



Islamabad POST

Monday, December 30, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Russia trying to hide causes of plane crash, says President Aliyev

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Politicians should sit together

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Martinez ends goal drought in Cagliari win

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7 days of national mourning

179 dead in South Korea plane crash

85 women, 84 men and 10 others whose genders weren't immediately identifiable – have been killed, and two people have been rescued – both crew members

NEWS DESK / DNA

SEOUL: At least 179 people have been killed after a passenger plane skidded and crashed while trying to land at Muan International Airport in South Korea in one of the country's worst aviation disasters. The accident occurred on Sunday at 9:03am local time (00:03 GMT) as the Jeju Air flight, carrying 175 passengers and six crew from the Thai capital Bangkok, landed at Muan International Airport about 290km (180 miles) southwest of the capital Seoul. The National Fire Agency confirmed that 179 people – 85 women, 84 men and 10 others whose genders weren't immediately identifiable – have been killed, and two people have been rescued – both crew members. The fire that engulfed the plane has been extinguished, the agency said. The agency reported that the crash is believed to have been caused by "contact with birds, resulting in malfunctioning landing gear" as the plane attempted to land at the airport. "Images which have been on the media here do appear to show the plane landing on its belly, skidding along the runway, followed then by a huge explosion," he said. "Eyewitness accounts have talked then about a series of explosions and certainly images that we have been seeing have shown a catastrophic fire," our correspondent added. McBride said only 65 victims out of 179 have so far been identified because of the huge fire on the plane. The South Korean government has declared seven days of national mourning over the plane crash. The plane, a 15-year-old Boeing 737-800 jet,

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President, PM express condolence over plane crash

Jeju Air Flight 2216 crashed at Muan International Airport on Sunday morning

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed his grief over the loss of many precious lives in a plane crash at Muan International Airport in Korea. "In this hour of grief, our thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families and with the people and the Government of Republic of Korea," the prime minister posted on X account. Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari on also expressed his grief over loss of precious lives in a plane crash at Muan International Airport in South Korea. The president expressed his condolences with the people and the Government of South Korea, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

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MUAN-GUN: Firefighters and rescue team members work near the wreckage of a passenger plane at Muan International Airport. – DNA

Indian citizen arrested in Mandi Bahauddin

Badal Babu did not possess any legal visa or permission to stay in Pakistan

DNA

MANDIBAHAUDDIN: An Indian citizen has been arrested in Mandi Bahauddin on charges of illegally entering and residing in Pakistan. According to police sources, 30-year-old Badal Babu was apprehended near Moza Moong. The arrested individual hails from Nagla Khatkari, Post Barla Mor, Tehsil Atrauli, District Aligarh, India. Badal Babu did

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Hints at issuing 'White Paper'

KP govt mired in corruption, misrule: Tarar

Govt all-out to ensure stability, growth in country: Attaullah Tarar

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Sunday that the country had been saved from default, and now the government's entire focus was on ensuring stability and growth. Addressing a press conference here, he said everyone was acknowledging that country's economy was getting stable and even Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder had admitted it. He said inflation had reduced from 32 per cent to 4 per cent. "Is it not a responsibility of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government to set up price control committees besides appointing price control magistrates at tehsil and union council levels, he questioned. Comparing to last year, prices of essential items were coming down, petrol price had reduced but why things in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were not improving.

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General consensus reached in Kurram jirga: Barrister Saif

Forum to meet on Tuesday after granting two days' time to one of the parties for further consultations

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Information Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif has said that a general consensus has been reached between the rival tribes in the Kurram peace jirga which continued through the night. Providing details on the ongoing peace talks on Sunday, Barrister Saif said that

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JI leads mass rally supporting Palestine

Hafiz Naeem takes jibe at PTI for seeking US help in Imran Khan's release

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of supporters of Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami party gathered in Islamabad on Sunday to protest against Israel and express solidarity with Palestinians. The "Gaza Million March," held at

F-9 Park, was led by Jamaat-e-Islami chief Hafiz Naeem Ur Rehman, who condemned Israeli actions in Gaza and called for immediate international intervention to end the violence. During the rally, participants chanted slogans critical of Israel and the

PICTURE ON PAGE 2

US, accusing both countries of enabling the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

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Briefs

Govt to revise petroleum prices on new year

It is anticipated that the government may increase petrol prices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government is expected to announce a hike in petroleum prices on the first day of the new year, bringing significant news for the public regarding petrol prices. According to details, there is a likelihood of an increase in the prices of petroleum products, with diesel prices expected to rise by more than Rs4 per liter. However, petrol prices may remain unchanged. Additionally, kerosene oil prices are anticipated to increase by Rs1 per liter. Sources from the Petroleum Division revealed that the adjustment in petroleum prices will be announced on December 31, the last day of the year.

Fazl lashes put at KP govt

Says, it failed to establish writ in province

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has failed to establish its writ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding he did not get any message from PTI founder Imran Khan for a meeting. Maulana Fazlur Rehman said, "We have working relations with the PTI in the Centre, but at provincial level we have different view. "We don't see writ of KP government in the province. It has failed to establish its writ in the province. Govt offices and courts have been transferred from Tank to DI Khan. It seems Bannu, Tank and DI Khan have been handed over to terrorists."

'Charter of economy'

Aurangzeb urges all stakeholders to unite

"Let us unite for the country's sake on three or four key issues," says finance czar amid PTI-govt negotiations

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has urged all stakeholders to evolve consensus on key issues including the "charter of economy" to bring sustainable economic stability to the country. Senator Aurangzeb reiterated that while challenges are plenty, economic reforms require collective efforts. "We are gathering suggestions from all stakeholders for economic reforms. We need to move towards sustainable economic stability. "Let us unite for the country's sake on three or four key issues, including the Charter of Economy." His statement comes as the opposition PTI and the coalition government officially kicked off negotiations to lower political temperature in the country earlier this month with the second round of talks is scheduled to take place on January 2.

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PTI not an enemy but a 'political opponent': Malik

Calls for dialogue to address national issues

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik has called for dialogue to address national issues while stressing the need for constructive discussions. Speaking to media in Lahore on Sunday, he said, "We were ready for negotiations. If we want to move forward, let's have a dialogue.

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Boat incident FIA 'completes' initial inquiry

3 suspects were arrested from Faisalabad, two from Gujranwala, and two FIA officials from Faisalabad

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has completed its initial inquiry into the Greece boat incident. According to sources, 31 FIA officers have been barred from travelling in their alleged connection with the incident. Sources revealed that these officers were deployed at various airports before the incident. The decision to restrict their travel was made after questioning survivors of the boat incident. Furthermore, investigators will obtain details

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Pitfalls of misplaced priorities: some musings

ANALYSIS

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

POLITICS in Pakistan continues to evolve with each passing day, but the challenges it faces are deeply rooted in its history. Since its inception in 1947, the country has been marked by persistent political upheavals, a phenomenon that has significantly hindered its ability to achieve steady progress and development. These disruptions have not only delayed nation-building efforts but also left Pakistan struggling to keep pace with other nations that gained independence around the same time, such as India and South Korea, which have made considerable strides in economic and political stability. One of the fundamental reasons behind Pakistan's stagnation lies in the entrenched feudal and autocratic mindsets that took hold in its early years. The dominance of feudal lords in politics has perpetuated inequality and slowed democratic reforms, as these elites prioritize their own interests over the welfare of the populace. Simultaneously, repeated military interventions and authoritarian regimes have further stifled the growth of democratic

institutions, creating a cycle of instability and mistrust in civilian governance.

This blend of feudalism and dictatorship has left little room for inclusive policies, economic innovation, or robust institutional frameworks, preventing Pakistan from fully realizing its potential. Overcoming these challenges required concerted efforts to dismantle entrenched power structures, strengthen democratic institutions, and promote accountability and transparency in governance but unfortunately nobody either from the political or military side, ever endeavored to put things in order simply because none of them was ready to establish a system that adhered to constitutional principles. Despite the apparent need for reform and stability, efforts to bring order have been hindered by self-serving motives or power dynamics. Neither the political class nor the military appeared ready to relinquish their control or influence in favor of a governance model based on the rule of law and constitutional integrity. This reluctance perpetuated a cycle of instability, undermined public trust, and hampered the country's progress toward democratic ideals and institutional accountability.

It is both fascinating and disheartening that, even after the passage of 77 years, the status quo continues to dominate the socio-political landscape of Pakistan. The enduring tug-of-war between the Establishment and politicians remains the defining feature of governance, perpetuating a

cycle of power struggles that have stymied progress. This relentless pursuit of control, with each side seeking to assert its dominance over all facets of national life, has had far-reaching consequences. The repercussions of this power imbalance are profound. The very essence of democracy—a system that thrives on representation, accountability, and the people's will—has been compromised. Instead of fostering unity and prosperity, the ceaseless contest for authority has sown discord and stagnation. Meanwhile, the ordinary citizens, burdened by decades of neglect, corruption, and instability, find themselves trapped in a precarious state, grappling with economic hardships, social inequalities, and an uncertain future. Even after more than seven decades of independence, the nation seems to be at a crossroads, uncertain about its trajectory. The question of what the future holds for Pakistan remains as pressing today as it was in the early years of its formation. Without meaningful reforms and a collective commitment to prioritise the needs of the people over the ambitions of a few, the country risks perpetuating this cycle of uncertainty and missed potential. Recently, military courts convicted civilians involved in the May 9 incidents, a decision that appears to have deepened the already fragile civil-military relationship. The convictions lacked domestic and international support, raising questions about their legitimacy. Analysts

argue that these individuals could have been prosecuted in civilian courts, leaving many to wonder why the military opted for its own tribunals, thereby inviting widespread public disapproval. The United States, European Union, and United Kingdom strongly criticised these trials, deeming them contrary to the spirit of Pakistan's Constitution. While the sitting government appears unbothered by the rebuke from these nations, it is well aware of the potential long-term consequences if such criticism gains traction. The challenges facing the incumbent ruling clique are expected to intensify once the Trump administration assumes office in the United States. Whether one likes it or not, the U.S. consistently plays a pivotal role in Pakistan's major decision-making processes. It even has the ability to influence regime changes in the country. Therefore, any signals from advisors of the incoming U.S. administration—whether in favor of certain politicians or otherwise—should not be ignored and must be taken seriously. Insiders familiar with these developments suggest that what has been observed so far is merely the tip of the iceberg. The real implications will become evident once the Trump administration is fully in charge. The challenges faced by those in power are numerous and complex. The recent escalations at the Western border present yet another difficult issue for the security establishment to address. The situation in

Kurram remains dire, with no resolution in sight. Meanwhile, any confrontation with the Taliban government under the current circumstances risks exacerbating the situation. This is particularly concerning as the Taliban have explicitly stated their intention to respond to Pakistani airstrikes within Afghan territory.

Political stability at home appears to be the only viable option to address both internal and external threats effectively. The ongoing discussions between PTI and the government hold the potential to contribute to this stability, provided they yield meaningful results. However, given the dismissive response from some government ministers to PTI's offer for dialogue, the chances of these talks succeeding seem slim. Unfortunately, certain ministers, including the defense minister, appear determined to derail these negotiations, regardless of the consequences. Even if talks between PTI and the government succeed, it is unlikely that political instability will dissipate anytime soon. The reasons are clear: the current setup lacks both credibility and public support. As I have emphasized in my earlier pieces, the only viable solution seems to be the holding of free and fair mid-term elections. Any other arrangement would likely prove counterproductive, especially in the current circumstances where politics is at its nadir, and the economy is in complete disarray. – The writer is the newspaper editor.

Media urged to help create awareness of family planning

SDPI representative Wasif Naqvi emphasized the media's critical role in dismantling the stigma around family planning and reproductive health

DNA

PESHAWAR: Recognizing socio-economic challenges posed by the rapid population growth in Pakistan, media professionals have been urged to play a proactive role in raising awareness about importance of family planning and reproductive health. This was the central theme of a coalition meeting for media on reproductive health and family planning, organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Media and Communication, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, attended the meeting as chief guest. The event aimed to establish dedicated media groups to foster dialogue and coverage on family planning, sexual and reproductive health, and violence against women. Welcoming the participants, SDPI representative Wasif Naqvi emphasized the media's critical role in dismantling the stigma around family planning and reproductive health. He explained that SDPI is forming media groups across provinces to monitor progress, identify policy gaps, and highlight challenges through investigative stories and programming.

Mahjabeen Qazi, Provincial Programme Coordinator for UNFPA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, provided an overview of UNFPA's efforts in collaboration with health and population welfare departments. She revealed alarming population growth trends, noting that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's population is projected to rise from the current 51 million to 89 million by 2050. She further highlighted the impact of excessive childbirth, including malnutrition among children due to insufficient maternal attention. Additionally, she pointed out that by 2040, Pakistan would require around 14 million new jobs to meet the growing population's needs, compounding the already high unemployment rate. Mahjabeen also highlighted societal pressures as a key factor behind uncontrolled population growth. She explained that many couples are unwilling to have more children but often feel compelled by family elders, such as in-laws, to expand their families. Ms. Qazi also shared the Council of Common Interest's (CCI) eight recommendations for population control, which advocate for the concept of "Tawazun" (balance) in family growth. Dr. Shahid Miskeen Khan, Programme

Specialist at UNFPA KP, delivered a technical presentation on the Population Action Plan and National Commitment. He pointed out that a lack of access to family planning medicines in many parts of the country is a major barrier. However, he noted that the government is working on producing these medicines locally to ensure widespread availability. Addressing the gathering, Barrister Saif stressed that the rapid population increase is a critical issue that cannot be ignored. "To address this challenge, we must work to change societal behaviors and remove the stigma surrounding family planning," he said. He urged the media and religious scholars to educate people on the need for family planning, framing it as essential for optimal resource utilization rather than a theological concern. Saif also suggested leveraging social media platforms to amplify the message, recommending the involvement of prominent vloggers and influencers to reach wider audiences effectively. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to mobilize media resources to promote awareness and drive meaningful action on family planning and reproductive health.



ISLAMABAD: Jamaat e Islami chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman addressing large gathering of Gaza Million March.

Rs 2.38b in stolen goods seized, over 24,000 criminals held

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police has reported a significant 75% decline in serious crimes in 2024, alongside the recovery of stolen goods worth over Rs 2.38 billion. With 24,387 arrests made and extensive crackdowns on criminal activity. This milestone was shared during the annual review meeting led by Inspector General (IG) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi and Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations Syed Ali Raza in the federal capital, an official told APP. Serious crime statistics According to official data, serious crimes in Islamabad decreased from 269 cases in 2023 to 200 in 2024. This significant decline is attributed to the proactive measures and strategic planning implemented by the Operations Division. DIG Syed Ali Raza emphasized that the police's vigilant efforts, including targeted operations and improved intelligence systems, have played a pivotal role in enhancing the city's security. Arrests and recoveries The Operations Division made 24,387 arrests in various criminal cases throughout the year, recovering stolen goods valued at over Rs 2.38 billion. The crackdown on criminal elements also led to the dismantling of 657 gangs involving 1,531 individuals. Vehicles recovered included 429 cars and 763 motorcycles. Drug control efforts Under the "Nasha Ab Nahi" campaign, the Islamabad Police registered 1,723 cases and apprehended.—APP

Plan unveiled to empower Marginalized Communities

Rana Mashhood said that this initiative shined a spotlight on the incredible contributions of these individuals, promoting equal rights and opportunities for all

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan announced on Sunday that the PML-N led government has unveiled a range of initiatives designed to uplift women, transgender individuals and people with disabilities, with the ultimate goal of fostering inclusive growth and social equality in Pakistan. Mashhood revealed in an exclusive interview with state run news channel news channel that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif was driving a series of initiatives to uplift marginalized communities, including women, transgender individuals and People with Disabilities with the aim to provide them equal opportunities in the society. The PML-N government has consistently demonstrated its commitment to empowering marginalized communities, particularly women, through various initiatives and policies, he said and

added, the Prime Minister's Youth Programme has taken a monumental step towards inclusivity and empowerment by hosting its 1st Dignity Awards, celebrating the remarkable achievements of women, transgender persons and women with disabilities. Rana Mashhood said that this initiative shined a spotlight on the incredible contributions of these individuals, promoting equal rights and opportunities for all. It is particularly noteworthy that the programme is recognizing the achievements of women with disabilities, who often face double discrimination due to their gender and disability, he said, adding, this acknowledgment is a crucial step towards breaking down barriers and promoting inclusivity. 'The Dignity Awards' serve as a powerful reminder that everyone deserves equal rights and opportunities, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, or abilities,

he highlighted. Responding to a query, he stated that this year, under the Youth Loan Program, various facilitation centers would be established, with a special focus on empowering women and persons with disabilities. Notably, a minimum of 25 percent of the program's targets will be reserved for women, ensuring they receive prioritized support, he added. Additionally, specialized projects will be introduced to cater to the unique needs of women and persons with disabilities, promoting inclusive economic growth and equal opportunities for all, he added. The government is also taking proactive steps to promote inclusive education and employment opportunities, he said, adding that, specifically, PM Shahbaz Sharif was focusing on IT and technical education, recognizing the immense potential of these fields to drive growth.—APP

IWMI expands operation in KP for addressing water governance

PESHAWAR: The International Water Management Institute (IWMI), a leading research-for-development organization, has expanded its operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by launching Water Resource Accountability Programme (WRAP) to assist provincial government in addressing critical water governance and management challenges. The program, launched as a pilot project, is operational in two districts of KP: Charsadda, which relies on irrigated agriculture, and Mansehra, where agriculture depends on rainfall. The WRAP initiative is designed to enhance water governance and management in Pakistan, enabling the country to adapt to climate change while promoting environmental sustainability. This approach emphasizes collaboration with provinces, research-driven insights, and media engagement, explained Dr. Mohsin Hafeez, Director of IWMI, during a briefing for journalists. "The project addresses complex water governance issues such as unsustainable groundwater extraction, inefficient flood irrigation practices, inadequate water data systems, weak resource planning, and the impacts of climate change," said Dr. Hafeez. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Science Policy Advisor at IWMI Pakistan, highlighted that the country's water governance mechanisms are outdated and unable to address the growing complexities of water management, especially under the pressures of climate change.—APP

Railways to induct 80 high-capacity freight wagons

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has planned to induct around 80 new High-Capacity freight Wagons and 32 passenger AC standard coaches this year which would help increase the revenue of the department. The department has also assembled 92 freight wagons in Mughalpora Workshops during the last three years to improve the department's performance, generate income and ensure smooth goods forwarding service across the country, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. "Besides, 508 more freight wagons will be assembled at Mughalpora Workshops and Pakistan Locomotives Factory, Risalpur by next year," he added. Similarly, the official said that as many as 184 new passenger coaches would also be assembled at Pakistan Railways Carriage Factory, Islamabad

during the next three years. Accordingly, he said raw material for assembling of 64 passenger coaches has been received by the department while the work would be initiated to meet the requirement soon. To a question, he said during the fiscal year 2023-24, Pakistan Railways registered record earnings of Rs. 87.5 billion which was made possible through implementation of financial restructuring plans aimed at reducing operational costs, optimizing revenue generation and improving financial discipline. The official said the passenger trains are being operated on the average with 19 coaches which has resulted in revenue of Rs. 43.512 billion (Rs. 7.763 billion over target). The freight trains with a load of 3,400 tonnes has enhanced revenue freight earnings up to

Rs. 25.025 billion (Rs. 2.699 billion over target), the official added. He said the commercial management of 13 trains has been outsourced by Pakistan Railways for better efficiency and earning. Brake vans and luggage vans have been outsourced to optimize the utilization of available resources which has boosted the earning of Pakistan Railway. The official said the electric connections of railway residential units have been handed over to respective DISCOs for direct billing to the consumers. Solar systems have been installed at selected sites to reduce utility bills. He said Pakistan Railways has developed long-term strategic plans to revitalize the Rail sector, improve service quality, enhance safety standards and ensure sustainability in revenue generation.

Provincial educational Jirga to develop strategic reforms

ISLAMABAD: Prominent education experts from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) held an inclusive meeting in the federal capital and decided to organize a 'Provincial Educational Jirga' in a bid to identify challenges in the education sector and formulating actionable recommendations. They gathered to attend the 6th meeting of the Board of Governors of the think tank Forum for Inquiry, Knowledge, and Review (FIKR), organized under the aegis of the Pakistan Development Foundation (PDF) the other day. The meeting, focused on the state of education in KP, was chaired by PDF Chairman Muhammad Bilal Sethi and attended by a distinguished panel, including Lt. Gen. (R) Shaheen Mazhar Mahmood, Justice Dr. Qibla Ayaz of the Supreme Court's Shariah Bench, Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Prof. Dr. Attaullah Shah, Vice-Chancellor of the Karakoram International University, Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Director of the IM Sciences, Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana, Member of the Public Service Commission, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, industrialist Masood Rehman, PDF Patron-in-Chief Dr. Fatima Shaheen, Halima Ikram, Waseem Gohar, Prof. Dr. Abdul Rehman Khalil, senior journalist Rehan Khan, and Ghazala Yousafzai. Jirga will engage stakeholders, including parents, to ensure a holistic approach to improving education standards. To oversee the planning and organization of the Educational Jirga, a committee was formed comprising Justice Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed, Waseem Gohar, and Muhammad Bilal Sethi. The Board also approved the development of a ten-year strategic plan for FIKR. A dedicated committee, including Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Prof. Dr. Attaullah Shah, Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana, and Muhammad Bilal Sethi, was tasked with this responsibility. The forum reiterated its unwavering commitment to improving education in the region, pledging to utilize all available resources to achieve this goal. The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to drive impactful initiatives for the betterment of education in KP.

Vocational education-Engaging youth to earn respectable living

DNA

PESHAWAR: Just oblivious to chapli kabab and qehwa getting cold on side table of his workshop, Zafar Ali, an electrician in Pabbi town of Nowshera district, was busy in repairing geysers, gas heaters and electric rods to deliver these appliances to owners as per deadline. As the day dawns, Zafar Ali rushes to his electric workshop on his motorbike every morning no matter the weather is cold or foggy in winters or it is scorching heat of summer, with tester and pliers in hand and diagnosing faults in these appliances with the help of his two assistants. Busy like a honey bee the whole day and commonly known as 'Ustad', after having years' long skill and experience in repairing multiple home appliances, Zafar not only runs his own workshop but also help out other mechanics in tracing faults

in appliances running their shops. "After completing DAE in electronics from Government Technical Institute Peshawar, I setup a small workshop in a room of my house for repairing electric appliances a few years back," Zafar informed. "But, now I have a modern workshop in Pabbi where five other people are also employed." "By gradually expanding my business, now I have started houses electrification that makes me earn more profit as I charge around Rs 50,000 for one 10 marla house electric wiring. However, these charges vary in urban and rural areas," he said. "I am satisfied with my business and even refused foreign visas offered by construction companies," he said and suggested to promote vocational education to enable our youth to establish their businesses and earn respectable living locally instead of going abroad and work in inhumane conditions. Zafar is an example for our migrants proceeding abroad il-

legally even at the risk of their lives as well as for the governments who must revisit their policies and focus this sector for preparing technical hands who can earn respectable living indigenously. As the Federal Government has significantly improved the vocational education system in recent years, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa still lags behind due to poor investment, outdated curriculum and insufficient faculty to meet modern day labor market needs. "Poor investment, outdated syllabus and lackluster patronage to vocational education and professional training contributed to increase in unemployment, illiteracy and poverty," remarked Professor Dr Naeem ur Rehman, former Chairman Economics Department University of Peshawar. He claimed that although slightly yet unemployment rate in country was increasing and according to 2017 national population census, major portion of our population is youth for whom hundreds of thou-

sands jobs would be required in next decade or two. He emphasized to specially focusing vocational education and creating more jobs and small business opportunities within the country to save country from brain drain. "When our youth visit GULF for employment, they spend normally eight months to two years to get LTV, HTV driving licenses and operational expertise for operating different machines. He claimed that more than 11 million Pakistanis proceeded to over 50 countries till December 2019 to get employment after fulfilling official procedures and many among them would also be experts of their fields. "This trend would ultimately create dearth of experienced hands to execute important projects within the country." He said CPEC alone has the potential to generate 1.2 million direct jobs for youth and "we need to divert financial resources towards strengthening technical educational institutes to tap this potential."

CONDOLENCE

APNS expresses profound grief over the sad demise of

Mr. Arshad A. Zuberi

Former Secretary General APNS & Deputy CEO of Daily Business Recorder

May Allah the Almighty rest his soul in eternal peace and grant courage to his family to bear this loss.



All Pakistan Newspapers Society

National Days and Armed Forces Days

DECEMBER

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

Hotels & Restaurants



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Marriott.....051-2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



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Water Tank

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Illegal housing societies usurping poor investors

ISLAMABAD: Despite registration of FIRs, punitive actions and operations, illegal housing societies continue to function as per routine in different parts of country, looting hard earned money of small investors and innocent people. Using deceptive tactics first they trap investors and then start fleecing their money on one account or other, like price revision, development charges, possession charges etc. least bothering about any action against them as most of time officials of concerned authorities are hand in glove with them. Rawalpindi district is also not an exception to this phenomenon where developers and societies' owners are looting innocent people with both hands since years due to unchecked mushroom growth of these illegal projects. According to available data, there are more than 149 illegal private housing societies functioning in the district and selling plots and residences without required approval. After a boom in real estate sector during last decade, scores of societies surfaced in the vicinity of Rawalpindi city and people invested billions of rupees in this business. Social Media and the

property websites are the best sources of advertisement for this business where property dealers attract investors by sharing fake information. Most of such societies have also opened their offices in other cities within the country and abroad. "It is beyond perception that why these societies' owners continue to work despite repeated complaints against them," stated a complainant Ashfaq Ahmed. "Concerned departments seldom take any action. Even if a complaint is lodged they merely issue a notice to these illegal businesses." Tariq, another resident of Waris Khan claimed the concerned officials to be themselves providing time to the illegal housing scheme for fleecing people as their action remains limited to only issuing notices. "Property dealers submit a plan and start advertisement with 'RDA approved' tag even before getting the No Objection Certificate (NOC)." However, Director General (DG), RDA, Kinza Murtaza has claimed otherwise mentioning to strict action against violators of rules and said, the RDA has issued 149 notices to illegal/fake housing schemes as part of its ongoing efforts to protect general public

from exploitation and financial losses. "RDA had warned public against investing in 149 housing schemes in the district that have not obtained NoCs or necessary approvals from the authority," she added. "We on our part have also intensified action against illegal/unapproved housing schemes. We are committed to protect general public from harmful effects of these illegal schemes and take strict action them." Urging citizens to always verify legality of any housing scheme before investment, she stated, "we advise everyone to consult RDA on legality of any scheme where they desire to invest." She said the RDA had also stopped approval of new housing schemes and a comprehensive survey was conducted, categorizing these schemes into three groups based on their legal status. Now whatever the claims of authorities, illegal schemes operating under false pretenses, have caused substantial financial loss by promising ownership of homes that only existed on paper or limited to mere maps and advertisements. According to official data, the RDA enforcement squad during operation took action against illegal housing so-

cieties including Top View City (D-17) Project of Orbit International, Al-Baraqa Garden, Kohsar Extension (F-Block) and Nabel Block (Near Kohsar Extension), Ring Road Enclave (A Project of Jawahir City Pvt. Ltd.), Hurtus Floare, Countree Farmhouse and Resorts, Gilgit City, Mehmood Town (K & M Construction and Developers (Pvt) Ltd.), Hamdard City, Top View City, Wanni in Tehsil Taxila, Green Hurtus, Farm Land Estate and others and demolished road infrastructure, security offices, sewerage lines, containers and removed advertisement boards, panaflexes besides sealing the site offices. "We have also launched an awareness campaign about housing schemes to save people from financial losses," Kinza Murtaza said. "The Punjab government has issued clear directions to RDA to save people's investment and our doors are always open to guide people on investment in housing schemes and legal status of housing societies." She informed that there were only 69 housing schemes that had obtained approval from RDA while others were illegal. "After survey we have categorized these

schemes into three groups and would take action against illegal housing schemes." Giving details, she informed that illegal housing schemes include Bin Alam City, CBR Residency, Media Enclosure, Al Haram Phase 2, Gujjar Khan, Town 21 and others; completely fake schemes are Khyber Model Town Chakri Road, Pak PWD Chakri Road, City Model Town, Al-Baddar Motorway, Shadabad Housing Scheme, and others and non-existent schemes which has no land, staff or offices are Regent Farm House, AM Town, City Homes, Greenstone and others. Since RDA can take action within a limited ambit of law, the situation is much more worrisome in wake of many developers proceeding abroad after usurping masses money and their operators here have falsely downed prices causing loss of billions to investors. Therefore, top authorities like NAB and FIA must have to indulge in this matter to rescue people trapped in this exploitative business and improve the overall real estate situation so the poor investors could get their dividend and take a sigh of relief. —Agencies

Police arrest 7 drug dealers with 9 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police has arrested 7 drug dealers and recovered 9 kg charras and other items from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Sunday. He informed that Race Course, Civil Lines, R.A.Bazar and Airport police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and arrested 7 accused namely Muhammad Ghalib, Waqas, Asif, Adnan, Ashfar Alam, Mustafa, and Ashraf and recovered over 9 kg charras and other items from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against all the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

CTP issue 40,985 challan slips to unfit PSVs

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Beenish Fatima have geared up their ongoing operation against public service vehicles (PSVs) plying without fitness certificates and without route permits while over 40,985 challan slips were issued in 2024 to PSVs on various violations. According to a CTP spokesman, senior Traffic Officers had also been directed to visit different areas and review the ongoing crackdown under the supervision of circle officers. The spokesman informed that the CTO had given strict instructions to all the officers and field staff to take strict action against unfit vehicles. Traffic Police officers had been warned that negligence on part of the officers concerned would not be tolerated. The spokesman said that CTP Rawalpindi had issued 40,985 challan slips to unfit and without route permit public service vehicles during the campaign in 2024 while fines were also imposed on the rules violators.—APP

Bangladesh HC keen to expand ties with Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Central Chairman, EFP, former President ICCI, a distinguished industrialist, extended his warm congratulations to the newly appointed High Commissioner of Bangladesh, Mr. Md. Iqbal Hussain, during a special meeting. On this occasion, he expressed his honor to be the first in Pakistan to congratulate the Bangladeshi High Commissioner on assuming this important role. He highlighted that the establishment of the current government in Bangladesh has infused new



warmth into the bilateral relations between the two countries, fostering a stronger sense of brotherhood

among the people of both nations. High-level diplomatic engagement between Pakistan and Bangladesh commenced in September during the United Nations General Assembly when Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the Chief Advisor of the interim government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. In response, the High Commissioner of Bangladesh, Mr. Md. Iqbal Hussain, thanked Mian Akram and assured the Pakistani government and business community, on behalf of the Bangladeshi government.

First Dignity Awards beacon of hope for marginalized individuals

ISLAMABAD :Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam Sunday lavished praise on the government's groundbreaking commitment to recognizing the remarkable contributions of women, transgender individuals and persons with disabilities, exemplified by the prestigious first 'Dignity Award'. In an exclusive conversation with PTV, Romina Khurshid Alam saluted the courage and resilience of marginalized individuals as she lauded the groundbreaking initiative of the First 'Dignity Award', which breaks barriers to recognize the unsung heroes of marginalized communities, celebrating their remarkable achievements and contributions to society. Romina Alam emphasized that the government is taking concrete steps to acknowledge and honor the contributions of marginalized heroes, including the transgender community, who have been neglected by society for far too long. She highlighted that the government is not only providing opportunities but also formally recognizing their achievements, thereby validating their struggles and resilience and fostering a more inclusive and accepting society.—APP

IMCG F7/2 students council formed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Student Council is instrumental in providing encouragement to the future leaders studying in educational institutions. It works actively with the teachers and the students for the fulfillment of the curricular and co-curricular objectives of the institution. The Elections to choose the Student Council of Islamabad model college for girls IMCG F7/2 for the academic year 2024-25 were held and all officials of council were elected by democratic process. A solemn and dignified Investiture

Ceremony for the newly elected Executive members of the Council and the Class Representatives was held in the College Auditorium. The Chief Guest for the occasion was Dr. Najeeba Arif, Chairperson, Pakistan Academy of Letters. She is the first woman to head the Pakistan Academy of Letters. Principal Prof Fouzia Tanveer Sheikh presided the ceremony. The programme started with the recitation of the Holy Quran and Translation by Ayesha Arshad followed by Naat-e-Rasool-e-Maqbool (s.a.w.w) by Faiza Naseer. The host of the ceremony, Syeda Fizza Batool, welcomed

the honourable Chief Guest on the stage. The stage secretary threw light on the role of the Student Council in organizing Inter-Class and Inter-Collegiate competitions. The Chief Guest distributed certificates among the office bearers of the outgoing Student Council. Dr. Najeeba Arif took oath of office from the newly elected President Huda Khalid, Vice President Noreen Hanif, General Secretary Asma Fazal, Joint Secretary Mahnoor Shehzadi, the secretaries of various societies and the class representatives also took their oath. The Chief Guest in her speech commended the smooth

transition of power to the new Student Council. She told the young audience not to be deterred by the lack of resources or difficulties in life; rather they should work hard and persevere with a pure heart to achieve great things in life. Her eloquent speech was well received by the audience. The Principal of the College also gave the insignia of the college to the Chief Guest. The Principal, Dr. Fauzia Tanveer Sheikh, in her closing remarks, thanked the Chief Guest for her august presence. She also felicitated the In charge Student Council and her team for organizing an outstanding function today.

Two-day Kashmir Jannat Nazeer event concluded

ISLAMABAD: People visiting stalls displayed by the students during the closing ceremony of "Kashmir Janat Nazeer" 2-day Kashmir kay Rung Festival at IMCG F-8/1. ISLAMABAD: A two-day Kashmir Jannat Nazeer event celebration concluded at the Islamabad Model College for Girls (IMCG), F-8/1, here on Sunday. This landmark event aimed to highlight the vibrant and rich cultural heritage of Kashmir while promoting a message of peace, unity, and solidarity. The event featured a dynamic array of activities including stage performances, movies and documentaries, talks by scholars, computer graphics competition and others. Kashmiri handicrafts, traditional attire, cuisine, art and culture, display of plants of Kashmir were among the prominent stalls of the event. The event concluded with a peace walk for solidarity and peace, where Senior Kashmiri leader and wife of Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Yasin Malik, Mishal Hussain Malik, Dr Tabassum Naz Director Schools, Principal of IMCG F-8/1 Mam Asia, Principal of ICG



F-6/2 Mam Saba Faisal, Riffat Director Academics, Murad MD of National Book Foundation (NBF) and students among other attendees gathered in a symbolic gesture of hope, unity, and harmony. Moreover, lanterns were also released into the air, symbolizing aspirations for a brighter, peaceful

future for the region. Ministry invites people from all walks of life to join this cultural extravaganza and stand together in solidarity with Kashmir. Kashmir Jannat Nazeer Event promised to be an unforgettable celebration of heritage, resilience, and the enduring hope for peace.—DNA

TENDER NOTICE

NO: TN/PROC/2425/0013, 0014 0014

1. Sealed Tender(s) are invited from registered reputed manufacturers/suppliers/authorized agents for supply of the following items:

Tender No.	S. No.	IT ref No.	Item Name	Tender Basis	Tender Fee (Rs)	Submission Date
0013/ ISB	1.	ISB/LIT/2410/2425/341	BOOK LET	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	2.	ISB/LIT/24241211/2425/342	CONDUCTIVITY METER	FOR	2,000	15-01-2025
	3.	ISB/LIT/24241211/2425/343	CABLE	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	4.	ISB/LIT/24241211/2425/344	CABLE	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	5.	ISB/LIT/241315/2425/350	COMMUNICATION RACK	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
0014/ LHR	1.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/339	COMBINER, SPLITTER	FOR	2,000	15-01-2025
	2.	LHR/LIT/20171113/2425/355	TRACTOR DRIVEN LAWN MOWER	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	3.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/356	SENSOR	FOR	2,000	15-01-2025
	4.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/357	VIDEO CONFERENCING UNIT	FOR	3,000	15-01-2025
	5.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/358	MULTIMEDIA PROJECTOR, PROJECTION SCREEN	FOR	2,000	15-01-2025
	6.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/359	VIDEO CONFERENCING EQUIPMENT, TV STAND, LED TV	FOR	3,000	15-01-2025
	7.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/360	BATTERY	FOR	2,000	15-01-2025
	8.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/361	UPS BATTERY	FOR	2,000	15-01-2025
	9.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/362	SCALE	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	10.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/363	SEALANT TAPE	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	11.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2425/364	FABRIC	FOR	2,000	15-01-2025
0014/ KHI	1.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/330	INSECTICIDE	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	2.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/331	INSECTICIDE, GLASS CLEANER	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	3.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/332	DRAIN OPENER	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	4.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/333	TISSUE PAPER	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	5.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/334	FOOT MAT	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	6.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/335	MOP	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	7.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/336	SOAP	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	8.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/337	COTTON RAGS	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	9.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/338	WIPER	FOR	1,000	15-01-2025
	10.	HQ/LIT/30101111/2425/346	SHEET, TUBE	FOR	2,000	15-01-2025
11.	HQ/LIT/30101111/2425/347	PLATE, SHEET	FOR	2,000	16-01-2025	
12.	HQ/LIT/2914/2425/348	LED MONITOR	FOR	2,000	16-01-2025	
13.	HQ/LIT/30101111/2425/349	CHANNEL	FOR	1,000	16-01-2025	
14.	HQ/LIT/30101111/2425/351	BLADE	FOR	2,000	16-01-2025	
15.	HQ/LIT/30101111/2425/352	CHUCK	FOR	4,000	16-01-2025	
16.	HQ/LIT/101314/2425/365	MEASUREMENT BOOK	FOR	1,000	16-01-2025	
17.	HQ/LIT/101315/2425/366	BRUSH, SUPREE, DUST BIN	FOR	1,000	16-01-2025	
18.	HQ/LIT/2911/2425/367	UPS BATTERY	FOR	2,000	16-01-2025	
19.	HQ/LIT/2914/2425/368	AIR CONDITIONER	FOR	2,000	16-01-2025	
20.	HQ/LIT/2911/2425/369	MODULE	FOR	2,000	16-01-2025	

- Tender documents can be downloaded by registered suppliers/firms from our website www.eproc8402.com and offers can be submitted in the light of guidelines provided therein. Technical & Financial Offers may please be submitted at the addresses given/mentioned at page no. 1 of the IT. Please fill the Tender document duly signed & stamped along with covering letter on your firm Letter-Head. Please note that Buyer does not sell hard copies of the Tender documents, unless specified so.
- Proposals/Bids/Others must be submitted on the given submission date against tender latest by 1400 hours. The opening of bid(s) will be carried out at 1430 hours on the respective submission date.
- Tender Notice is also available at PPR website www.ppra.org.pk.
- The organization reserves the right to reject all bids under proviso provided under rule No. 33 of PPP Rules, 2004.
- Incomplete, conditional, ambiguous or doubtful Proposals/Bids/Others will not be considered.
- All bidders shall abide by the Terms & Conditions attached with the tender form.
- For any queries please contact on Phone No: 92-21-99241765-79 Ext. 2803, 2805, 2810, 2816.

Note: Please submit the Tender fee through our MCB online account (Account details are available on our website) from any online MCB branch in Pakistan and attach its original receipt with Technical Quotation.

Director General Logistics
P.O. Box: 8402, Karachi-75270
PID (K) 1994/2024

Briefs

Practical steps must be taken to increase Pak-Uzbek trade volume

ISLAMABAD: Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtayev, has stated that the trade volume between Pakistan and Uzbekistan stands at \$400 million. Both countries need to take practical steps to further increase this trade volume. He expressed these views during a conversation with the Secretary General UBG, Zafar Bakhtawari, Member Central Core Committee UBG, Ahsan Bakhtawari, and Chairman of Ba-Waqar Pakistan, Waqar Bakhtawari, who visited the embassy. Ambassador stated that there is a direct air link between Lahore and Tashkent, and direct flights from Karachi and Islamabad to Tashkent will commence soon. Pakistan and Uzbekistan share deep historical and religious ties, and there is a need for further initiatives to highlight the cultural connections between the two countries. It was stated that Uzbekistan has already begun efforts to import and export its goods through Karachi and Gwadar via railways and road networks. It is expected that both nations will play a significant role in promoting regional connectivity. Zafar Bakhtawari suggested that Zahir-ud-Din Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, serves as a historical and cultural link between the two countries. He remarked that without Babur and the Indian Subcontinent, the existence of Pakistan might not have been possible. He suggested that we should establish the tradition of celebrating "Babur Day" every year to highlight the remarkable personality of Babur.

Army handling of terrorists lauded

ISLAMABAD: Business leader and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that Army's improved approach to handling terrorists is laudable and will benefit Pakistan. He said that relations with Afghanistan cannot be at the cost of Pakistan and good relations are only possible if the latter stops supporting Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that Afghanistan is Pakistan's brotherly neighbour, and it is our heartfelt wish to improve relations with Kabul, especially about the economy and trade, but it is subject to mutual cooperation. He said that the TTP is operating from Afghanistan and carrying out terror attacks and killing innocent people inside Pakistan, which cannot go on. Pakistan has a sincere desire to have good neighbourly ties with Afghanistan, but the TTP issue has become a sour point, as the Afghan government is not controlling TTP. The issue of anti-Pakistan activities by the TTP and other terrorist outfits from Afghan soil was repeatedly raised with the Afghan interim government. Still, he observed no satisfactory response. The business leader noted that Pakistan fully respect Afghanistan's sovereignty, but they, too, should not give terrorists priority over Pakistan otherwise strikes inside Afghanistan will continue while the masses will fully support it. Highlighting the defence forces prolonged and continued battle against terrorism, he noted that the outgoing year has witnessed the highest number of terrorists eliminated compared to the past five years. The magnitude of this unconventional war can be gauged by the fact that 59,779 intelligence-based operations were carried out against terrorists during the past year alone. During these operations, 925 terrorists were killed, and several others were arrested. This was the most significant number of terrorists killed in a single year during the past five years. He informed that during various operations, a significant quantity of weapons was recovered from terrorist hideouts, demonstrating the scale of the threat. —APP

ICCI, Chinese business delegation discuss ways to boost bilateral trade

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Chinese investors from Xingjian province, led by the Mayor of Yecheang and the Foreign Office Bureau of Kashgar, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). The delegation also included Mr. Wong Tang, the focal person for the Belt and Road initiative and Director of Foreign Affairs and Investment. The core objective of the visit was to explore B2B relationships between the two countries, with a focus on renewable energy, infrastructure development, and the iron and steel processing industry.

Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Acting President of ICCI, welcomed the distinguished guests and briefed them on the Chamber's efforts to promote local and international business collaborations. He highlighted the local exportable products, such as marble, steel, and pharmaceuticals, and emphasized the need for infrastructure development to enhance the value of Pakistani products, making them more competitive in the international market, while fostering employment and skill development.

The Chinese delegation expressed keen interest in exploring investment opportunities, particularly in the mining and mineral sectors. Both sides agreed to stay in con-



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and acting Senior Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry meeting with Chinese delegation.

tact, exchange visits, and strengthen links with relevant chambers to promote mutually beneficial partnerships.

Senior Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry suggested that both parties prepare and exchange lists of their export-quality products to further facilitate collabora-

tion. The Chinese delegation included:

Wang Xiangbing, Chairman of the Belt and Road International United Group, Liu Jiading, General Manager of Kashgar Huada Construction Engineering Co, Jiang Xinhua, Chairman of Yecheng Kerry Steel

Structure Co, Zhu Chuanbin, General Manager of Yecheng Changda Wood Industry and Zhu Houhao, Deputy General Manager of Yecheng Changda Wood Industry.

ICCI representatives present included Chaudhry Mohammad Waseem, Fasihullah Khan, Shahid Zafar and other.

Mushaal fears Kashmir conflict a ticking time bomb to unleash Indo-Pak war

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of AJK, called upon the youth of AJK, who have access to all opportunities and enjoy all fundamental freedoms, to raise voice on behalf of those in IIOJK. He was speaking at a one-day workshop organized by the Institute of Regional Studies in collaboration with the Youth Forum for Kashmir, where deliberations were held on the root causes of

the Kashmir dispute, the challenges faced by AJK residents, and the negative campaign waged by India against Pakistan. Intelligentsia and students from various universities of AJK participated in the event. Mushaal Hussain Mullick, former SAPM for Human Rights and spouse of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) leader Yasin Malik, also urged the youth of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to take lead in advocating for the right of self-determination of the people in IIOJK. Earlier, at the workshop's opening session, Ambassador Jau-

har Saleem, President of the Institute of Regional Studies, emphasized the impact of India's disinformation campaign on IIOJK's ongoing struggle for freedom. He reaffirmed Pakistan's solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their pursuit for attaining the right of self-determination, in line with the United Nations resolutions. In the closing session, Mr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, Member of the Parliamentary Kashmir Committee and Chief Whip of the National Assembly, endorsed youth involvement in discussions

surrounding Jammu and Kashmir. He encouraged university students from AJK to participate in debates organized by the Kashmir Committee at the parliament house.

The well attended event reiterated Pakistan's commitment for advocating the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir while reinforcing the historical, religious and cultural ties that connect the two regions. Other notable speakers included Dr. Mujeeb Afzal, Mr. Altaf Hussain Wani, Dr. Mujahid Gillani, and Mr. Zaman Bajwa.

Gwadar Airport's landing system in bad weather made functional

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: To enhance the efficiency of aircraft landings and take offs during adverse weather conditions, the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) has successfully operationalized the high-tech Instrument Landing System (ILS) CAT-III(B). The Instrument Landing System (ILS) is a ground-based approach system that provides precise guidance to aircraft as they approach and land on the runway. It is crucial for ensuring safe landings and take-offs when visibility is compromised due to poor weather conditions. A Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) official explained to Gwadar Pro this state-of-the-art system is capable of assisting aircraft in landing under low-visibility conditions, with a Runway Visual

Range (RVR) limit of just 50 meters. The official emphasized that successful landings depend on three key factors: minimum visibility of 50 meters, fully trained pilots, and aircraft equipped with the necessary avionics that are compatible with the ground-based system. "The Civil Aviation Authority has already notified all airlines to upgrade their aircraft and train their pilots to ensure they can fully utilize the ILS CAT-III(B), thereby preventing any disruptions for passengers," he added. A Pakistan Airport Authority (PAA) representative noted that severe weather conditions often lead to dangerous situations, resulting in costly delays and posing risks to passenger safety. "Accurate situational awareness is crucial for airports, as it allows them to assess storm conditions, visibility, wind, precipitation.

RDA removes encroachments from Bostan Khan Road

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Enforcement Squad on the directives of the Director General (DG) Kinza Murtaza has removed encroachments from Bostan Khan Road. According to a RDA spokesman, in order to ensure smooth flow of traffic on Bostan Khan Road, an anti-encroachment operation was launched and encroachments were removed. The operation was carried out by the RDA Enforcement Squad, which demolished and removed illegal structures, including sheds, kiosks, tandoors, and huts along Bostan Khan Road, from Gulraiz Chowki to Car Chowk. RDA Enforcement Squad including Director Land Ghazanfar Ali Awan, Director Building Control, Atif Muhammad Chaudhry, Building Surveyors, Aamir Mahmood Malik, Asim Khokhar, and other RDA officials took part in the operation which was launched aimed at improving road accessibility, and ensuring a safe environment for the pedestrians and commuters. DG RDA, Kinza Murtaza said, "This initiative is part of our ongoing efforts to restore the city's infrastructure and ensure all roads are clean and safe for general public use. Encroachments not only cause traffic congestion but also pose significant safety risks for the citizens. RDA is committed to maintaining the integrity of Rawalpindi's urban spaces." The removal of the illegal structures is expected to improve traffic flow significantly and contribute to a cleaner, more organized urban environment, she added. She further said that similar operations would be conducted on other major roads throughout Rawalpindi, as part of RDA's efforts to improve urban infrastructure and ensure general public safety.—APP

Security beefed up at churches in Pindi

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani here on Sunday enhanced security at churches. According to a police spokesman, Divisional Superintendents of Police, SDPOs and SHOs on Sunday checked security at churches in their respective areas and briefed the police personnel deployed there. He informed that Rawalpindi police have made strict measures to ensure security of the Christian community at churches. CPO further ordered effective patrolling in their respective areas.—APP

Five held over violation of renting laws

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police here on Sunday carried out search operations in the jurisdiction of different police stations and arrested five renting law violators. According to a police spokesman, the search operations were conducted in order to maintain law and order and flush out suspects following the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani. He informed, senior police officers and police personnel including women police took part in the search operations. Police checked houses, shops, hotels, tenants and a large number of individuals during the search operations. Wah Cantt Police arrested five suspects namely Shehreyar, Ali, Naeemullah, Ishaq and Muhammad Nawaz. He said that police were more vigilant to keep an eye on suspects and maintain law and order in Rawalpindi.—APP

Speakers call for connecting with Quaid-i-Azam's vision

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan nears its centennial year of independence, engaging in thoughtful discussions to envision a prosperous future becomes imperative. In this regard the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad in collaboration with Air University organized a guest lecture under its Catalyst Conversation Series on 'Steering through Storms: Quaid-i-Azam's Leadership in the Time of Crisis', which aimed to facilitate such discourse. Moderated by CASS Research Assistant Shaheer Ahmad, the discussion explored Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's leadership style and decision-making during turbulent times, drawing

lessons for modern governance. The keynote was guided by insights of Prof. Dr Dushka H. Saiyid, Editor Youlin Magazine & Former Chairperson, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University. In her Keynote Address, Prof. Dr Dushka H. Saiyid discussed the enduring legacy of Quaid-i-Azam focusing on his leadership qualities and his advocacy for women's empowerment. The speaker reflected on Jinnah's visionary approach to governance and his unwavering commitment to constitutional principles. Highlighting Jinnah's legislative achievements, the speaker noted his instrumental role in championing women's rights, including his support for inheritance laws through the Shariat Bill of 1937, which secured fixed property shares for women.

Jinnah's leadership in mobilising women for political and social causes was underscored, as was his belief in the vital role of women in nation-building. Prof. Dr Dushka H. Saiyid's address served as a powerful reminder of Jinnah's foresight and inclusivity, urging today's leaders to draw inspiration from his example in promoting equity and progressive governance. In his Concluding Remarks, Dr Air Marshal Farooq Habib (Retd), Senior Director at CASS, underscored the significance of Quaid-i-Azam's vision in shaping Pakistan's identity and future. He urged the young generation to honour Jinnah's legacy as a guiding principle for progress and unity. 'Without Quaid's vision, the Muslims of the sub-continent would have had

no identity. It is crucial for us to reconnect with this legacy to shape a prosperous future,' said Air Marshal Habib. He emphasised Jinnah's dream of an inclusive state with an impartial government, where all citizens could live freely and with dignity. Delivering his Vote of Thanks, President of CASS, Islamabad, Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd), thanked Prof. Dr Dushka H. Saiyid for her thought-provoking address and expressed gratitude to the administration of Air University for their cooperation in organising the Catalyst Conversation at their institution. The lecture was followed by an interactive Question and Answer session with students and faculty of the university.

China Center to provide comprehensive access to information

The Center was inaugurated by The China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Shi Yuanqiang, Deputy Head of Mission at the Chinese Embassy hoped China Corner Center set up in Islamabad will provide comprehensive access to information and resources on China's governance model, economic policies, and diplomatic strategies. The Center was inaugurated by The China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). The Center was aimed to advance China studies. Shi Yuanqiang emphasized their cooperation with ISSI, contributing books and CDs to the 'China Corner.' Chief Guest Ambassador Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to Prime Minister/Minister of State (Foreign Affairs), remarked that the enduring and evolving nature of

Pakistan-China relations has long intrigued international relations scholars. Despite significant differences, the relationship has consistently strengthened. Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of CPSC, stated that the 'China Corner' will provide comprehensive access to information and resources on China's governance model, economic policies, and diplomatic strategies. This repository will foster knowledge, dialogue, and collaboration, embodying a commitment to understanding China's development narrative for shared progress and prosperity. The event saw the attendance of prominent members of the diplomatic community, bureaucracy, civil society, and the media. This marks the first 'China Corner' established in a Pakistani think tank. This new section features over 600

physical and 5000 electronic books, journals, newspapers, and monographs, all available for scholars. In his welcome address, Director General of ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood noted the institute's role as an important research hub on China in Pakistan, highlighting its various collaborations with Chinese think tanks and universities. In his remarks, Pakistani Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi highlighted its potential as a space where ideas will thrive, supporting the future of Pakistan-China bilateral relations. He urged students, scholars, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to fully utilize this platform. He said the establishment of the 'China Corner' at ISSI is not only about studying China but also about building bridges and fostering synergy between the two countries.

Zahid elected as VP of SRWIA

ISLAMABAD: Professor Dr. Zahid Akram has been elected as the Vice President (VP) of the Silk Road Wheat Innovation Alliance (SRWIA) for a four-year term. According to a press release from Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Dr. Zahid Akram, currently serving as Chairman of the Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics at the university, is the first Pakistani academician to achieve this honour among alliance member countries, including Russia, China, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. The alliance, initiated by Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University, Yangling, China, has been organizing this event since 2019. It was established to promote wheat research and improvement in member countries, thereby enhancing food security along the Silk Road. Dr. Zahid Akram's election underscores the vital role Pakistani academicians play in addressing food security challenges through agricultural transformation, improved food production, and the development of sustainable food systems.—APP



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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 316

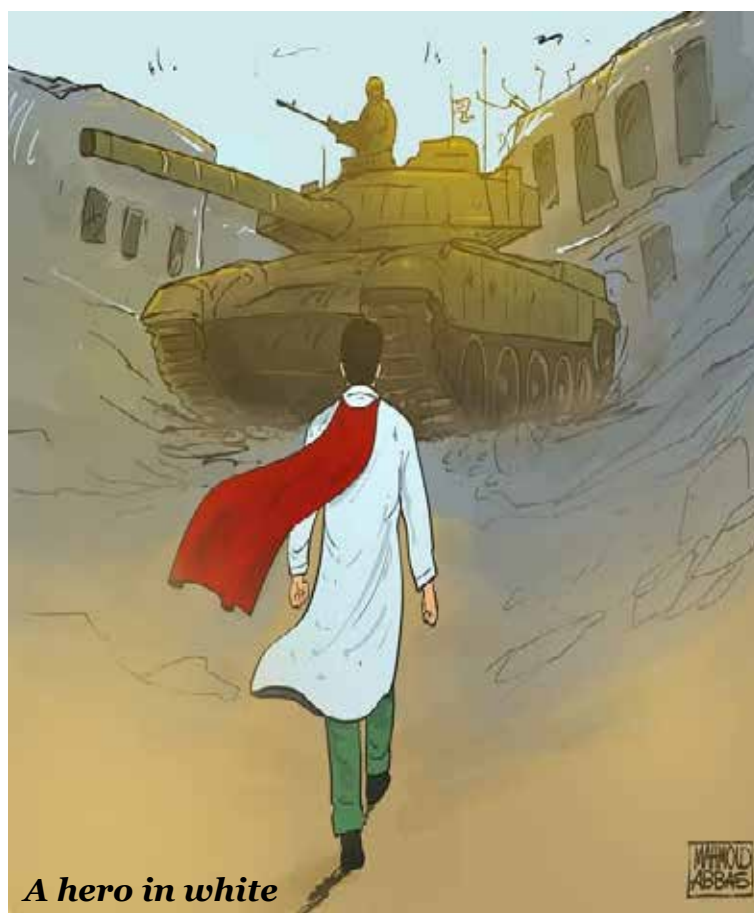
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Hot spots of 2025

WE have a maximum of global uncertainty. We have an incoming US administration. And here are four quick points about 2025 - what we hope will happen and what could happen potentially in 2025. First point is about the three major global hot spots. We need to end the war in Ukraine. This war will end when the US finally says clearly that it will stop attempting to expand NATO to Russia's border. The war in Ukraine is caused by the US' intention to enlarge NATO - a provocative action. Stopping this action can help end the war by addressing both Russia's security needs and Ukraine's security needs, thereby ending an unnecessary provocation. The second hot spot is the Middle East. This violence will stop when there is a State of Palestine admitted to the United Nations as the 194th UN member state, living alongside Israel in peace. So many of the crises in the Middle East have occurred because of Israel's attempt to continue to hold on to the occupied territories it captured decades ago and to rule unjustly over the Palestinian people. The two-state solution will be the basis for peace. This can happen, indeed, as early as 2005. The third hot spot is East Asia. Here, there is a straightforward solution, that is for the US to abide by the one-China policy and stop arming the Taiwan region. It is not the business of the US to violate the one-China policy and continue arming Taiwan. Such actions are provocative and dangerous, putting the Taiwan region at risk and significantly increasing the likelihood of war. My first point is that the three hot spots - Ukraine, the Middle East and East Asia - can all be resolved through straightforward policies. The US needs to shift from provocation to cooperation. The second point is the reform of the global financial architecture. US President-elect Donald Trump said that the BRICS countries should not dare to try to introduce a non-dollar payment system. The US has militarized the dollar. It has weaponized the dollar and imposed sanctions using the SWIFT banking system all over the world. The US has to stop weaponizing the dollar. Other countries don't need the dollar to be the dominant or the sole payment mechanism for international trade, especially between BRICS countries, who are not transacting with the US but are transacting with each other. So, I favor many kinds of non-dollar payments anyway. With regard to the global financial architecture, to China: please expand the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). That's purely a win-win for China and the partner countries. Make the loans under BRI long-term - 30-year loans - and give the other countries time to grow and repay the loans. It's a win-win proposition to have an even larger Belt and Road program. The third area is climate action. We need the world to decarbonize by mid-century. We need China, with its capacity in renewable energy, fourth-generation nuclear power, electric vehicles and the hydrogen economy, to accelerate decarbonization. And we need the US to do the same: to stop putting emphasis on new fracking and hydrocarbons, to phase out fossil fuels and collaborate with China on decarbonization, and to form a partnership with China to help other regions of the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa, in making their energy transitions. This is an area where China and the US could very helpfully cooperate.



A hero in white

Bitter cold in Gaza's camps

AFTER enduring sniper attacks, fires, bombings, and all forms of violence, the displaced residents of Gaza now face the deadly threat of freezing temperatures sweeping through their makeshift camps as winter sets in. This crisis is compounded by a severe lack of supplies, blankets, and winter clothing. According to medical sources, five individuals, including four children, have died due to extreme cold within the camps. These families were forced into these inadequate shelters after their homes were destroyed and they were displaced during the ongoing genocide that began on October 7, 2023. For the second consecutive year, displaced families are enduring the winter in tents made of fabric and plastic, which have deteriorated to the point of being unusable. Without proper heating, residents suffer from health issues such as joint pain, bone aches, and nosebleeds. Ibrahim Al-Astal, a resident of one such camp, shared his struggles, saying that the harsh winds threaten to tear down their tents, while the biting cold ravages their bodies. "We can't sleep because of the wind and cold. We have no blankets or winter clothes. The bombing destroyed everything we owned, leaving us in these tattered tents that neither shield us from the summer heat nor the winter cold," he said. In Al-Mawasi, Khan Yunis, hundreds of thousands of people are displaced, living in extremely harsh conditions. Their struggles include a lack of basic necessities such as food, warmth, and shelter. In recent days, Gaza has faced a severe cold snap, with record-low temperatures prompting camp residents to refer to their tents as "death refrigerators." According to the Meteorological Department, Gaza is expected to experience heavy rain starting Monday evening for two days, posing a real danger to these fragile camps. The occasional strong winds frequently uproot the tents, leaving residents exposed to the winter weather with nothing to protect them. Children's cries and the sighs of their parents resonate in the cold air as despair mounts. Early Saturday morning, dozens of tents were flooded due to torrential rains accompanying a new weather front. Residents reported that strong winds damaged their tents, with some blown away entirely. Mothers and fathers, unable to provide warmth for their children, resort to burning paper and plastic for heat, despite knowing the health risks and the danger this poses to their fragile plastic shelters. Additionally, flooding destroys what little belongings displaced families have, exacerbating their suffering. Since the genocide began on October 7, 2023, thousands of families have sought refuge in the sandy terrain of Al-Mawasi, an area stretching along the Mediterranean coast from central Deir Al-Balah to northern Rafah. According to humanitarian organization Oxfam, hundreds of thousands of people have fled to this region over the months of violence. With insufficient access to water, food, and basic necessities, the displaced face extremely challenging living conditions. The Gaza Government Media Office (GMO) estimates that 2 million of Gaza's 2.4 million residents are now displaced, living in inadequate camps.

DG ISPR says the country is in safe hands

Qamar Bashir



The DG ISPR reiterated the commitment of the armed forces to the defense of the country. In this regard, he identified social media activists as the biggest enemies of the state and elaborated on a comprehensive offensive set in place to counter this threat. He stated that millions of dollars have been invested to gag social media platforms in order to safeguard the country from the onslaught of "digital terrorists"...

THE DG ISPR began his latest press conference by highlighting the professional achievements that demonstrate the war readiness of the armed forces to counter any foreign aggression. As evidence, he elaborated on various professional tasks undertaken by the armed forces to prepare them to face any adversity. These included the construction of dams, restoration of the Kachi Canal, rehabilitation of the Sibi-Harnai railway track, construction and opening of schools in Balochistan and the erstwhile FATA, the establishment of medical camps, border control along the Afghan-Pakistan trade corridor, and measures to counter electricity theft. He informed the audience that disproportionate funds have been invested in Balochistan to alleviate and improve the socio-economic well-being of its people, highlighting this as one of the armed forces' most significant professional achievements. He also elaborated on other professional achievements, including the punishment meted out to the alleged 85 civilian perpetrators of the events of May 9 by military courts. He equated this to the swift justice delivered to civilians involved in violent agitation in the USA, UK, and France, while conveniently overlooking the fact that in the countries he cited, such punishments were handed down by civilian courts, not military courts. The ISPR chief further detailed several other professional accomplishments. He began by highlighting the killing of over 900 alleged Khawarij, terrorists, secessionists, and separatists. He provided a sobering account of the armed forces and law enforcement personnel who lost their lives during thousands of intelligence-based operations. However, he left it to the journalists and audience to interpret that all those killed were Pakistanis. Whether they were alleged terrorists or security personnel, their deaths have only added to the wounds, pain, and agony of Pakistani society. The ISPR Chief also claimed the distinction of labeling various sections of Pakistani society with his preferred terms. He referred to the TTP Pakistanis as Khawarij, labeled social media activists, whether operating inside or outside Pakistan, as "digital terrorists," and described Pakistanis living along the border areas as "smugglers." Additionally, he branded those exercising their constitutional right to assembly and protest as "armed thugs." This time, he added yet another label to his repertoire—"political terrorists"—referring to individuals and groups who participate in processions, sit-ins, or protests. Without explicitly naming PTI, he implied that this term exclusively applies

to its members and supporters. While describing the armed forces' approach to Afghan policy, he stated that the armed forces are engaged with the Afghan government at various levels, both bilaterally and through mutually friendly countries. He clearly conveyed that such engagements are undertaken at the direction of the Army Chief. It can be easily anticipated that, in future press conferences, should this policy fail, its failure will be conveniently attributed to the civilian leadership, who, according to the armed forces' narrative, are often portrayed as neither competent nor capable of handling such sensitive matters. This strategy of shifting responsibility has been effectively employed by the armed forces in the past. A recent example is the policy of negotiating a settlement with the TTP, which was led by the former Army Chief and DG ISI. Not a single civilian was involved in the negotiations, the signing of agreements, or the facilitation of the TTP's settlement in certain regions of Pakistan. These actions were undertaken without any coherent or effective efforts to deradicalize TTP members or ensure their integration into society as responsible citizens. However, now that this policy has failed, its failure has conveniently been attributed to the former civilian government. The DG ISPR reiterated the commitment of the armed forces to the defense of the country. In this regard, he identified social media activists as the biggest enemies of the state and elaborated on a comprehensive offensive set in place to counter this threat. He stated that millions of dollars have been invested to gag social media platforms in order to safeguard the country from the onslaught of "digital terrorists," who are incidentally Pakistanis, both within the country and from the overseas Pakistani community. He also accused human rights organizations, civil rights movements, and international human rights watchdogs of fictitiously highlighting human rights abuses by fabricating and disseminating fake videos on social media. He advised these organizations to focus instead on human rights abuses in Gaza and Indian-Occupied Kashmir. The DG ISPR also rightly identified governance issues as the root cause of the societal, economic, and law and order challenges facing the country. However, he conveniently stated that these were the responsibility of the civilian leadership and bureaucracy. Conversely, during his press conference, he did not hesitate to convey the perception that the armed forces are in control of every facet of na-

tional life without exception. He touched upon governance issues, political matters, foreign policy, domestic politics, the justice system, development projects, border control regimes, developments in Balochistan, Afghan policy, and relations with India. In fact, the DG ISPR made it clear during his press conference that the armed forces are fully in control of the entire governance system, while conveniently shifting the blame for the root causes of the country's myriad issues onto the civilian government. While replying to a question, the DG ISPR stated that the armed forces have no favorite or unfavorable political party, seemingly unaware that his entire press conference targeted one political party and its leaders, labeling them as "political terrorists." While professing the armed forces' neutrality, he also mentioned that the armed forces remained engaged with political parties both overtly and covertly, which he claimed was irrefutable evidence of their neutrality. The DG ISPR repeatedly used a standard narrative in his comments. He claimed that the armed forces, with the help of the people of Pakistan, defeated the D-Chowk protesters who allegedly carried firearms, tear gas shells, and nail-studded batons, and referred to them as "political terrorists" who had killed Rangers personnel. However, he conveniently omitted any mention of civilians allegedly killed by the Rangers' direct fire. He further stated that the armed forces would defeat the political party marked with a "red cross" with the help of the people of Pakistan. Similarly, he asserted that the armed forces would defeat digital terrorists and smugglers with the support of the people of Pakistan. Yet, he failed to provide any reason, logic, or evidence to substantiate the claim that the people of Pakistan support the armed forces in their actions against these various "terrorists," all of whom happen to be Pakistani citizens. Following the heavily attended press conference, the entire Pakistani nation has been assured that it is in the safe and capable hands of Pakistan's armed forces. The message conveyed was that no harm could come to the nation under their protection. While traditionally the armed forces were the defenders of the country's borders, during Zia's era, they additionally assumed the role of defending the country's ideological frontiers. Now, they have taken on the additional title of defending the nation's social media space. Practically, they have become the defenders of every aspect of national life without exception. The nation is thus reassured, feeling safe, sound, and protected under the firm and patriotic grip of the armed forces.

Taiwan: A flashpoint of conflict between China and US

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Both Beijing and Moscow believe that such measures contradict the security and sustainable development goals of the Asia-Pacific region and it will increase the risk of an arms race in the region, which also poses a serious threat to nuclear non-proliferation. Opposition to President Xi and Putin's Biden administration's new Australia-British-US (AUKUS) initiative has led to violations of non-proliferation treaties. This opposition is also echoing in the West. On the other hand, Australia, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan are committed to supporting Ukraine

AFTER the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there were concerns in western capitals over whether China might take similar action in Taiwan. Against this backdrop, Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan has prompted some security scholars to predict a fourth cross-strait crisis. China will likely ensure that it punishes Taiwan enough to prevent future visits like Pelosi's. This may include economic action, limited military signaling and selective diplomatic action in bilateral and multilateral fora, and aggressive cyber repression. In response, Taiwan and the United States are likely to continue building deterrent defense capabilities to deter Chinese aggression. The US may continue to signal its increased presence and commitment to the region through freedom of shipping operations in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, while keeping lines of communication open to avoid unintended tensions with Beijing. China and Russia believe the United States is playing the role of an arrogant player. This thinking has emerged in many parts of the world, including China. The People's Republic of China places all responsibility for the violence and destruction in Europe on Washington. Russia supports Chinese principle and affirms that Taiwan is a part of China and opposes any form of Taiwan's independence. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has shown that the world should take seriously what Xi and Putin are saying, especially when they speak in their own language. Both countries are determined to destroy the US alliance by force whenever it would be possible. Xi and Putin means that the US alliance has been formed over their opposition and they will oppose it. Statements by top Chinese diplomats should not be dismissed as mere propaganda. This is a clear warning to Washington to abandon its strategy in the Indo-Pacific, and Beijing reserves the option of resistance. From this point of view, Russia's invasion of Ukraine sets an example. Beijing has also warned small countries such as Ukraine to stay away from US plots. According to Beijing, sympathy for Ukraine is good but it is not good to be used as a pawn in Washington's efforts to maintain geopolitical dominance. These messages are also being heard in those countries that remain neutral in international politics. Russia and China continue to oppose any attempt by foreign powers to undermine security and stability in their respective territories. That why China and Russia also oppose further NATO expansion

and have called on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to abandon Cold War ideological methods. China and Russia also oppose the formation of a bloc in the Asia-Pacific region and remain wary of the negative effects of the US Indo-Pacific strategy on peace and stability in the region. The two countries also express deep concern over the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, which provides deep cooperation between its members in the areas of strategic stability, especially in the nuclear field. Both Beijing and Moscow believe that such measures contradict the security and sustainable development goals of the Asia-Pacific region and it will increase the risk of an arms race in the region, which also poses a serious threat to nuclear non-proliferation. Opposition to President Xi and Putin's Biden administration's new Australia-British-US (AUKUS) initiative has led to violations of non-proliferation treaties. This opposition is also echoing in the West. On the other hand, Australia, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan are committed to supporting Ukraine. Most Southeast Asian nations have supported NATO, Ukraine and the United States. The Philippines and Indonesia also voted in favor of condemning Russia but India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam did not. Indo-Pacific countries, such as Saudi Arabia, have also not backed coalition efforts against Russia. Such neutrality and indifference is a growing problem in international affairs and undermines counter-terrorism efforts. There is a growing sense in the West that a new Cold War is going to be started but most of the world does not see things that way. China is a bigger threat to Asian countries than Russia, but in the absence of a comprehensive US-led diplomatic campaign, Washington cannot support Taiwan in the Taiwan crisis. Many analysts believe that if China invades the Democratic Republic of Taiwan, many countries will remain on the coast. Such a campaign by Beijing to tarnish Taiwan's international image could be dangerous as if a dispute erupts, it may signal Taiwan's diplomatic isolation that Taiwan is the only province China will bring back. China also has strong economic ties with every country. The United States will need to defend Taiwan, and it often uses its diplomatic and other tactics to keep it at bay. Many countries and US allies do not necessarily agree with all Chinese statements about Taiwan and justify their neutrality. US diplomacy should highlight that Chi-

na is backtracking on its commitment to peace and endangering the stability of law and order in the region while it is committed to maintaining peace under the Taiwan Relations Act. Washington needs to make sure that it does not distance itself from countries or regions that oppose China and Russia. However, the United States has also given China and Russia the opportunity to wield considerable influence in key regions such as the Persian Gulf. The lack of a US trade vision for Southeast Asia and the lack of a security system are obstacles to form a bloc. But Washington only sees how quickly military aid can be delivered and how quickly the right weapons system can get into the right hands in a crisis. Washington does not need to provoke China, but the two states must make promises and work for peace. There are lessons to be learned from Ukraine's failed deterrence efforts. It should be noted that the prevention of war in Ukraine has failed. The United States has no military ties with Ukraine, so it could not help Ukraine directly except through rhetoric. Although the United States has armed Ukraine with disproportionate weapons that could destroy Russia's major weapons system but it has not been able to stop Putin from going to war. On the other hand, Taiwan is also under threat from China and a similar approach will not work to stop China because the United States is not militarily engaged with the island. The United States must build Taiwan's military so that it can work together as an ally to counter the various threats of repression. But that requires careful coalition management, as Washington has been practicing with other potential coalition partners. China relies on global markets for everything from technology and energy to food and agriculture, major metals, minerals and capital. In fact, China's dependency on the global economy did not stop it from trading with Russia. Washington will have to maintain strong ties with all major suppliers in China. In short, President Xi is using the war in Russia and Ukraine to forge a "new era" that will either destroy or weaken the US alliance. Putin has taught the world that the aggressive statements and threats can wreak havoc. Washington must also review its strategy and highlight the growing threats posed by Beijing to peace and security in Asia in order to protect thousands of innocent people from the effects of war. It will take time for these two countries to come down from the mountain of arrogance to stand side by side. Though it is difficult to do so but they have to do to protect Asia from war and its consequences

Briefs

179 dead in South Korea plane crash

FROM PAGE 01
was reported to be carrying two Thai passengers and the rest were believed to be South Koreans. Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra has expressed deep condolences to the families of the crash victims. Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been ordered to investigate if Thai passengers were on the plane and to provide "assistance immediately", the prime minister said in a post on social media. One photo shared by local media showed thick clouds of black smoke coming out of the plane. Another showed the tail section of the jet engulfed in flames on what appeared to be the side of the runway, with firefighters and emergency vehicles nearby. The country's News1 agency reported that a passenger texted a relative to say a bird was stuck in the wing. The person's final message was, "Should I say my last words?" South Korea's acting President Choi Sang-mok, meanwhile, ordered "all-out efforts for rescue operations" at Muan airport.

President, PM express condolence..

FROM PAGE 01
He also expressed his sympathies with the bereaved families. According to foreign media reports, a Jeju Air Flight 2216 crashed at Muan International Airport on Sunday morning, resulting in at least 85 deaths. The Boeing 737-8AS, which had departed from Bangkok with 181 people on board, including 175 passengers and six crew members, crashed as it attempted to land.

Aurangzeb urges all stakeholders

FROM PAGE 01
A day earlier, Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah stressed the need for dialogue among the country's political bigwigs, saying it would be better if Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan and Asif Ali Zardari sit together to resolve the issues, as holding negotiations is the only solution to the prevailing political crisis. Addressing the media in Punjab's Kamalia city today, the finance minister urged for self-reliant progress rather than dependency on external aid. "We have progressed through our own efforts, not by relying on anyone," he said, highlighting the government's focus on sustainable development.

General consensus reached..

FROM PAGE 01
The jirga would convene on Tuesday after the forum, via mutual consultation, decided to grant two days' time to one of the parties who asked for more time for further discuss with its leaders on few points. The development comes as major breakthrough, as reported by The News, was claimed on Saturday in the ongoing peace negotiations with one of the tribes signing the agreement. "All demands and proposals put forward have been accepted, and the Turi Bangash tribe has signed the agreement," said Jalal Hussain Bangash, secretary of the Anjuman-e-Hussainia Association.

JI leads mass rally...

FROM PAGE 01
Rehman described the dire conditions in the besieged territory, stating, "The situation has deteriorated to unprecedented levels, with extreme poverty gripping the region. Thousands of children, women, and the elderly are suffering, many losing their lives amid harsh conditions and severe cold." Rehman also accused the US of supporting Israel through military aid and political backing, which he claimed has contributed to the significant civilian toll in Gaza. He further criticized global silence on the issue, asserting,

Diplomatic Football League Season 8 kicked off in Islamabad

The league is proudly title-sponsored by Gerry's and powered by RBS, with additional sponsorship from Trio Homes, Jupi Media and Tours, Joma, and Alamco Duty-Free

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Season 8 of the Gerry's Diplomatic Football League is marking a vibrant start with some thrilling matches. A total of 18 teams are competing in the league, divided into two groups, battling through the league stage to secure spots in the knockout rounds. In Group B, MOFA, Big Bird, and Central Asia United are leading the pack with six points each, showcasing strong early performances. Meanwhile, in Group A, Trio Homes and Nigeria are setting the pace as group leaders. The league has attracted the diplomatic community in Islamabad where more than 25 different nationalities are participating, with approximately 280 players contributing to the international camaraderie and competitive spirit. Matches are being hosted at Iqra University, the official venue partner for the tournament. The event will culminate in a grand finale at the end of February next year. The league is proudly title-sponsored by Gerry's and powered by RBS, with additional sponsorship from Trio Homes, Jupi Media and Tours, Joma, and Alamco Duty-Free. The event is organized by its founder, Mubasher Sanjrani, CEO of Sanjrani Oxen Enterprises, who is also participating in the league as a representative of Joma United. The league continues to be a platform for fostering international relations, sportsmanship, and community engagement. The Diplomatic Football League has undoubtedly established itself as one of the most renowned and highly anticipated events among diplomats in Pakistan.



SA beat Pak to reach World Test c'ship final

Rabada and Jansen's 51-run partnership leads the hosts to a two-wicket victory



CENTURION: Returning pacer Mohammad Abbas's six-wicket haul went in vain as South Africa held their nerves calm to edge past Pakistan by two wickets in the first here at the SuperSport Park on Sunday and qualified for the World Test Championship (WTC) final. South Africa's tailenders Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen displayed nerves of steel and put together a match-winning 51-run partnership to defy Pakistan's comeback. The duo batted sensibly to recover their side from 99/6 after Abbas's six-fer. The eventual day kicked off with the

home side resuming their innings from 27/3 through Aiden Markram and skipper Temba Bavuma, while chasing a modest 148. The duo stretched their overnight partnership to 43 runs until Abbas cleaned up Markram, who scored 37 off 63 deliveries with the help of six boundaries. The returning pacer soon got rid of South Africa's batting mainstay Bavuma to open the floodgates. The skipper remained the top-scorer for the Proteas Men with a cautious 40 off 78 deliveries, comprised of four fours and a six. The next over saw Na-

seem Shah finally opening his account by casting wicketkeeper batter Kyle Verreynne, who made just two. Mohammad Abbas further pushed South Africa to the backfoot by dismissing David Bedingham (14) and debutant Corbin Bosch (zero) on successive deliveries, reducing the home side to 99/8. Following the catastrophic collapse, Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada fought well to take the hosts' total to 116/8 with a crucial 17-run partnership. When the lunch was taken, Rabada was unbeaten on 10, while Jansen had made five. - Agencies

Wapda, Army to fight for Women's Basketball C'ship Title

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Defending champion Pakistan Wapda will face Pakistan Army in the final of the ongoing National Women's Basketball Championship in the decisive encounter will take place on Monday (today) at the WAPDA Sports Complex, organized by the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF). Wapda, who remain unbeaten throughout the championship, dominated Lahore in the first semifinal, winning 65-33. Wapda's star player, Hijab Fatima, led the team with 24 points, while Kainat Zafar added 13 points. Aiman Mehmood scored 13 points for Lahore. The semifinal was officiated by referees Umer Mehmood, Gul Jamal, and Prem Shahzad. In the second semifinal, Pakistan Army triumphed over Karachi with a commanding 59-19 victory, securing their spot in the final. Wearing red shirts, the Army girls were simply too strong for Karachi, who had performed well in the tournament but couldn't upset the Army's dominant play. Ayesha Dilshad was the standout player for Pakistan Army, scoring 20 points, while Zobia Shehnaz contributed 10 points. Referees for the second semifinal were Yasir Ghafour, Adeel Raza, and M. Umer. Wapda and Army will battle for the championship title on Monday (today), while Lahore and Karachi will compete for third place.

Islamabad Cup Snooker C'ship kicks off

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Cup Snooker Championship 2024 has officially begun at the Shender 41 Snooker Academy, organized by the Federal Billiard and Snooker Association. Tournament Director Salim Akhtar Rana shared that over a hundred players are participating in the ongoing event. He added that top performers will represent Islamabad in the upcoming National Snooker Championship, which will be held under the auspices of the PBSA. In the ongoing matches, Mansoor Ahmed defeated Hasan Anwar 4-2 frames, Ali Dara triumphed over Azim Abbas 4-2 frames, Waqar Mir secured a 4-0 frames victory against Chaudhry Shahzar.

Germany begin United Cup title defence with win

PERTH: Alexander Zverev eased past Thiago Monteiro 6-4 6-4 as Germany beat Brazil for a winning start to their United Cup defence on Sunday while the Czech Republic got the better of Norway in a hard-fought match. Zverev had a lengthy spell on the sidelines after damaging his ankle ligaments at the 2022 French Open but returned to his career-high ranking of number two following his Paris Masters triumph last month. The 27-year-old continued his good form in the mixed team tournament that kicks off the new season as he used his heavy shots from the baseline to grab a break in the first game and took the opening set on serve with a huge ace. Zverev stepped up a gear at the start of the next set with a stunning backhand winner en route to another break and he closed out the match comfortably to give Germany an unassailable 2-0 lead ahead of the mixed doubles match. "I'm very happy to be back, very happy to be playing for team Germany," said Zverev. "Perth is one of my favourite cities in Australia. I really enjoy my time here. - Agencies

Players kept in dark over high-profile doping cases

'It's not a good image and not a good look for our sport,' says Djokovic

WEB DESK

NOVAK DJOKOVIC expressed his frustration at being "kept in the dark" about world number one Jannik Sinner's doping case, saying in Brisbane on Sunday that it was not a good look for tennis. Anti-doping authorities said in August Sinner twice tested positive in March for the anabolic androgenic steroid clostebol and was cleared of wrongdoing by an independent tribunal that accepted his explanation of unintentional contamination. The 23-year-old Italian faces a potential ban of up to two years after the World Anti-Doping Agency appealed that decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. "It's not a good image and not a good look for our sport," Djokovic told reporters ahead of the Brisbane International. "You don't want to see that. I believe that in the last 20-plus years that I've been playing on the professional tour that we've been one of the cleanest sports. I'll keep believing in that clean sport. "I'm just questioning the way the system works, really, and why certain players are not treated the same as other players." Sinner was not the only recent high-profile case in the sport as world number two Iga Swiatek accepted a one-month ban that ended on Dec. 4 after a positive test for trimetazidine, which she said was due to contamination of her sleep medication. The International Tennis Integrity Agency maintains that all doping cases are dealt with based on facts and evidence and not a player's name, ranking or nationality, but has not been able to fend off allegations of double standards. "The issue is the inconsistency and the transparency. We've been kept in the dark with Jannik's case," Novak Djokovic added. "I'm not questioning whether he took the banned substance intentionally or not. I believe in a clean sport, I believe that the player will do everything possible to be playing fair. "I've known Jannik since he was very young. He doesn't strike me as somebody who would do such a thing. But I've been really frustrated as (have) most of the other players to see that we've been kept in the dark for five months."

Indian citizen arrested...

FROM PAGE 01
not possess any legal visa or permission to stay in Pakistan. As a result, the Saddar Police Station promptly registered a case against him. The police confirmed that a case has been filed against the accused under Sections 13 and 14 of the Foreigners Act, 1946. Following a court order, the accused has been sent to jail on a 14-day judicial remand. Authorities have launched further investigations to determine the purpose of the accused's entry into Pakistan and to identify any potential local connections.

PTI not an enemy but a 'political..'

FROM PAGE 01
How come issues will be resolved if our people do not sit together?" He welcomed the political talks with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), describing it as a positive step. However, he clarified that the agenda of dialogue would not include criminal cases involving PTI's leadership. Referring to the allegations against the PTI founder, Malik said, "The cases against him are of criminal nature. The £190 million matter is beyond politics."

FIA 'completes' initial...

FROM PAGE 01
from the State Bank regarding transactions made to certain accounts. Agents have also gathered information from survivors about their interactions with human smugglers. In a crackdown on human smuggling, three suspects were arrested from Faisalabad, two from Gujranwala, and two FIA officers from Faisalabad. Earlier, the FIA arrested two individuals, including a human smuggler in Gujranwala, in connection with Greece boat tragedy. On December 14, the foreign media reported that a wooden boat carrying migrants capsized off the island of Gavdos in southern Greece, killing at least five of them.

KP govt mired in...

FROM PAGE 01
All micro-economic indicators were improving in the country under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he added. He said that all political parties had their own manifestos under which they had contested general election. He said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was in government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for almost 11 years adding that during last ten months misgovernance and corruption was witnessed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. While sharing white paper regarding performance of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government he highlighted financial corruption along with financial irregularities. Tarar said that metro bus in Lahore was started to facilitate.

Australia suffer injury blow Inglis sustains the injury while fielding as a substitute during the ongoing Test

MELBOURNE: Australia suffered a significant blow in the ongoing five-match Test series against India as backup wicketkeeper batter Josh Inglis has been ruled out of the fifth Test, scheduled to kick off on January 3, 2025. The backup keeper-batter sustained a calf strain while fielding as a substitute on the second day of the fourth Test, underway here at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). Cricket Australia (CA) spokesperson later confirmed that the 29-year-old has sustained a low-grade calf strain and will miss the final clash of the India series in Sydney. "Josh Inglis sustained a low-grade calf strain while fielding on day two of the fourth Test match against India and will leave the squad to undergo rehabilitation," CA shared in a statement. "A replacement in the squad for the fifth Test match in Sydney will be announced in due course," the statement added. Australia, however, remained confident that Inglis will be available for their two-match Test series against Sri Lanka, scheduled next month. "Inglis is anticipated to be available for Australia's tour of



Sri Lanka which follows the home Test Series," CA added. Their next month's series holds equal importance for both Australia and Sri Lanka as the two teams are in contention for the World Test Championship (WTC) final. Inglis, who played 56 first-class matches for West Australia, is yet to make his Test debut for the Baggy Greens. The wicketkeeper batter, however, is an integral part of Australia's white-ball sides and has played 29 T20Is and 26 ODIs. - Agencies

Martinez ends goal drought in Cagliari win

'Lautaro (Martinez) will never be a problem for Inter, only a resource'

WEB DESK

CAGLIARI: Inter coach Simone Inzaghi reaffirmed his faith in striker Lautaro Martinez after he ended his goal drought in Saturday's 3-0 win over Cagliari that kept the Nerazzurri at the top of Serie A. Inter's skipper had not scored for his club since Nov. 3 in a 1-0 win over Venezia. But the Argentine got back on the scoresheet in the 71st minute on Saturday with a volley to put his team two up. Inzaghi praised Martinez's resilience despite his recent struggles. "Naturally, this situation was weighing on him, though we told him to relax and that he continued to give the team so much with his work. Lautaro (Martinez) will never be a problem for Inter, only a resource," Inzaghi told DAZN streaming service. Alessandro Bastoni's header and Hakan Calhanoglu's penalty sealed Inter's fifth consecutive away win. Inzaghi praised his side's hard work from set-pieces and the

contributions of players such as Federico Dimarco, Calhanoglu and Kristjan Asllani.

"At the end of the first half, we congratulated the team on their performance and



knew we just had to keep going against a tenacious Cagliari side," Inzaghi added. The manager was upbeat as he set his sights on Inter's fourth consecutive Supercoppa title and a 21st Scudetto after lifting the title last season. "This exciting 2024 ends with the 20th Scudetto that will forever unite us with the fans and directors, but now we go to Saudi Arabia for the Supercoppa hoping to win it for the fourth year in a row." Inter are level in the league on 40 points with Atalanta, who play at Lazio later on Saturday. The two sides will also meet in the semi-finals of the Supercoppa Italiana in Saudi Arabia on Jan. 2, with the winner advancing to face either Juventus or Milan. "We know that we are Inter, we have objectives and it is only right to declare them. It takes a lot of sacrifice, January and February will have us playing constantly, but I am fortunate to have players ready to give their all, whether for 95 minutes or five, and that is important," Inzaghi added.

Briefs

Gaza health officials say baby dies from 'severe cold'

GAZA STRIP: Palestinian Territories: Gaza health officials said that a 20-day-old baby died on Sunday from "severe cold" as the war-ravaged Palestinian territory grapples with winter weather. Jumaa Al-Batran died from the cold, while his twin brother remains in the intensive care unit at a local hospital, the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory said in a statement. Marwan Al-Hamas, head of field hospitals in Gaza, confirmed the death. He said it brought to five the total number of children "who have died due to severe cold" in recent weeks. "There is no electricity. The water is cold and there is no gas, heating or food," said Yahya Al-Batran, the father of the child. "My children are dying in front of my eyes and nobody cares. Jumaa has died and I fear that his brother Ali may follow." Yahya Al-Batran said he and his wife were living in a tattered tent in the city of Deir el-Balah in central Gaza. Hundreds of thousands of displaced people are crammed into unsuitable tents, most of which were hastily set up in Deir el-Balah and in the southern areas of Khan Yunis and Rafah. Since the war between Israel and Hamas began in October last year, Gaza's 2.4 million residents have endured severe shortages of electricity, drinkable water, food and medical services. The vast majority of the territory's residents have been displaced at least once since the war broke out with Palestinian militant group Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel. —APP

Tourist killed in shark attack in Egypt's Marsa Alam resort

CAIRO: One tourist was killed and another was injured in a shark attack in Egypt's Marsa Alam resort, the environment ministry said in a statement on Sunday without giving the nationalities of those involved. There are sharks in the Red Sea but encounters with them are relatively rare. The ministry said the attack occurred in deep water outside the designated swimming zone near the jetties in northern Marsa Alam, adding that swimming out from the jetties was prohibited and the jetties would be closed for two days from Monday. Marsa Alam is an Egyptian coastal town known for its coral reefs, marine life and beaches. The last similar incident was in June 2023 when a tiger shark killed a Russian national in Hurghada, another coastal city on the Red Sea north of Marsa Alam. Last month a tourist boat capsized in the same area, leaving four dead and seven missing. —Agencies

BMP wants smooth gas supply to industry in winter

Anjum Nisar says repeated hike in energy rates leave businesses uncompetitive

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) on Sunday urged the government to ensure smooth gas supply to the local as well as the export industry so that local production and the exports could not be suffered, which have just started to show a positive trend after a long time. Expressing serious concerns over the threats of gas supply termination and notices of additional security payment by the SNGPL the FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar argued that at a time when the exports data have showed some growth the government agencies, instead of taking business-friendly measures, are creating hurdles for the industry. He quoted the latest exports data and said the exports of readymade garments rose 23.17pc by value in the first quarter and 16.16pc by quantity, while knitwear rose 14.13pc by value and 2.17pc by quantity while bedwear posted a growth of 13.31pc in value and a growth of 14.55pc in quantity, which is

an encouraging sign. The government should extend its full support to continue this positive trend of exports growth through uninterrupted gas supply to the captive power plants at affordable and competitive rates. Mian Anjum Nisar called for swift implementation of a system based on modern technology for the selection and transmission of low-cost electricity. He wanted to complete all measures for the reform of the power sector within the specified timeline. He warned that the continued escalation of energy prices could result in the closure of industries, amplifying unemployment rates and diminishing Pakistan's export capabilities. He emphasized the need for the government to explore and provide affordable energy alternatives for the industry, stressed that such measures are crucial for ensuring the competitiveness of Pakistani products in the global market. As the industrial sector grapples with the ramifications of the gas price hike, the BMP leader's stance advocates for the preservation of industrial stability and the prevention of potential economic setbacks for Pakistan. He said that the re-

peated increase in the gas and electricity prices to an unbearable level by the government has left the trade and industry uncompetitive, blaming it for trapping the country in the IMF plans. Strongly opposing gas price surge, he said that the gas tariff hike has threatened the industrial sector, besides increasing unemployment, saying that the every government had poor economic policies that unleashed the free fall of rupee against the dollar, ensuing in input cost escalation to pull down the manufacturing growth. He demanded the government to take back the decision of hike in gas tariff in the larger interest of national economy and to save the industries from collapse. He warned that if the decision is not withdrawn the industries will close down, resulting in decline in exports and mass unemployment. This was 16.61 percent decline to the export target of \$32.35 billion set for the fiscal year 2022-2023, he said that the export-oriented industries were faced with the greatest ever challenges in terms of the highest cost of manufacturing. Many industries, he claimed to have already stopped their produc-

tion in the country with several others fearing a closure because of the unviable trade, which may also pulled the country's exports further down. Anjum Nisar said that the exports of textile and clothing recorded an increase of nearly 9.51 per cent in the first quarter of FY25 amid concerns that the industry was experiencing a slump. The exports from the sector had a negative growth of 3.09pc in July, which rebounded 13pc in August and 17.92pc in September. The BMP Chairman believed that the textile sector may struggle to compete with regional rivals due to the implementation of harsh taxation measures in the current fiscal year. However, the disruption in supply from Bangladesh has also increased the demand for Pakistani garments. "We would like to bring to your kind notice an important issue which would hurt industrial units and their production activities." He said that the notices have been issued to our members having captive power facility, demanding additional security payment based on revision of share of system gas and RLNG (e.g. 25:75). "These notices are not only unwarranted but also harsh steps,

given the decision to terminate the gas supply from these members from Jan 1, 2025 and simultaneously serving notices for enhanced security. "It defies logic that on one hand, the SNGPL is terminating the gas facility, and on the other, an additional demand of security is being raised. We request immediate withdrawal of these notices and ensure gas supply to industry so that exports do not suffer." Furthermore, the industry was disappointed with the decision to terminate the gas facility. He said that the exporters have invested heavily in setting up captive power plants, and this move will render their infrastructure redundant and their investment will be doomed. In the light of the Petroleum Exploration & Production Policy 2009, which aims to accelerate exploration and development programs, we believe that terminating the gas facility is counterintuitive. We request that these decisions may please be reconsidered and industry may be engaged to explore alternative solutions that may balance the interests of all stakeholders.

Turkiye court jails three for life over death of 8-year-old girl

DIYARBAKIR, Turkiye: A Turkish court on Saturday sentenced three suspects including family members to life in prison over the mysterious death of an eight-year-old girl in the southeastern province of Diyarbakir, an AFP journalist saw. The body of Narin Guram, who had been missing for 19 days, was found in September in a bag in a river around one kilometer (0.6 miles) from the village where she lived with her family. After a tense day-long hearing, the court in Diyarbakir handed Narin's mother, elder brother and uncle an aggravated life sentence on charges of "deliberate murder in collaboration," according to the journalist at the courthouse. The judge sentenced another suspect Nevzat Bahtiyar, who had confessed to the murder, to four years and six months in prison. Police heightened security measures inside and outside the tribunal as the judge read out the verdict. The court said that Bahtiyar found the body at Narin's home, adding that he carried and hid it. Abdulkadir Gulec, head of the bar association in Diyarbakir, told reporters the court verdict was near what they had expected. "Bahtiyar should have received the same penalty," he said. Lawyers Nait Eren said they would object to the court's ruling on Bahtiyar. —APP

China's fastest high-speed train prototype unveiled

DNA

BEIJING: A prototype of the CR450 EMU (electric multiple units) high-speed train, China's most recently designed high-speed bullet train model, debuted in Beijing on Sunday. When operational, it is expected to reach a speed of 400 kilometers per hour, making it the fastest high-speed train in the world, according to the country's railway operator. The train will further shorten travel time and improve connectivity, making travel more convenient and efficient for the country's vast passengers, China State Railway Group Co (China Railway) told the Global Times on



Sunday. The CR450 prototype reached a test speed of 450 kilometers per hour, with key performance indicators operational speed, energy consumption, interior noise, and braking distance — setting a new international benchmark, the company said. The

CR450 will be significantly faster than the currently operating CR400 Fuxing high-speed trains, which operate at a maximum speed of 350 kilometers per hour. CR450 high-speed train will lower operational resistance by 22 percent and reduce weight by 10 percent

compared to CR400 bullet train, the company told the Global Times. The breakthroughs of the CR450 project will help boost China's railway technological innovation and independence, further strengthening the country's global leadership in high-speed rail technology, according to China Railway. China has built the world's longest and most advanced high-speed rail network and is ready to enhance passenger travel with faster, more comfortable, and efficient rail services. As of September, China's high-speed rail network exceeds 46,000 kilometers, accounting for over 70 percent of the global high-speed railway length.

Federal Tax Laws Manual a great help for taxpayers

LAHORE: The Urdu translation of Federal Tax Laws Manual, compiled by the Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr Asif Mahmood Jah, serves as a comprehensive source of information to help taxpayers understand their rights and obligations easily available under federal tax laws of customs, income and general sales tax, etc. Addressing an awareness session with business community here on Sunday, FTO Coordinator Muhammad Farhan Munir said it was specifically designed to address common challenges faced by taxpayers and offers guidance on the remedies available for resolving grievances. The manual provides clear and concise explanations of the tax filing process, assessment procedures, and compliance requirements. It also highlights the avenues for appealing incorrect tax assessments, addressing excessive deductions, and resolving delays in tax refunds. By simplifying complex legal terms, the manual ensures that taxpayers from all walks of life can easily comprehend and navigate the system, he added. Farhan Munir said that one of the key features of this initiative is the Urdu translation of the manual, making it accessible to a broader audience in Pakistan. The translation ensures that language barriers do not prevent individuals from understanding their rights or seeking redress. FTO Legal Adviser Almas Ali Jovinda contributed a lot in compiling federal tax laws manuals. The manual emphasizes the role of the Federal Tax Ombudsman in resolving disputes, ensuring accountability. —DNA

BD imports fertilizers from SA to boost food security

Dhaka: Bangladesh has secured a two-year deal to import 400,000 tons of fertilizer from Saudi Arabia, the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation said on Sunday as the South Asian country seeks to boost its food security. Bangladeshi officials have been working to increase food production as the country faces rising food demand amid decreasing farming land due to rapid urbanization and a growing population. The BADC signed the new agreement with Saudi state-owned company Ma'aden in Riyadh on Dec. 15, following years-long cooperation between them. "Good quality fertilizer plays a vital role in ensuring food security for our 175 million people. This fertilizer helps us increase productivity by many folds," BADC general manager Ahmed Hassan Al-Mahmud told Arab News. Under the latest deal, Ma'aden will supply 400,000 tonnes of diammonium phosphate fertilizer every year until 2026 and provide training for Bangladeshi farmers. "The Saudi state-owned fertilizer company offered to provide training for our farmers, for the purpose of knowledge transfer on optimizing the use of the DAP fertilizers," Al-Mahmud said. —APP

Asma Assad barred from UK to seek cancer treatment

LONDON: Asma Al-Assad is effectively barred from returning to the UK after her British passport expired, The Times newspaper reported. The wife of former Syrian dictator Bashar Al-Assad will not be able to return to her birthplace, London, despite reports that she is critically ill with leukemia. The 49-year-old has been given a 50-50 chance of surviving the illness, according to sources. The news comes as her father, Fawaz Akhras, a renowned cardiologist, left his work at the privately run Cromwell Hospital in Kensington, west London, to care for his daughter in Moscow, where the Assad family was granted asylum this month. Asma Assad's British passport expired in September 2020, and it is unclear whether UK ministers have blocked renewal or if the former first lady simply allowed the document's validity to lapse. Yvette Cooper, the UK home secretary, said that Assad will be prevented from entering the UK to seek treatment. Foreign Secretary David Lammy said that the former investment banker is "not welcome" in Britain. —APP

Several airlines cancel flights after Azerbaijan plane crash

Statements from Azerbaijan citing the investigation into the incident suggest Baku believes the plane was hit mid-air

MOSCOW: Several airlines have announced the suspension of flights to Russian cities, after Western experts and the US suggested the crash of the Azerbaijan Airlines this week may have been caused by a Russian anti-aircraft missile. Moscow has declined to comment on reports the plane could have been accidentally shot down by its air defense. Russia has said that Grozny, the Chechen capital where the plane was meant to land, was being attacked by Ukrainian drones that day. It crashed near the Kazakh city of Aktau Wednesday, killing 38 of the 67 people on board. Turkmenistan Airlines — the national carrier of the exclusive Central Asian state — was the latest airline to announce cancellations Saturday. It said that "regular flights between Ashgabat-Moscow-Ashgabat were canceled from 30/12/2024 to 31/01/2025," without giving an explanation. The decision came after UAE airline flydubai suspended flights between Dubai and the southern Russian cities of Mineralnye Vody and Sochi that were scheduled between December 27 and January 3. Kazakhstan's Qazaq Air has suspended its flights to Russia's Ural city of Yekaterinburg until the end of January. Earlier this week, Israeli airline El Al said it was suspending its flights to Moscow for a week. The Azerbaijan Airlines Embraer 190 crashed near the western Kazakh city of Aktau, on the shores of the Caspian Sea. It was carrying out a flight between Azerbaijan's capital Baku and the city of Grozny in Russia. For several days, some Western experts have been pointing to a crash caused by a Russian anti-aircraft missile. Citing preliminary results of an investigation, Azerbaijan's transport minister said Friday that the crash suffered physical "external interference." Statements from Azerbaijan citing the investigation into the incident suggest Baku believes the plane was hit mid-air. On Friday, White House spokesman John Kirby said Washington has "indications" Russia may have been responsible, without giving details. —DNA

Bilawal inaugurates Ratodero water supply scheme

The inauguration of the Ratodero Water Supply Scheme represents a significant step forward in addressing one of the most pressing needs of the people of Sindh

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



ACCESS to clean drinking water is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of public health. In the Sindh province of Pakistan, the Water Supply Scheme for Ratodero Town stands as a testament to the commitment of both local and provincial leadership in addressing this critical issue. The inauguration ceremony of the Water Supply Scheme for Ratodero Town was a momentous occasion, attended by prominent political figures and local residents. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Member of the National Assembly (NA-194) and Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), led the event, accompanied by Faryal Talpur, Member of the

Provincial Assembly (PS-10), and Saleem Baloch, Minister for Public Health Engineering in Sindh. Other dignitaries included Ijaz Ali Shah, Secretary of the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) Sindh, Barkat Ali Khawaja, Chief Engineer of the Sukkur Region, Inayatullah Memon, Superintending Engineer of the Public Health Engineering Circle Larkana, Rashid Ali Rind, Executive Engineer PHED, Ghulam Mohd Qureshi AEN Sub Division Ratodero and Nadir Ali Rind Sub Engineer Sub Division Ratodero. This assembly of PHED's officials underscored the importance of the project and highlighted the collaborative efforts required to make it a reality. The enthusiasm of the local population was palpable as they gathered in large numbers to witness the inauguration. Their participation symbolized a collective hope for a better future, one where access to clean drinking water would no longer be a luxury but a norm. The event was a celebration of progress, with residents expressing their gratitude and optimism for the positive changes the scheme would bring to their lives. The

successful implementation of the Ratodero Water Supply Scheme was the result of visionary leadership and effective teamwork. Bilawal Bhutto

the project. His collaboration with senior officials like Ijaz Ali Shah and Barkat Ali Khawaja ensured that the scheme met the highest standards of

plants across Sindh reflects a strategic approach to public health engineering. By leveraging modern technology, the PHED has not only improved



Zardari's special interest in the project served as a driving force, ensuring its prioritization and timely completion. His commitment to improving public health infrastructure across Sindh reflects the broader goals of the PPP, which seeks to enhance the quality of life for all citizens. Saleem Baloch, as the Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering, played a crucial role in mobilizing resources and overseeing the technical aspects of

quality and efficiency. One of the most remarkable aspects of the Ratodero Water Supply Scheme is its integration of advanced water filtration technologies. Ultra water filtration plant was deployed to ensure the provision of safe and clean drinking water. These technologies are designed to remove contaminants and impurities, addressing the long-standing issue of waterborne diseases in the region. The rapid progress in establishing these filtration

water quality but also built resilience against future challenges. This initiative aligns with global efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6, which emphasizes clean water and sanitation for all. The successful implementation of the water supply scheme has significantly bolstered public confidence in the PPP's governance. Access to clean drinking water is a basic yet transformative service that directly impacts the well-being

of individuals and communities. By addressing this critical need, the PPP has reaffirmed its commitment to serving the people of Sindh. The project's success also highlights the importance of transparency and accountability in public service delivery. The collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, from engineers to policymakers, ensured that the scheme was completed efficiently and effectively. This model of governance serves as an example for other regions, demonstrating that public trust can be earned through tangible results. The Ratodero Water Supply Scheme is not an isolated success story; it is part of a broader effort to improve water access across Sindh. Under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the PPP has prioritized the development of water infrastructure, ensuring that similar projects are undertaken in other regions. The rapid completion of ultra-filtration and RO plants is a testament to this commitment. This scaling-up of efforts reflects a strategic vision for sustainable development. By addressing water scarcity and quality issues, the PPP is lay-

ing the groundwork for long-term socio-economic growth. These initiatives also align with Pakistan's national development goals, contributing to the broader objective of reducing regional disparities and fostering inclusive progress. The inauguration of the Ratodero Water Supply Scheme represents a significant step forward in addressing one of the most pressing needs of the people of Sindh. Through visionary leadership, advanced technology, and effective collaboration, the project has transformed lives and strengthened public trust in governance. Its success serves as a model for sustainable development, demonstrating that even the most daunting challenges can be overcome with determination and teamwork. As Sindh continues its journey toward inclusive growth, the lessons learned from the Ratodero Water Supply Scheme will serve as a guiding light. It is important to appreciate the hard work of the Minister and Secretary of Public Health Engineering including all engineers for completing the best quality water supply and sewerage projects.

Briefs

Marri terms energy crisis a 'joke'

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Secretary Information Shazia Marri on Sunday said that PPP did not join the federal government, but Bilawal Bhutto is still worried about the country. Addressing a press conference in Bilawal House, Shazia Marri said that despite repeated reminders about the current energy crisis, the federal ministers failed to reply in this regard. She said that there is a clear difference in the statements of the federal minister for energy. She said that the Sindh government will not compromise on its water rights. She further said that six new canals were being constructed from the Indus River to generate more water, while there was no clear policy adopted by the federal government to enhance water reservoirs. Shazia Marri said that the federal minister for energy created a 'joke' about energy. She said that PPP always raised its voice, highlighting the energy crisis. She also expressed her grave concerns over slow internet speed and said that people are facing problems due to slow internet issues.

'Only negotiations can address problems'

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmed Khan said on Sunday that only negotiations can address the political problems. Expressing his thoughts in Burewala, Khan recalled the events that transpired on May 9, saying, "One cannot claim the political rights by resorting to the vandalism. Undoubtedly, events like May 9 are the blackest chapters in the country's history." "Doing crime is being perceived as the political right in the country," he rued. "There is a dire need to establish the judicial commission to investigate the events that happened on May 9, last year." Separately on Saturday, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, addressing a ceremony in Lahore.

'Russia trying to hide causes of plane crash'

"Of course, our plane was hit by accident," President Aliyev says, asking Russia to admit "guilt" in disaster

FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said Sunday that the Azerbaijani airliner that crashed last week was shot down by Russia, albeit unintentionally, and criticized Moscow for trying to "hush up" the issue for days. "We can say with complete clarity that the plane was shot down by Russia. (...) We are not saying that it was done intentionally, but it was done," he told Azerbaijani state television. Aliyev said that the airliner, which crashed Wednesday in Kazakhstan, was hit by fire from the ground over Russia and "rendered uncontrollable by electronic warfare." Aliyev accused Russia of trying to "hush up" the issue for several days, saying he was "upset and surprised" by versions of events put forward by Russian officials. "Unfortunately, for the first three days we heard nothing from Russia except delirious versions," he said.

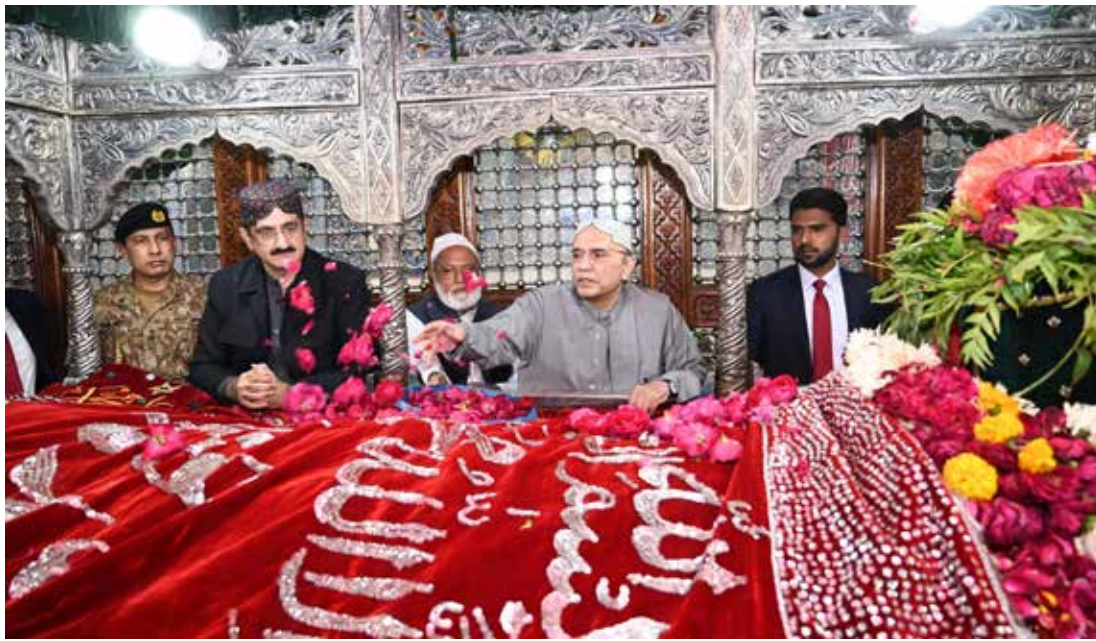
The crash killed 38 of 67 people on board. The Kremlin said that air defense systems were firing near Grozny, the regional capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya, where the plane attempted to land, to deflect a Ukrainian drone strike. Aliyev said Azerbaijan made three demands to Russia in connection with the crash. "First, the Russian side must apologize to Azerbaijan. Second, it must admit its guilt. Third, punish the guilty, bring them to criminal responsibility and pay compensation to the Azerbaijani state, the injured passengers and crew members," he said. Aliyev noted that the first demand was "already fulfilled" when Russian President Vladimir Putin apologized to him on Saturday. Putin called the crash a "tragic incident" though stopped short of acknowledging Moscow's responsibility. He said that an investigation into the crash was ongoing, and that "the final version (of events) will be known after the black boxes are opened." He noted that Azerbaijan was

always "in favor of a group of international experts" investigating the crash, and had "categorically refused" Russia's suggestion that the Interstate Aviation Committee, which oversees civil aviation in the Commonwealth of Independent States, investigate it. "It is no secret that this organization consists mostly of Russian officials and is headed by Russian citizens. The factors of objectivity could not be fully ensured here," Aliyev said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian state media on Sunday that Putin had spoken to Aliyev over the phone again, but did not provide details of the conversation. The Kremlin also said a joint investigation by Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan was underway at the crash site near the city of Aktau in Kazakhstan. The plane was flying from Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, to Grozny when it turned toward Kazakhstan, hundreds of kilometers (miles) across the Caspian Sea from its intended destination, and

crashed while making an attempt to land. Passengers and crew who survived the crash told Azerbaijani media that they heard loud noises on the aircraft as it was circling over Grozny. Dmitry Yarov, head of Russia's civil aviation authority Rosaviatsia, said Friday that as the plane was preparing to land in Grozny in deep fog, Ukrainian drones were targeting the city, prompting authorities to close the area to air traffic. The crash is the second deadly civil aviation accident linked to fighting in Ukraine. Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was downed with a Russian surface-to-air missile, killing all 298 people aboard, as it flew over the area in eastern Ukraine controlled by Moscow-backed separatists in 2014. Russia has denied responsibility, but a Dutch court in 2022 convicted two Russians and a pro-Russia Ukrainian man for their role in downing the plane with an air defense system brought into Ukraine from a Russian military base.

Georgia's outgoing president refuses to quit

SOFIA: Mikheil Kavelashvili (left) was sworn in as Georgia's president on Sunday. Outgoing president Salome Zourabichvili (right) has refused to recognise his appointment. Thousands of Georgians protested in the capital Tbilisi as a new president allied with the ruling Georgian Dream party was inaugurated. Mikheil Kavelashvili, a former pro-footballer, has been sworn in during a critical political period for the country after the government suspended its application to join the European Union. Georgian Dream won parliamentary elections in October, but the victory was mired in allegations of fraud which have since sparked several street protests. Outgoing president Salome Zourabichvili refused to step down on Sunday, saying she was the "only legitimate president". Addressing crowds gathered outside, Zourabichvili said she would leave the presidential palace but branded her successor illegitimate. "This building was a symbol only as long as a legitimate president was sitting here," she said. A few minutes' walk away, Kavelashvili was sworn in at a closed-doors ceremony in parliament, where he was accompanied by his family. Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze also attended the inauguration. - Agencies



SEHWAN: President Asif Ali Zardari offering Fateha and showering petals at the shrine of Sakhi Laal Shehbaz Qalandar in Sehwan Sharif. - DNA

President signs madrasa bill

President also issues ordinance introducing tweaks to Societies Act; gazette notification issued

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday signed the madrasa registration bill into law ending the weeks-long friction with the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F). Meanwhile, the National Assembly Secretariat has issued a gazette notification for the said law according to which seminaries would be registered as per the Societies Act. Furthermore, the president has also issued an ordinance concerning amendments to the Societies Registration Act 2024. As per the ordinance, applicable only to the Islamabad's jurisdiction, madrasahs will have the discretion to register either with the education ministry or the industries ministry. The development follows the federal cabinet's Friday's approval of the tweaks to the Societies Registration Act 1860 after the government and the JUI-F resolved their differences. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had met JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman wherein the former reportedly "accepted all demands of the Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaris Deenia (ITMD)" regarding the bill. The disputed madrasa bill, which has already been passed by both houses of parliament, had become a bone of contention between the Fazl-led party and the government. Its enactment was part of an agreement between the government and the religio-political party for supporting the 26th Amendment, Fazl had said previously. The bill required President Zardari's assent to become law after he returned the bill, citing legal objections. The said legislation, now an Act, amends the existing procedure for registration of madrasahs with the education ministry, stating that the institutions should be affiliated with the industries ministry instead. Previously, the president had reportedly raised eight objections over the then bill regarding seminaries' registration. President Zardari, the sources had said, expressed fear that if the madrasa bill turns into a law, seminaries will be registered under the Societies Act, which may lead to the imposition of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), and other sanctions on the country.

Israeli forces order new evacuation

DNA

CAIRO: Israeli forces carrying out a weeks-long offensive in northern Gaza ordered any residents remaining in Beit Hanoun to quit the town on Sunday, pointing to Palestinian militant rocket fire from the area, residents said. The instruction to residents to leave caused a new wave of displacement, although it was not immediately clear how many people were affected, the residents said. Israel says its almost three-month-old campaign in northern Gaza is aimed at Hamas militants and preventing them from regrouping. Its instructions to civilians to evacuate are meant to keep them out of harm's way, the military says. Palestinian and United Nations officials say no place is safe in Gaza and that evacuations worsen humanitarian conditions of the population.

Sit-ins continue in Karachi for 6th day

Police's efforts to clear road from Natha Khan through negotiations with the demonstrators fail

KARACHI: Protest sit-ins by a religious-political party against closure of routes and deadly tension in Parachinar, District Kurram, continues to paralyse various parts of Karachi for the sixth consecutive day on Sunday, with no immediate relief in sight for commuters. Travelling has become a nightmare for a number of cit-

izens as traffic gets clogged at different points and the commuters have to take a diversion which further aggravates the traffic situation on other arteries as well. The protest demonstrations are being staged at more than 11 different locations, including main arteries. Besides other locations, demonstrations are currently being staged at Numaish Chowranghi, Natha Khan bridge on Sharea Faisal, in front of KDA flats in Surjani Town, Golimar, Power House Chowranghi, near Safari Park on University Road, Korangi No 2, Five Star Chowranghi in North Nazimabad, Abul Hassan Ispahani road, Kamran Chowranghi in Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Incholi society and near Ayesha Manzil. The traffic police, however, said that alternative routes have been provided to facilitate the commuters. Nevertheless, police's efforts to clear the road, leading to the Airport area from Natha Khan, through negotiations with the demonstrators failed. Police said protest on the Natha Khan-Airport road continued, while traffic flowed on the road leading to Saddar from Natha Khan on Sharea Faisal. - DNA

Imran, Nawaz, Zardari should sit together, says Rana

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Political Affairs, Rana San-ullah said that PTI founder Imran Khan, PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif and PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari should sit together resolve Pakistan's problems. Addressing a seminar in connection with martyrdom ceremony of Shaheed Khawaja Muhammad Rafique in Lahore, he said attitude of some political parties has been changed after failed protest on November 26 this year. He expressed Government's resolve to make negotiation process with Opposition successful. Special Assistant said national issues can only be resolved through talks. He said PML-N saved the country from default, even by suffering political setback. Earlier, PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui said that talks between PTI and the Centre are ongoing, with Nawaz Sharif's approval. Senator Siddiqui emphasized that the committee will focus on written demands rather than statements made by PTI's founder. Prior to this, PTI set a deadline for the completion of talks with the government, aiming to conclude negotiations by January 31, 2025. Addressing reporters outside Adiala jail, SIC head Hamid Raza stated that Imran Khan has expressed confidence in the negotiating committee who are working to resolve issues with the Centre.

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