their respective National Security Strategies. For instance, officials from the Trump administration downplayed the threat of pandemics, while those from the Biden administration claimed that the Middle East was stable. Despite these criticisms, the national security issues identified in these annual reports are generally legitimate. Russia and China, as rival great powers, fundamentally diverge in their values from those of the United States. The past decade has clearly demonstrated how pandemics and climate change can severely affect American life. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, may also present critical threats to national security in the near future. However, if national security challenges cannot be easily downgraded or eliminated, they

should at least be better organized. Even novices in foreign policy understand that national security concerns can be classified by country (e.g., Iran, North Korea) and by theme (e.g., nonproliferation, cybersecurity). To better manage the ever-expanding list of issues, there are at least two strategies for improvement. First, U.S. officials should categorize national security issues by their timescale and urgency. Some issues, such as terrorism and Russian revanchism, present immediate and pressing risks. Others, like artificial intelligence and China's rising power, are concerns of medium-term significance. Still, other issues, such as climate change, pose current challenges but will have their most profound impacts in the long term. By explicitly outlining the anticipated timing of specific threats, the government can more effectively allocate resources. This approach does not imply that urgent concerns should overshadow important but longerterm threats. Instead, it advocates for a reasoned basis for reallocating resources away from less immediate threats. Prioritizing urgency would also enable successive administrations to clearly define which initiatives they plan to pursue during their tenure. Another approach to clarifying the relative importance of national security threats is to determine whether an issue requires proactive measures, defensive responses, or a combination of both. New viruses with pandemic potential cannot be addressed until they emerge and are challenging to contain once they do, necessitating a preventive stance. Public health officials must be prepared for contact tracing and testing, while scientists should focus on developing tests and vaccines. Conversely, attempting to eradicate diseases that have transitioned from a cal and resource-intensive. Countering terrorist cells might necessitate offensive measures, such as covert operations or special forces interventions. Managing China's growing economic and military power requires a balanced mix of offensive and defensive strategies to safeguard U.S. interests without unnecessarily escalating tensions to the point of armed conflict. The government might consider implementing an annual scorecard to rank national security concerns according to their current significance. This method would allow policymakers to highlight the areas of national security they perceive as most pressing at present, while also providing the public with insights into how various threats have been evaluated over time. Additionally, scorecards would enable administrations to deprioritize certain threats without disregarding them entirely. This mechanism would compel U.S. officials to indicate which issues are comparatively less critical, even if the specific rankings are contentious. Such an approach would enhance focus in national security debates and assist in identifying threats that may be undervalued. The challenge of calibrating national security priorities has long been a difficulty for U.S. officials. In January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson delivered a speech to the National Press Club in which he delineated the regions considered within the U.S. defense perimeter, notably excluding the Korean Peninsula. However, when North Korea invaded South Korea less than six months later, the Truman administration responded by deploying 300,000 troops, indicating that Korea was not a U.S. national security priority until it became one. Over the past 70 years, the concept of national security has expanded nearly beyond recognition. Advances in technology have multiplied the avenues through which external threats can impact the United States. Moreover, as security issues necessitate larger staffs and budgets, policy entrepreneurs are incentivized to present their interests as national

A state in theory and practice

Hina Zafar

Population constitutes the social foundation of the state, as the existence of a governing structure presupposes people to be governed. Territory refers to a geographically bounded area where the state's authority is exercised.

The government functions as the executive, legislative, and judicial apparatus, responsible for creating and enforcing laws while maintaining public welfare and order

state represents a political and legal entity exercising sovereign authority over a defined territory and population. It es-tablishes and enforces laws, ensuring stability, order, and the well-being of its inhabitants. This organized structure forms the basis of governance, facilitating the management of social, economic, and political affairs within its jurisdiction. The state is characterized by four fundamental elements: population, territory, government, and sovereignty. Population constitutes the social foundation of the state, as the existence of a governing structure presupposes people to be governed. Territory refers to a geographically bounded area where the state's authority is exercised. The government functions as the executive, legislative, and judicial apparatus, responsible for creating and enforcing laws while maintaining public welfare and order. Sovereignty denotes the state's supreme authority, free from external control, allowing it to operate independently within its defined borders. The emergence of the state has been explained through various theoretical perspectives, notably the Divine Theory, Force Theory, and Social Contract Theory. Each offers a distinct interpretation of how states originated and justified their authority. The Divine Theory posits that the state and its rulers derive authority from divine will. Historically prevalent in ancient and medieval times, this theory asserts that rulers are chosen by a higher power, making their authority unquestionable. Central to this perspective is the belief in the divine origin of political power, where rulers act as God's representatives on Earth. People are morally bound to obey such rulers, considering it a religious duty. Monarchs wield absolute authority, and their decisions are

deemed infallible, rendering them unaccountable to the populace. However, they remain answerable to divine judgment alone.

This concept persists in certain modern states where religious doctrines influence governance. For instance, Saudi Arabia's monarchy operates under Islamic principles, with the king recognized as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. Similarly, in Iran, the Supreme Leader holds both religious and political authority under Islamic law. Despite its historical significance, the Divine Theory faces criticism for fostering unaccountable rule and opposing democratic principles. Its relevance has diminished in contemporary governance, as most modern states have embraced democratic systems emphasizing public accountability and participatory governance. The Force Theory, another explanatory model, asserts that the state emerged through the exercise of power and domination. Strong individuals or groups established control over weaker populations through conquest and coercion. The use of force enabled these dominant groups to impose rules, maintain authority, and establish governing institutions. Key features of the Force Theory include the application of power as the primary means of establishing control, the process of conquest and subjugation, and the imposition of laws to sustain dominance. Historical examples include the colonial empires of European powers, where military conquest facilitated the establishment of colonial states. In modern contexts, elements of this theory are evident during conflicts or wars where political authority is secured or maintained through military force. Instances of state-sponsored suppression of political dissent through police and military interventions also reflect the enduring applicability of this theory in certain geopolitical scenarios. The Social Contract Theory presents a more consensual perspective on the state's origin, emphasizing mutual agreements between individuals and governing authorities. Philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau championed this theory, asserting that individuals voluntarily relinquish certain freedoms to the state in exchange for protection, security, and societal welfare. The Social Contract Theory underscores the state as a product of collective consent, where governance is legitimized through the will of the people. Citizens agree to abide by laws and regulations, trusting that the government will ensure their well-being and safeguard their rights. In turn, the government is obligated to act in the public interest, upholding justice, maintaining order, and providing essential services. A compelling modern illustration of the Social Contract Theory emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments worldwide implemented measures such as lockdowns, mask mandates, and vaccination campaigns to curb the spread of the virus. Citizens generally complied with these restrictions, trusting that such actions were necessary for public health and safety. In Pakistan, adherence to social distancing protocols, mask-wearing mandates, and vaccination drives demonstrated the practical application of the social contract, reflecting mutual cooperation between the state and its citizens. The state, defined by its essential elements and shaped by diverse theoretical interpretations, remains a dynamic institution evolving in response to societal needs. The COVID-19 pandemic exemplified the enduring relevance of the Social Contract Theory, highlighting the collaborative relationship between governments and citizens in addressing collective challenges. As the state continues to adapt, its foundational principles of authority, governance, and mutual responsibility remain central to its enduring significance in the modern world.

WORLD / SPORTS

Fakhar Zaman, Nafay star as

Briefs Shehbaz directs...

06

Markhors knock Dolphins out FROM PAGE 01 monitor international travellers. During the briefing, he was told that 174 people involved in human trafficking had been produced before courts with four of them convicted. The premier sought details on the public awareness campaign on human trafficking and asked the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to furnish a report on the incidents involving Pakistani nationals over the last year. He also stressed the need to enhance collaboration with international institutions to prevent the recurrence of such tragic incidents. It is pertinent to know that Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, on the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday, formed a committee led by the additional secretary of the Ministry of Interior to conduct an investigation into the incident.

Markhors move to the top of the standings with 10^{-10} points in six matches chase with a magnificent

SPORTS DESK RAWALPINDI: Opening batters Fakhar Zaman and Khawaja Nafay smashed half-centuries quickfire to propel Markhors to a thumping eight-wicket victory over Dolphins in the 15th match of the Champions T20 Cup here at the Rawalpindi Stadium on Wednesday. The thumping victory lifted Markhors to the top of the standings with 10 points in six matches, while Dolphins, who suffered their sixth consecutive defeat. have been knocked out of the fiveteam tournament. Chasing a modest 140-run target, Fakhar and Nafay laid a solid foundation for the run

113-run opening partnership. The match-winning partnership eventually concluded in the 12th over when Shayan Sheikh dismissed set batter Fakhar Zaman. The left-handed batter scored 53 off 34 balls, laced with eight boundaries and a six. Shayan then struck again on the next delivery to dismiss Mohammad Faizan for a golden duck but his back-to-back strikes were far from changing his side's fortune. Skipper Iftikhar Ahmed (13 not out) then joined Nafay in the middle and made sure there were no further hiccups in the run chase with an unbeaten 27-run partnership. Emerging opener

Nafay top-scored for the Markhors with an unbeaten 66 from 44 balls, studded with 10 boundaries including three sixes. Put into bat first, the Dolphins only managed to score 139/8 in their allotted 20 overs despite an anchoring half-century by Waqar Ahmed. The top-order batter top-scored with a 47-ball 55, which featured six boundaries and a six. Besides him, Qasim Akram (31) and skipper Faheem Ashraf (20 not out) made notable contributions while the rest of the Dolphins' batters struggled against Markhors' bowling unit. Nisar Ahmed was the pick of the Markhors' bowlers, taking four wickets for 22 in his four overs, while Akif Javed bagged two.



Simona Halep gets wildcard for Australian Open qualifying

Halep was runner-up to Wozniacki in the 2018 Australian Open fina.

FROM PAGE 01 Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine, reinforcing international support for their legitimate aspirations for self-determination. The unanimous adoption of this resolution reflects the collective will of UN member states and strengthens the principle of self-determination, as enshrined in international law, including the UN Charter and the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It also reaffirms the global commitment to justice, peace, and equality. By reaffirming these principles, the resolution sends a strong message of solidarity to peoples across the world who continue to struggle for freedom and independence from foreign occupation and domination.

UNGA

adopts..

Verdict reserved.



WEB DESK

BUCHAREST: Former world number one Simona Halep has received a wildcard for Australian Open qualifying. The 33-year-old Romanian was given a four-year doping ban that was reduced to nine months this year. Halep, who maintained her innocence after being charged with two separate doping offences, returned to action in Miami in March and last competed on the WTA Tour in October in Hong Kong, where she lost in the first round. The former French Open and Wimbledon champion is ranked 877 in the world. Halep was runner-up to Caroline Wozniacki in the 2018 Australian Open final. She reached the fourth round on her most recent appearance in 2022. "I have been working hard to get ready for the 2025 season," said Halep. "The Australian Open has provided me with some of the best moments in my career, so I can't wait to be back in Melbourne and playing in front of the Aussie fans." Sixteen-year-old Australian Cruz Hewitt will aim to emulate father Lleyton by making his Grand Slam debut at the Australian Open after he was handed a qualifying wildcard.

Lleyton Hewitt, a two-time Grand Slam champion and former world number one, made his major debut as a 15-vear-old at Melbourne Park after coming through qualifying in 1997. Qualifying runs from 6-9 January and the Australian Open starts on 12 January. Halep returned to tennis at the Miami Open in March, she however lost to former world number two Paula Badosa in three sets. A few weeks later, she retired midmatch at the WTA 125 in Paris due to a knee injury. In July, she wrote on Instagram: "For a few months now, I have been struggling with a knee injury. It's an injury I have never had before and it has been a tough one to manage, with the pain persisting. "It has been a very difficult period (almost two years) mentally and emotionally for me, and struggling physically on top of that definitely doesn't help. I have decided to take the time needed to recover properly, rather than training and playing through pain." Following a five-month spell on the sidelines, she beat Arina Rodionova in straight sets at the WTA 125 tournament in Hong Kong, before losing in the next round to Anna Blinkova. Halep will hope for a more successful 2025 campaign.

South Africa announce squad for Pakistan Tests

JOHANNESBURG: Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Wednesday announced the squad for the upcoming two-match Test series against Pakistan. The team has taken a calculated risk by naming Keshav Maharaj and Wiaan Mulder in the squad, both of whom are dealing with fitness issues. Maharaj suffered a groin strain during the warm-ups for South Africa's opening ODI against Pakistan on Tuesday. Although he was initially ruled out of the first ODI, Maharaj has been included in the Test squad for the series against Pakistan, pending the results of a scan scheduled for later today. Wiaan Mulder, who is also recovering from a broken right middle finger sustained during a recent series against Sri Lanka in Durban, has also been included. Mulder is expected to be fit for the Boxing Day Test and is set to feature in the squad for the upcoming fixtures against Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan, who currently sit in seventh place, need to win both matches to improve their chances of making it to the WTC final. The national team will carry forward their winning momentum, having recently won the threematch home Test series against England 2-1.

South Africa squad for Tests against Pakistan:

Temba Bavuma (capt), David Bedingham, Corbin Bosch, Matthew Breetzke, Tony de Zorzi, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Kwena Maphaka, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Senuran Muthusamy, Dane Paterson, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tristan Stubbs, Kyle Verreynne (wk)

ner. "When you're a young kid, the dream was always to play for New Zealand, but to have the opportunity to officially lead my country in two formats is special." Santner acknowledged the challenges ahead, noting the transition as some of the team's experienced players approach the end of their careers. "It's a new challenge and I'm excited to get stuck into the important period of white-ball cricket that we have ahead of us. There's obviously a little bit of a changing of the guard with some of our experienced players at the back end of their careers." "I think that's exciting for the remainder of the group and the young players to now take on the challenge and drive this team forward to further success." New Zealand's head coach, Gary Stead, explained that the decision to appoint Santner was made to allow Test captain Tom Latham to focus fully on his red-ball responsibilities. "In Tom Latham, we have an accomplished and experienced captain who has led the side admirably across all three formats." "Tom's doing a great job as full-time Test captain since taking over in October, and we're keen to allow him to focus on that job, which requires a considerable amount of time and energy." New Zealand completed the formalities on the fourth day as they clinched the Hamilton Test by 423 runs as the series ended 1-2. This was New Zealand's biggest-ever Test win in terms of runs, and was the perfect sendoff for one of their veterans and stars in Tim Southee. The former captain clutched a stump as a memento as he led the team off the field in the second session after England had lost their ninth and final wicket. With the injured Ben Stokes choosing not to bat, England were already a batter short as they started the day and the target of 659 was always going to be an imposing presence. Having already lost their openers on the previous evening, England began the day with Jacob Bethell and Joe Root taking the attack to the opposition. The duo lived by the sword and it paid off for a while albeit with a few close shaves. Root was put down by Tom Latham off Southee when he was on 19, but managed to put it behind as Bethell and he went on a boundary-hitting spree.

Ready to play role in govt, PTI talks...

Islamabad **POST**

Thursday, December 19, 2024

FROM PAGE 01 the PTI-government dialogue which have been the talk of the town ever since the party's founder, Imran Khan, formed a five-member negotiation committee. The committee comprising NA Opposition leader Omar Ayub Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Salman Akram Raja and Asad Qaiser has been mandated to demand the release of "political prisoners" facing trial and the constitution of a judicial commission to probe the events of May 9, 2023 and a late-night crackdown on the PTI protesters on November 26. The PTI - whose founder along with several other leaders and workers remain behind bars and are embattled in a plethora of cases – and the incumbent government have shared a rather turmoil history with the former marching on to Islamabad on multiple occasions for protests in the ongoing year. The former ruling party had even announced launching a civil disobedience movement - which now has been deferred by Khan for a "few days" on the "PTI leaders' request".

PM lands in Cairo to attend 'D-8..

FROM PAGE 01

At the Summit, the Prime Minister will underline the importance of investing in youth and SMEs for building a strong and inclusive economy; creating jobs; advancing innovation; and promoting local entrepreneurship. The Prime Minister will also attend the Special Session of D-8 on the Humanitarian Crisis and Reconstruction Challenges in Gaza and Lebanon to deliberate on the situation resulting from Israeli aggression in the Middle East. On the sidelines of the Summit, the Prime Minister is expected to hold bilateral meetings with the participating leaders. Pakistan delegation includes Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Ataullah Tarar. Founded in 1997 in Istanbul, the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation. also known as Developing-8, is an organisation for development co-operation among Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkiye.

FROM PAGE 01 The case centers around an alleged settlement between the PTI government and a property tycoon, which reportedly caused a loss of £190 million to Pakistan's national exchequer. Khan and the accused are alleged to have misused £190 million sent by the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) as part of the settlement. Bushra Bibi was named as an accused for her role as a trustee of the Al-Qadir Trust. Additionally, the couple is accused of receiving undue benefits, including over 458 kanals of land in Mouza Bakrala, Sohawa, for the establishment of Al-Qadir University.

Nothing important' ..

FROM PAGE 01 We should be informed when will the internet work at its full speed," Patel said, whose party is a crucial ally of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. In response, Fatima said that her ministry was working for the betterment of user experience, noting that the internet was not shut down completely during Muharram, which was the case during previous governments. "Pakistan's average speed has also increased 28% compared to the previous year, which led to a 24% surge in mobile internet usage," the IT minister noted.

'PTI forms negotiation ..

FROM PAGE 01 explanation had been sought from Sher Afzal Marwat, as he had not made any statements against party policy. Earlier, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Avaz Sadiq agreed to play his role in the political dialogue between the government and the opposition. "My office is always ready to mediate between the government and opposition in order to decrease the political temperature in the country," NA speaker said. He said that negotiations are very important between the government and opposition and yesterday's debate in National Assembly was also very fruitful.

Rizwan and Shaheen fall in T20I rankings

Babar moves up,

Babar Azam has also moved up in the Test batter rankings

LAHORE: Opening batter Babar Azam made a significant jump in the latest ICC T20I rankings, while white-ball captain Mohammad Rizwan and left-arm pacer Shaheen Afridi experienced major declines. Babar, who now sits in sixth place. has surpassed Rizwan, who drops two spots to eighth with 704 rating points in the latest ICC T20I batter rankings. Australia's Travis Head continues to dominate as the number-one T20I batter with 855 rating points, followed by England's Phil Salt in second place and India's Tilak Varma in third. In the bowling rankings, Shaheen Afridi drops one place from 20th to 21st, with 599 rating points. Haris Rauf also drops three places, slipping to 26th with 573 rating points. Young pacer Abbas Afridi moves up two places from 43rd to 41st with 526 rating points. Shadab Khan also experienced a significant drop, falling six places to 71st position with 444 rating points. West Indies' Akeal Hosein dethrones England's Adil Rashid as the number-one T20I bowler. Rashid now occupies the second spot, with Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga in third. Shifting focus to the ICC ODI rankings, both Saim Ayub and Abdullah Shafique experienced decline in their positions. Saim, despite scoring a century against South Africa in the first ODI, dropped one spot to 80th with 470 points. Abdullah Shafique, struggling with the bat, slipped to 77th with 472 points. Meanwhile, players such as Fakhar Zaman (16th), Imam-ul-Haq (18th) and Mohammad Rizwan (24th) have maintained their rankings. Babar Azam continues to dominate as the number-one ODI batter, with India's Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill occupying the second and third positions, respectively. - DNA

over as New Zealand captain

Santner takes

Santner with over 100 appearances in both T20Is and ODIs, takes on the leadership roles as New Zealand sets its sights on a busy schedule of white-ball cricket

WEB DESK

AUCKLAND: Mitchell Santner has been officially named the full-time captain of New Zealand's white-ball teams, succeeding Kane Williamson, who stepped down following the Black Caps' early exit from the 2024 T20 World Cup in the USA and the West Indies. Santner with over 100 appearances in both T20Is and ODIs, takes on the leadership roles as New Zealand sets its sights on a busy schedule of white-ball cricket. The all-rounder, who has already captained the team in 24 T20Is and 4 ODIs, led Kiwis in their most recent assignment in Sri Lanka last month. His tenure begins with T20I and ODI series against Sri Lanka in late December and early January. These series will kick off a packed schedule for New Zealand, including an ODI tri-series in Pakistan in February, the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, and a home series against Pakistan to conclude the summer. "It's obviously a huge honor and a privilege to be asked," said Sant-

Rain ruins finale in Australia-India Test The five-match series resumes with the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne on 26 December for which a crowd close to 90,000 is expected for the opening day

GABBA: More bad weather in Brisbane ruined a potentially intriguing finale to the third Test between Australia and India and left the series tied at 1-1. After gaining a first-innings lead of 185, Australia wickets tumbled as they chased quick runs in their second innings in an attempt to force a result at the Gabba. They slipped to 33-5, Jasprit Bumrah ripping through the top order again, before captain Pat Cummins slogged 22 from 10 balls and declared on There was brief hope of 89-7. That positive move something set India 275 to win from a when the players returned minimum of 54 overs, but in sunshine. Australia's bad light stopped play with second innings lasted only the tourists 8-0 in the third 18 overs but it was enough for both sides to leave over of their chase. Rain, which decimated much of Queensland with claims to the Test, arrived shortly the upper hand in a series after and the players shook that is living up to the hype. hands at 15:30 local time. Australia largely dominated The five-match series rethe first four days after levsumes with the Boxing Day elling the series in Adelaide Test in Melbourne on 26 but were not out of danger December (23:30 GMT, when Steve Smith was the 25 December), for which fifth wicket to fall with the a crowd close to 90,000 is lead only 218. Earlier. Bumexpected for the opening rah bowled Usman Khawaja

day. This result was always likely with only 131.2 overs possible across the first three days - even more so when India's last-wicket pair of Bumrah and Akash Deep dramatically avoided the follow-on late on day four. India's innings was finally ended when Deep was stumped off Travis Head for 31 five overs into the final day, but no play further play was possible before lunch because of rain and the threat of lightning.

spectacular

for eight and had a slashing Marnus Labuschagne caught behind for one. He is now India's highest wicket-taker in Australia with 53 in 10 Tests, 21 of which have come in this series. Labuschagne, meanwhile, has made 18 runs in four innings either side of a 64 in the second Test. Opener Nathan McSweeney's tricky start to international cricket continued when he offered an under edge off Deep for four. The seamer also had Mitchell Marsh, promoted to number four to help boost the scoring rate, caught behind for two. Smith was caught down the leg side for the second time in the series, but the contribution of Cummins, Alex Carey's 20 not out and 17 from Travis Head probably put Australia into the ascendancy on a lively pitch, albeit in unconvincing fashion. More concerning for

Australia was the sight of Head, whose first-innings 152 came after 140 in Adelaide, struggling with an apparent groin issue. He did not field during the 13 balls possible in the India innings but later played down any injury concerns. India captain Rohit Sharma: "We will take that. To have interruptions like that wasn't great but going to Melbourne 1-1 pretty much gives us that confidence we

can go out there and pull

things towards us. "The situation we were in [on day four], we wanted someone to stand up and take the game through. Akash and Bumrah showed the fight and character. It was great to watch. All of these guys were really good with the ball." Australia captain Pat Cummins: "I am really happy with how the guys played. We felt like we were right ahead of the game for all of it." Former Australia batter and coach Darren Lehman on ABC: "I loved the way Australia went about it today to try and make something out of it. "All in all, Australia are probably still confident going to Melbourne. It sets up Melbourne unbelievably well. "Bumrah has been unbelievable to get nine [wickets] for the game. I haven't seen someone dominate a series since (Glenn) McGrath and (Shane) Warne. This is special to see first hand." – Agencies

Anti-CPEC designs to fail: Ahsan

FROM PAGE 01 Chinese engineers in terror-related incidents, made it clear that the government of Pakistan strongly condemned the terror incidents aimed at destabilizing the vital CPEC project. "Pakistan has further stepped up security arrangements for engineers and staff working on the CPEC project to prevent such incidents in the future," assured. He said that the iron brotherhood between Pakistan and China could not be undermined by such cowardly acts of terrorism. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the continued success of CPEC 2.0, highlighting the ongoing efforts to expand and deepen bilateral ties between the two nations. "The pace of CPEC 2.0 will not slow down, but rather this project will reach greater heights and guarantee the development and prosperity of both countries," he remarked.

Govt to impose...

FROM PAGE 01 amendment titled The Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, introduced by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, proposes that non-filers will not be allowed to buy property beyond a certain limit. The amendment also proposed that non-filers will be banned from purchasing shares above a certain limit and won't be allowed to open a bank account. According to the bill, non-filers will not be able to make transactions through a bank beyond a certain limit and will also not be allowed to buy motorcycles, rickshaws and tractors.



07

BUSINESS / WORLD

Briefs

PSX stays bearish, loses 3,790 more points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend Wednesday, losing on 3,790.40 points, a negative change of 3.30 percent, closing at 111,070.29 points as compared to 114,860.69 points on the last trading day.

A total of 1,111,921,053 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,252,980,316 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 60.242 billion against Rs. 62.722 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 472 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 89 of them recorded gains and 349 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 34 companies remained unchanged The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom 139,290,885 shares at Rs 1.71 per share, Cnergyico PK with 67,462,895 shares at Rs 6.54 per share and Bank of Punjab with 60,162,802 shares at Rs.10.17 per share. Al-Ghazi Tractors Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.51.29 per share price, closing at Rs.564.23, whereas the runner-up was Indus Motor Company Limited with Rs 43.66 rise in its per share price to Rs 2,058.57. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 107.16 per share closing at Rs 20,892.86 followed by Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 98.02 decline to close at Rs.8,902.00.-APP

Rupee gains 05 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 05 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.22 against the previous



ISLAMABAD: Senator Ashraf Ali Jatoi, Convener Pak-Turkey parliamentary friendship group in the Senate and members of the group with Ambassador of Turkiye Irfan Neziroglu at Parliament House.

RCCI delegates discuss SEZ, economic issues with SIFC coordinator

The delegation emphasized the urgent need for approval and development of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) around the Ring Road. Despite the allocation of 4,000 acres for this zone, they stressed the importance of expediting the approval process and providing special incentives to attract investment.

RAWALPINDI: A high-level delegation from the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), led by President Mr. Usman Shaukat, had a meeting with National Coordinator Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) Lt. Gen. at General Headquarters Rawalpindi Sarfaraz Ahmed at GHQ. The delegation included Group Leader Mr. Sohail Altaf, former Presidents Dr. Hassan Soroush, Manzar Khurshid Sheikh, Asad Mashadi (Chairman, Rawalpindi Ring Road Economic Zone Committee), Zahid Latif

Exchange REIT), Nadeem Rauf, and Saqib Rafiq. The meeting focused on critical development and economic issues, including progress on Rawalpindi Ring Road Project, Special Economic Zone (SEZ) around the Ring Road, Rawat Industrial Estate Development, Pharma Export Council, Tax System Reforms, Impact of Bank Road Conversion into walking street, Expo Center for Twin Cities and Revival of Construction Sector and promotion of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) in Pakistan. The delegation emphasized the Khan (Chairman, Islamabad Stock

urgent need for approval and development of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) around the Ring Road. Despite the allocation of 4,000 acres for this zone, they stressed the importance of expediting the approval process and providing special incentives to attract investment. The delegation also highlighted challenges faced by over 450 operational factories in the estate, which includes Pakistan's third-largest pharmaceutical cluster. They urged the immediate construction of a 2-kilometer connectivity road to enable the development of 800 additional vacant plots, fostering in-

dustrial growth and creating job opportunities. RCCI proposed the creation of a Pharma Export Council under the Ministry of Commerce to boost pharmaceutical exports and enhance the industry's global competitiveness. Furthermore, the chamber suggested leveraging its extensive business networks to assist the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in addressing systemic inefficiencies, expanding the tax net, and enhancing revenue collection. The delegation discussed concerns from local businesses regarding the conversion of Bank Road in Saddar into a walking street, proposing a balanced solution that accommodates all stakeholders. Immediate approval for an Expo Center was requested to promote trade and investment in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The delegation emphasized the need for a strong construction package, given the critical role of over 40 related industries in economic development. They also presented suggestions to promote Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs). Lt. Gen. Sarfaraz Ahmed assured RCCI of full cooperation and support in resolving these critical issues and advancing the proposed development projects.

Pakistan embassy hosts 2-day annua Consuls General conference

Islamabad **POST**

Thursday, December 19 , 2024

BEIJING: The Embassy of Pakistan hosted the Annual Consuls General Conference 2024 from 17-18 December, which was chaired by Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Khalil Hashmi.

The two-day event brought together the Consuls General from Pakistan's Consulates General in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chengdu. The conference reviewed the Consulates' activities over the last one year, discussed the synergies achieved between the Consulates and the Embassy in Beijing and set out the strategic goals and priorities for the upcoming year. The Consuls General provided in-depth briefings on a range of key areas, including consular services, trade and economic relations, cultural and educational cooperation, and community welfare activities. They also presented detailed action plans for 2025, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties, boosting trade and investment and enhancing services for the Pakistani community, including students in China. In his remarks, Ambassador Khalil Hashmi commended the efforts of the Consuls General in deepening China-Pakistan relations and underlined the need to uphold the collaborative spirit among all the Pakistan Missions in China to achieve the shared goals. He called for maintaining the highest standards of service and commitment to promote the bilateral trade and investment, and to assist the Pakistan Community living in China. Reviewing the action plans presented by the Consulates, the Ambassador advised the Consuls General to keep up the momentum generated by the B2B conferences and road-shows, in line with the consensus reached between the leadership of China and Pakistan. He also underscored the importance of harnessing sister-province and sister-city relationships, with a view to fos-

Iran lawmakers request changes to strict hijab bill

> The months-long unrest saw hundreds of people,

Pak navy commissions offshore patrol vessel **PNS Yamama in Romania**

DNA

Ambassador of Pakistan to September 2024. Vice Ad-Pathan, were also present Abbasi commended the the occasion. While addressing the ceremony, Chief Guest emphasized the significance of this project and highlighted the additional set of capabilities that PNS YAMAMA brings to Pakistan Navy's sphere of operations. He further stated that these platforms are designed to enhance full spectrum of Navy's maritime operations. Earlier this year, Pakistan Navy inducted first ship of OPV

Marian Ciobotaru, and the Batch II into its fleet on 6 The ship is equipped with state-of-the-art electronic Romania, Mr. Arshad Jaan miral Muhammad Faisal warfare, anti-ship, and anti-air warfare capabilities. Additionally, it is capable of embarking a multirole helicopter and can operate independently or as part of a task force for extended durations to execute a variety of missions, thereby safeguarding Pakistan's maritime interests. The commissioning ceremony was attended by high-level dignitaries from Pakistan, Romania, and the Netherlands, including members of Pakistani community.

day's closing of Rs 278.27. However, according to the Forex Association of Paki stan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.75 and Rs 279.25 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by 29 paisa to close at Rs 291.85 against the last day's closing of Rs 292.14, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paisa and closed at Rs1.81, whereas a decrease of 56 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound. which traded at Rs352 88 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs353.44. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Rival decline by 02 paisa each to close at Rs75.74 and Rs74.02, respectively.

State Bank injects Rs1202b into market

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), on Wednesday, injected Rs1,202.65 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO). The SBP, following the Monetary Policy rate cut to 13%, conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on December 18, 2024 for 2-day tenor and, as per results issued, accepted an amount of Rs1,013.65 billion offered through 12 The central bank bids. received 12 bids for 2-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs1,013.65 billion at the rate of return ranging from 13.07 to 13.25 percent. The SBP accepted the entire amount offered through 12 quotes for 2-day tenor at the 13.07% rate of return. Meanwhile, SBP also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for the 2-day tenor. The central bank received 4 bids for 2-day tenor quoting an amount of Rs189 billion at the rate of return ranging between 13.10 to 13.15 %. The SBP accepted the entire amount offered through the 4 quotes for 2-day tenor at 13.10% rate of return. -APP

including dozens of security personnel, killed. Thousands of demonstrators were arrested

TEHRAN: Iranian lawmakers have asked to amend a bill that would impose tougher penalties on women who refuse to wear the mandatory hijab, local media reported on Wednesday. The bill, already approved in parliament but not yet submitted to the government for final confirmation, has stirred a heated debate in Iran more than two years since nationwide protests erupted in part over the Islamic republic's dress code for women. Shahram Dabiri, Iran's vice president for parliamentary affairs, has requested to hold off on sending the bill for approval, according to news agency ISNA. "We requested that the law of chastity and hijab not be referred to the government," Dabiri was quoted by ISNA as saying, adding that "the parliament speaker requested an amendment to the bill." Dabiri did not specify the nature of the amendment or provide a timeline for the process. Lawmakers in September 2023 had approved the bill, officially the "Law on Supporting the Family through the Promotion of the Culture of Chastity and Hijab." It has since won the approval of the Guardian Council, a body empowered to vet legislation. The bill was initially meant to be referred to President Masoud Pezeshkian in December. Pezeshkian, who could sign it into law, has expressed "reservations" about the text, citing numerous "ambigui-

ties." The 74-article bill tightens restrictions over women's public attire and threatens action against businesses who fail to enforce the dress code, according to the text carried by local media. It also imposes hefty penalities of up to 10 years in prison or fines equivalent to more than \$6,000 for promoting "nudity" or "indecency." Since the early years of the republic following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, women in Iran have been required by law to cover their head and neck. In late 2022, a wave of protests erupted following the death in custody of 22-year-old Iranian-Kurd Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested for allegedly violating the Islamic dress code. The months-long unrest saw hundreds of people, including dozens of security personnel, killed. Thousands of demonstrators were arrested-DNA

Pa-ISLAMABAD: kistan Navy has commissioned its Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), PNS YAMA-MA, at Constanta Port. Romania. Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi, graced the ceremony as Chief Guest and handed over the traditional Command Scroll to Commanding Officer of PNS YAMAMA. Deputy Fleet Commander of Romanian Navy, Rear Admiral (UH)

exceptional professionalism and dedication of DAMEN Shipyards and expressed confidence in the prospects of future cooperation in delivering cutting-edge technologies to Pakistan Navy. PNS YAMAMA is the final vessel of OPV Batch II constructed at DAMEN Shipyards, Galati, Romania. It is a versatile and highly agile platform of medium size and tonnage.

tering people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two countries.-APP

Chinese CG visits RUDA, China investment desk setup LAHORE: Consul General

of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan, Mr Zhao Shiren paid a special visit to Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA) headquarters here on Wednesday. During the visit, he was briefed about the RUDA initiatives. The China Investment Desk at RUDA was also officially inaugurated by Mr. Zhao Shiren, Consul General of China, in the presence of RUDA Chairman, Shahid Ashraf Tarar, RUDA Chief Operating Officer Mansoor Janjua and distinguished members of the Chinese community in Pakistan and senior officials of RUDA. RUDA Chairman Shahid Ashraf Tarar along with senior officials of RUDA warmly welcomed the Chinese Consul General and highlighted the importance of the Pakistan-China friendship. In his remarks, Mr. Zhao Shiren commended this timely initiative, emphasizing its significance in the backdrop of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's recent successful visit to China. He appreciated RUDA's delegation for their productive road show in China and acknowledged their consistent efforts, which had now culminated in establishing the China Investment Desk at RUDA. He praised the efforts of RUDA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Imran Amin in actualization of very cordial professional engagement. Chinese Consul General Mr. Zhao expressed his appreciation for RUDA CEO's dynamic leadership and conveyed optimism about fostering stronger ties between the two institutions. Mr. Zhao further highlighted the importance of such platforms, drawing parallels to Business Facilitation Centers, and expressed his confidence that this initiative will play a pivotal role in assisting and supporting the Chinese

community.-APP



World leading economists bet on China's economic resilience, strategic shifts

DNA

BEIJING: Amid global economic uncertainties. China continues to demonstrate resilience, adapting its strategies to maintain growth.

At the CAIJING Annual Conference, held this week, leading financial institutions such as UBS, Morgan Stanley, and the IMF provided insights into China's evolving economic posture in the face of both external challenges and internal shifts. Morgan Stanley's Chief China Economist, Robin Xing, highlighted that China is poised to move from past approaches and shift towards more dynamic and responsive economic strategies, including consumption stimulation, social security enhancement, and proactive

policy takes a proactive stance, transitioning from investment to consumption while managing debt, China could enter a positive economic cycle in the next one to two years," Xing said, adding that China is well-positioned to handle a higher central government budget deficit underpinned by its strong national balance sheet. The economist believes that although there are significant macro challenges during this period of transformation, there are many opportunities for structural adjustment. He identified three emerging areas that could drive future growth: artificial intelligence (AI), humanoid robots, and green energy transition. "China's vast data resources, diverse application scenarios, and a consumer ecosystem are conducive to AI's commercialization," Xing noted. The same goes for the rise

debt management. "If its fiscal and widespread use of humanoid robots. "China has certain cost advantages and scale benefits across the entire industrial chain," he added. In the green energy sector, Xing pointed out that, while the U.S. shows hesitancy, Chinese enterprises can capitalize on European and global commitments to energy transition and foster win-win cooperation, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Addressing the potential impact of U.S. tariff hikes, Xing warned that proposed tariffs could increase U.S. inflation by 1 percentage point and reduce economic growth by 1.4 percentage points over the next two years. In this scenario, he suggested the U.S. could adopt a phased and gradual increase in tariffs that would have a more manageable impact on China compared to that in 2018-2019. In addition. China's export market has become more

diversified over the past six years. "The U.S. now accounts for only one-seventh of China's total exports, compared to one-fifth previously," he said, highlighting the reduced dependency on the U.S. market. UBS's Chief China Economist, Wang Tao, emphasized the importance of expanding domestic demand in response to external shocks. "Expanding internal demand is the most crucial strategy at present," Wang said. She highlighted China's focus on stimulating consumption and improving livelihoods as key to driving internal demand and reducing reliance on external trade amid rising global trade protectionism. The IMF's Chief Representative in China, Steven Barnett, attributed China's rapid economic rise to structural reforms that maximized resource allocation. "China's economic success is the result of reforms that channelled resources to their most productive use, he said. Barnett emphasized the potential for further growth through consumption, noting that despite significant gains in the past two decades. consumption still lags behind GDP growth. "All production is ultimately to meet consumer demand, so I believe rapid growth in consumption will be greatly beneficial to China". The analyses from UBS, Morgan Stanley, and the IMF align on several key points: China's strategy is a balance between managing external challenges and fostering internal growth. The country's focus on innovation, consumption, and social security reflects a pragmatic approach to longterm economic stability. As China navigates the evolving global economic landscape, its strategic shifts will play a critical role in shaping its economic future.





Pakistan and Iran agree to

enhance trade cooperation



Briefs Russia detains Uzbek man over general's killing

MOSCOW: Russia's security service says a 29-year-old man from Uzbekistan has been detained over the killing of senior general Igor Kirillov and his assistant in Moscow. Lt Gen Igor Kirillov, head of the Radiation, Chemical and Biological Protection Forces, was outside a residential block early on Tuesday when an explosive device hidden in a scooter was detonated remotely. The Russian security service said the unnamed suspect was recruited by Ukrainian intelligence, according to state media agencies. Ukraine's security service had already claimed it was behind the killing, a source told the BBC on Tuesday. The Ukrainian source said Kirillov - who was Russia's chemical weapons chief was "a legitimate target" and alleged he had carried out war crimes. On Monday, the day before the killing, Ukraine charged Kirillov, 54, in absentia, saving he was "responsible for the mass use of banned chemical weapons". Russia denies the allegations. A Kremlin spokesman said Russian President Vladimir Putin "expresses deep condolences" over Kirillov's death, Russian news agency Tass reported. The Russian Federal Security Service's (FSB) public relations centre said on Wednesday the detained 29-year-old was "suspected of committing a terrorist act". A statement said that during "interrogation he explained that he was recruited by the Ukrainian special services". - Agencies

Cases against Asad Qaiser



DPM Dar and Minister Araghci also exchange views on the situation in Middle East

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Wednesday agreed to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation and increase people-to-people contacts. The understanding was reached during a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Iran Seyyed Abbas Araghchi on the sidelines of the 21st D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers being held in Cairo, Egypt. The two dignitaries expressed satisfaction at the trajectory of bilateral relations marked by increased high-level exchanges in political and economic fields, a press release issued by the Foreign Office said. Deputy Prime Minister Dar and Minister Araghci also exchange views on the situation in the Middle East. The deputy prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's principled position on Palestine and expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people.

IHC orders SZABMU to re-conduct MDCAT within two-week

ISLAMABAD: A division bench of Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday instructed the Shaheed Zulifkar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABMU) to conduct medical and dental colleges admission test (MDCAT) again within two weeks. A two-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Saman Raffat Imtiaz heard the intra court appeal (ICA) against the verdict of the single member bench.

The petitioners' lawyer said that the single-member bench had declared that 31 questions out of 200 were out of syllabus and course. He said that the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) declared firstly 25 but later 18 questions out of the syllabus. He said that there were a total of 150 seats allocated for Islamabad of which 50 were for admissions in medical colleges while 100 for dental colleges. Addressing the lawyer, the court said that if you are admitting the opinion of PMDC then you have to accept it in letter and spirit. On the query of the bench, the registrar of the university said that passing marks in the test are 50 percent to which the court said that if the 18 questions are excluded then the passing marks would be 90. Justice Saman Raffat Imtiaz said that the university has to satisfy the students on their reservations instead of court. – APP

Workshop mulls over climate commitments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) held a stakeholder national workshop on Wednesday focused on developing an inclusive approach to Pakistan's climate commitments under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) framework. The event, titled "Developing Inclusive Climate Commitments: NDCs 3.0 for Pakistan," convened policymakers, experts, media and key stakeholders to discuss Pakistan's climate goals and the way forward to meet these commitments in light of growing environmental challenges, said a press release. The workshop featured a series of insightful speeches from leading experts, beginning with Dr Shafqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director of SDPI, who emphasized the importance of strengthening Pakistan's climate policies to create a more resilient and sustainable future. Muhammad Arif Goheer, Executive Director of the Global Climate Change Impact Studies Center (GCISC), underscored the nation's responsibility to safeguard its future and society. "We must develop resilience plans and innovative solutions to meet our commitments. Our country is vulnerable to climate impacts, and it is essential that the NDCs reflect practical, effective actions," said Mr Goheer.

Saudi Arabia to help Pak tackle passport forgery

The minister discussed advanced tech and anti-forgery measures during visit to Saudi Directorate of Passport

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has stated that, with Saudi Arabia's cooperation, individuals involved in passport forgery and document tampering can now be apprehended within Pakistan. During his visit to the Saudi Directorate of Passport in Riyadh, Mohsin Naqvi met with the acting Director General, Major General Dr. Saleh Al-Marabba. The discussion focused on streamlining the passport issuance process and implementing effective measures to prevent forgery. The minister reviewed the advanced technology utilised by the Directorate and praised its modern passport system. Mohsin Naqvi highlighted that Saudi support could significantly enhance and secure Pakistan's passport system. This collaboration will benefit the public and eliminate fraudulent

ZAB case 'a dark chapter' in judicial history: CJP

CJ agrees with Justice Shah's remarks, acknowledging flaws in Bhutto trial and urging judicial integrity reforms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice YahyaAfridi has raised concerns about significant lapses in the trial of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, terming the case a "dark chapter" in Pakistan's judicial history. In an additional note, Justice Afridi partially agreed with Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's observations regarding the infamous trial, Express News reported. Justice Afridi noted that while he reviewed the opinions of former Chief Justice QaziFaez Isa and other judges, he largely agreed with Justice Shah's remarks. However, he emphasised that the Supreme Court's advisory jurisdiction under Article 186 limits its scope in such matters. Referring to the trial's flaws, the chief justice observed that both the trial court and appellate court had failed to uphold fair trial standards. He highlighted procedural breaches, stating that stan's criminal procedure could not have been directly conducted in the high court. Afridi further pointed out that former Chief Justice Nasim Hasan Shah, now deceased, had admitted to external pressures influencing the verdict in the Bhutto case. He called this revelation a "regrettable chapter"

in Pakistan's judicial history, undermining public trust in the judiciary. The chief justice praised dissenting judges of the time, including Justices Dorab Patel, Mohammad Haleem, and Safdar Shah, for their courageous stand against the prevailing pressures. Although their dissenting notes did not alter the outcome, Afridi said they upheld the judiciary's impartiality and underscored its critical role in maintaining the rule of law.

Justice Afridi concluded that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto trial lacked due process, cautioning that failure to address such miscarriages of justice could continue to erode public confidence in the legal system. In July, then Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) QaziFaez Isa had declared Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto innocent, stating that he was sentenced to death by unconstitutional courts with insufficient evidence. In detailed remarks on the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto reference issued, it was stated that an innocent person was executed without a fair trial. At the time of Bhutto's trial, the courts lacked constitutional legitimacy, the country was under martial law, and fundamental rights were suspended, it maintained, adding that the judiciary was also subservient to martial law. The order emphasised that courts under judges who swore allegiance to a dictator do not remain courts of the people. The execution of Bhutto directly benefited General Zia-ul-Haq.

rise to 17

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The number of cases registered against the National Assembly's former speaker and PTI leader Asad Qaiser reached 17 in the capital territory.

On the court orders, DSP Legal Sajid Cheema presented details of the cases. According to the police report, before PTI's "Final Call" protest, nine cases had been registered against AsadQaiser in Islamabad. However, following the protest on Nov 24, eight additional cases were lodged against him. Asad-Qaiser, through his counsel Avesha Khalid, had filed an application seeking details of all cases registered against him. Meanwhile, a hearing on Qaiser's petition for the provision of case details could not take place. Justice SamanRafatImtiaz was scheduled to hear the case but deferred In compliance with it. court orders, the police submitted the details of all 17 cases registered against the PTI leader in court.

practices. He also announced plans to establish a call centre in Pakistan similar to the one run by the Saudi Directorate of Passport. Saudi authorities previously apprehended 3,700 Pakistanis at airports for travelling with forged documents and tampered passports. If Bhutto had been released, he could have pursued serious treason charges against the dictator. CJP remarked that the reference took 11 years to be scheduled for a hearing. All judges who initially heard the reference retired, and the evidence for the death sentence was insufficient. There was no direct evidence under Section 302 against Bhutto, it added.

Blome reaffirms commitment to strengthen US-Pakistan ties



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome visited Karachi from December 17-18, reaffirming the United States' commitment to strengthening bilateral ties in business, trade, jobs and education. His engagements emphasized shared goals of economic growth, opportunity, and respect for human dignity. At a dinner with business leaders, Ambassador Blome highlighted the importance of expanding trade and investment, including by inviting Pakistani businesspeople to participate in the SelectUSA 2025 Investment Summit. "The United States is committed to supporting Pakistan's economic development," he said. "Our mutual prosperity depends on free, open, competitive markets where trade and investment can thrive." Meeting with human rights advocates at the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC), he reiterated U.S. support for advancing religious freedoms and the civil rights of those living in Pakistan. "The United States stands with Pakistan in its pursuit to safeguard the rights of all citizens," he said, commending the SHRC's efforts.

Swiss-EU talks to 'stabilise' ties nearing a deal

GENEVA: After years of negotiations, Switzerland's government appeared poised to approve a package of agreements with the European Union, though Swiss lawmakers and a likely referendum could still sink the deal. Non-EU member Switzerland and its largest trading partner are seeking to stabilise and develop their relations, which are currently governed by more than 120 agreements. For nearly two decades, the two sides have been discussing the need to simplify and harmonise ties, but relations soured in 2021, when, without warning, Bern slammed the door on the negotiations. The talks tentatively resumed in March, with both sides saying they hoped to conclude a deal by the end of the year. Unlike previous attempts to seal an overarching framework agreement, the current negotiations have sought to update the existing bilateral agreements and conclude new ones on issues like electricity, health and food safety. Swiss media have in recent days cited diplomatic sources saying that all issues had been agreed upon, with the exception of the amount Switzerland should pay into the EU's Cohesion Fund, which is aimed at reducing economic and social disparities in the bloc. A fresh round of discussions on Tuesday "took place in a very positive atmosphere", a European diplomatic source said.

US hopes for Gaza truce within weeks

CIA Director Burns is expected to meet with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani

FOREIGN DESK

CAIRO: The US expressed optimism Tuesday that a Gaza cease-fire and hostage exchange deal could be finalized within weeks, citing ongoing efforts to resolve remaining disputes, according to the State Department. Addressing reporters at the Foreign Press Center, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller underscored the urgency of reaching an agreement, expressing frustration at the repeated set-backs in negotiations. "We believe that we are at the point where we ought to be able to get to an agreement. The differences between the two parties really have been narrowed such that all remaining differences ought to be bridgeable," Miller said. However, he acknowledged the challenges, cautioning that previous negotiations had stalled despite appearing to be close to a resolution. "That said, we have been here before and have not seen the parties come to an agreement," he said. Earlier in the day, Miller expressed "cautious optimism"

about negotiations in Qatar's capital Doha to secure a deal. Israel, which according to prisoners' groups has more than 10,000 Palestinians in its prisons, estimates that there are around 100 Israeli captives in Gaza. The Palestinian resistance group Hamas has said that 33 captives have been killed in indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes in Gaza. Meanwhile, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Bill Burns is set to travel to the Qatari capital Doha on Wednesday to discuss the latest developments in cease-fire and prisoner exchange negotiations between the Palestinian group Hamas and Israel. Burns is expected to meet with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, the U.S.-based news site Axios reported, citing a source familiar with the trip. The discussions will focus on indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas facilitated by Qatar. U.S. President Joe Biden's Middle East adviser Brett McGurk is already in Doha, engaging in talks with Qatari. Egyptian and Israeli officials, according to a U.S. official speaking to the media outlet.

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