



Islamabad POST

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'Can't allow IS in Syria', will directly engage with HTS

Detailed News On Page-08

South Korean army chief arrested

Detailed News On Page-08



Ronaldo to run for CBF presidency

Detailed News On Page-06



Threats of civil disobedience

Govt rules out talks with PTI at 'gun point'

Defence minister lambasted the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for prioritising marches on Islamabad instead of the Kurram clashes

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The incumbent government has ruled out talks with the embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) with the "sword of civil disobedience hanging on its neck" as the former ruling party refused to "beg for negotiations". "For the first time, a pleasant breeze came from the opposition [...] but talks cannot be held at gunpoint," Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said while speaking on the floor of the National Assembly on Tuesday. Incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan — in a post on X — had warned the government of launching a "civil disobedience" movement if his demands — judicial inquiry of the May 9, 2023, riots and November 26 crackdown on PTI protesters and release of its "political prisoners" — are not met. The ousted prime minister also constituted a five-member negotiation committee comprising Omar Ayub Khan, Ali Amin Gandapur, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, Salman Akram Raja and Asad Qaiser. Earlier this week, the reports of the former ruling party and the government's agreement to use the parliamentary forum for negotiation emerged following a meeting between PTI stalwart Asad Qaiser with NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq. However, Qaiser dismissed these reports saying that he visited Sadiq's residence for condolences. "No discussion regarding negotiations took place with the [NA] speaker," he added. Similarly, the government has also said that no talks with the PTI have been initiated. Speaking on the NA floor today, the defence minister lambasted the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for prioritising marches on Islamabad instead of the Kurram clashes.

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Gohar urges political dialogue to address issues

PTI's actions are guided by directives from party founder Imran Khan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar said that political issues should be resolved through political means. Speaking to journalists at the Parliament House, he stated that progress could only be achieved if their demands are openly discussed and grievances addressed. He clarified that PTI's actions are guided by directives from the party founder, Imran Khan, with regular updates provided to him. Gohar further explained that the founder had formed and mandated a committee to pursue these matters. He expressed optimism for progress, reiterating that political problems require political solutions. Earlier, PTI's Sher Afzal Marwat said the nation is looking at this house. No-one from India or

Continued on Page 06

NATIONAL DAY OF UAE



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Ambassador of UAE Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of UAE. The Prime minister in his remarks said that both countries enjoy excellent relations. He hoped these relations would further be cemented in the day to come. — DNA

Pak appoints new envoys to Canada, Doha

Lt Gen Mohammad Amir reaches Doha to assume charge; Amir Shoukat take charge in Egypt

SIYAFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a significant reshuffle aimed at strengthening its diplomatic presence abroad, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has reassigned ambassadors to various major capitals worldwide. Lt. Gen. Mohammad Aamer has reached Doha, Qatar, to assume his duties as Pakistan's new ambassador. He replaces Dr. Mohammad Ejaz, who is set to take up the ambassadorial duties in Minsk, Belarus. Following the retirement of Pakistan's High Commissioner to Canada, Zabeer Aslam Janjua, the post remained vacant.

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CTD captures 16 terrorists across Punjab

One of those captured was a member of Fitna Al-Khwariz

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Counter-Terrorism Department claimed on Tuesday to have arrested 16 terrorists in IBOs across Punjab. According to the CTD spokesman, teams conducted 118 intelligence-based operations in Lahore, Bahawalpur, Toba Tek Singh, Mandi Bahauddin and other cities and arrested 16 terrorists. One of those captured was a member of Fitna Al-Khwariz who belonged to North Waziristan, said the spokesman.

Continued on Page 06

Attends UAE National Day event

PM praises KSA's efforts for peace in Gaza, Lebanon

Shehbaz Sharif said that we are active in expanding economic and financial ties with Saudi Arabia as agreements worth two point eight million dollars have been signed between the two countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed Pakistan's continued support to all efforts against the sufferings and human rights violations of the people of Gaza and Lebanon. He was talking to Saudi delegation of the Shura Council led by Chairman of the Council Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al Sheikh, which called on him in Islamabad today. On this occasion, the Prime Minister commended Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for hosting the Arab-Islamic Summit, which reinforced the Muslim Ummah's call for peace in Gaza, Lebanon and in the region.

Continued on Page 06

PM orders to address shortage of medicines in Kurram immediately

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, convened to discuss the approval of the National Registration and Biometric Policy Framework and the ongoing medicine shortage in Kurram. The cabinet took serious notice of the lack of essential medicines in

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Sara case
Father, mother awarded life sentence

DNA

LONDON: A UK court has awarded life imprisonment to the father and stepmother of a 10-year-old girl, British-Pakistani girl, Sara Sharif, who died from prolonged and horrific abuse. Sharif was found dead in August 2023 at her home in Woking, a town southwest of London, after what prosecutors said was a campaign of "serious and repeated violence". Prosecutor Bill Emlyn Jones told jurors at the start of the trial that Sara had suffered injuries including burns, multiple broken bones and bite marks. Sara's father Urfan Sharif, 43, and his wife Beinash Batool, 30, stood trial at London's Old Bailey court charged with her murder, which they denied.

Forced resignations being sought

Government denies harassment, passes legislative bills in National Assembly

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader and former Speaker of the NA, Asad Qaiser, has stated that he is being pressured to resign and was informed that the current Speaker had been briefed about accepting his resignation once submitted. His remarks came during a session of the NA chaired by Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, where Qaiser criticised the ongoing situation, alleging harassment of Members of MNAs. Asad Qaiser questioned under which law MNAs were being subjected to harassment, stating that members felt threatened by the "establishment govt" and administration.

MQM supports JUI

Fazl warns to take issue to the streets

JUI-F chief slams bureaucracy and establishment for not accepting curriculum of religious seminaries

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Tuesday threatened to launch a protest drive if the government further delayed the matter and refused to notify Societies Registration (Amendment) Act 2024 passed by both houses of parliament. Addressing the National Assembly session, Fazl said legislation on the bill regarding madaris was made after the government expressed satisfaction on it. Whereas, the matter of registration of madaris in the Ministry of Education was part of an agreement, not an act, he added. "As per the agreement, the government would cooperate in the registration of new madaris. There was an agreement that registration of those madaris that have been registered will be maintained. "The agreement mentioned bank accounts of madaris will be opened and 3-year visas will be issued for foreign students of madaris," however, he said, neither bank accounts were opened nor visas

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Govt's efforts successfully revive economy: Tarar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar, highlighting the government's economic achievements on Tuesday, said that inflation had dropped to 4%, foreign reserves had risen to \$12 billion, and remittances reached \$8.8 billion in the first quarter of the fiscal year. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he said, "Our focus is on the economy and it is back on track due to steps taken by the government".

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan committed to CICA's vision, says DPM Ishaq Dar

the deputy prime minister called for just and inclusive political solutions for long-standing disputes such as Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir

FOREIGN DESK

CAIRO: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday participated virtually in the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) wherein he reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the CICA's vision of achieving common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in Asia. Hosted by CICA chair Azerbaijan in virtual format, the meeting focused on enhancing regional cooperation, promoting peace, and advancing sustainable development in Asia. The deputy prime minister, who is currently in Cairo to attend the D-8 summit, highlighted CICA's immense potential in addressing the region's key challenges including political disputes, conflicts, and endemic poverty that continue to hinder collective progress. Underlining the importance of dialogue, mutual respect and adherence to international law, the deputy prime minister called for just and inclusive political solutions for long-standing disputes such as Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir. A key focus of Pakistan's statement was the imperative of strengthening regional

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Dozens of Pakistanis still missing in Greece boat tragedy: envoy

Pakistan's Ambassador to Greece Aamar Aftab Qureshi confirms the embassy will repatriate deceased nationals

DNA

ATHENS: Dozens of Pakistanis still missing in the aftermath of the boat accident in Greece, as confirmed by the Pakistani Ambassador. In a press conference, Pakistan's Ambassador to Greece, Aamar Aftab Qureshi, stated that the embassy will send the bodies of the Pakistani nationals who died in the incident back to Pakistan at its own expense. He mentioned that many Pakistanis are still missing from the accident, and although the rescue operation is still

Continued on Page 06

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Romina lauds WB for fostering more resilient future for Pakistan

This meeting also focused on addressing Pakistan's growing climate-related challenges, which include extreme weather events such as floods, heat waves and drought

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Country Director for Pakistan, South Asia Region, Najy Benhassine called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam and discussed various matters of bilateral interest and cooperation for building Pakistan's climate resilience through various measures on Tuesday.

extreme weather events such as devastating floods, heatwaves, droughts, desertification, groundwater depletion, crop failures and unpredictable rainfall patterns, which have significant economic, social, and environmental consequences, Pakistan is doing everything possible with its resources and existing capacity to cope with the impacts of climate change," Romina Khurshid Alam said.

stan's climate risk management systems, focusing on several key areas including water, agriculture, energy, and food security. Meanwhile, the World Bank official also emphasised with the PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid Alam the significance of developing and implementing comprehensive climate risk management strategies to be implemented at national, provincial and district levels.



LAHORE: Ambassador Blome and US Consul General Kristin Hawkins with business women during their visit to Academy for Women Entrepreneurs. - DNA

KP governor vows to uplift Dera region

Blome inaugurates 'Lincoln Corner' at iconic QAL

DNA

DERA ISMAIL KHAN:Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday said that tangible measures were being taken for the uplift of Dera Ismail Khan region.

LAHORE: The United States (U.S.) ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome on Tuesday inaugurated Lincoln Corner at the iconic Quaid-e-Azam Library (QAL) here to mark a new era of knowledge in the library's forty-year long history.

Kashif Manzoor and other library officials at the gates of Bagh e Jinnah (formerly Lawrence Gardens) and presented a bouquet. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Blome said, today, we embark on a new chapter of collaboration and cultural exchange between the United States and Pakistan, adding our two countries have enjoyed more than 75 years of cooperation and collaboration.

their eyes to new possibilities - including hands-on opportunities to explore 3D technology, access to more than 40,000 academic journals through our research databases, opportunities to practice their English skills, and have the latest information about study-abroad and exchange program opportunities in the United States.

Havelian Police held 4 suspects in triple murder cases

HAVELIAN:District police on Tuesday intensified their crackdown on criminal elements in Havelian and Lora, leading to the arrest of two key suspects after a shootout and the capture of a double murder accused in separate operations.

Govt to set up Forest Force to tackle timber theft

MULTAN:In a bid to combat the growing menace of timber theft, the Punjab government was working on a plan to establish a dedicated Forest Force in collaboration with the police and revenue department.

Additionally, the current low fines fail to act as a strong deterrent, further complicating efforts to stop illegal practice. The proposed Forest Force will work along with the police to ensure timely action against offenders.

out that hundreds of timber theft cases remain pending in courts, despite 40 cases being decided in December alone. She stated that even after court decisions, many culprits remain at large due to delays in police action.

KP hosts road-show showcases energy sector projects

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Government in collaboration with the Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) programme, hosted a dynamic investment road-show in Islamabad, the other day, said an official press release issued here on Tuesday.

PPP chairman condemns attacks on polio workers in KP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a police checkpoint in Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which resulted in the martyrdom of two police personnel, including an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI).

PPP paid tribute to the martyred ASI Hassan Khan and Constable Nisar Khan, stating that the nation will never forget the sacrifices of its martyrs. He extended heartfelt condolences and solidarity with the families of the fallen heroes and urged authorities to ensure the best possible medical treatment for the two injured policemen.

Bhutto Zardari expressed deep concern over the rise in terrorist incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He criticized the PTI-led provincial government's lack of interest in combating terrorism, describing it as a disregard for the national resolve.

Court Notice

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ISSI, CSCCC host Post-COP29 dialogue on analysis of outcome, strategy on way forward

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) along with the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) and Embassy of France organized a Dialogue titled "Post-COP29 Dialogue: Analysis of Outcome and Strategy on Way Forward."

heer, Executive Director of the Global Climate-Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC); Mr. Olivier Mahu, Global Practice Manager for Climate Finance Mobilization at the World Bank; and Dr. Pema Gyamisho Director General ICIMOD. At the sub-

national level, the speakers included Mr. Nadeem Ur Rehman, Secretary Climate Change & Environment, Balochistan; Mr. Mahmood Ghaznavi, Chief Conservator of Forests, Gilgit-Baltistan; Mr. Riaz Ahmed Wagan, Chief Conservator of Forests,

Sindh Forest Department; Mr. Muhammad Shafique Abbasi, Director (HQ) AJK-EPA; and Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim, Deputy Project Director for the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Project at the KP Climate Change Forestry, Environment & Wildlife Department.



PAKISTAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA REGULATORY AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS, ISLAMABAD. Invitation of Applications for Registration / Accreditation of Companies for Provision of Television Audience Measurement (TAM) Services. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) invites applications from companies registered under the Companies Act 2017 for registration / accreditation on non-exclusive basis under section 19 of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 (Amendment Act 2023) read with relevant provisions of PEMRA Registration / Accreditation of Television Audience Measurement (TAM)/Rating Service Regulations-2018 as amended in 2024 (hereinafter referred to as TAM Regulations in short) for provision of television audience measurement (TAM)/television rating point (TRP) Services in Pakistan.

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

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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Japan provides ¥1.503b for maternal, child health, flood

The agreement was signed and exchanged between Mr. TAKANO Shuichi, Charge d' Affairs ad interim of Japan and Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has provided 1.503 billion Japanese Yen () for the project for the recovery of maternal and child health equipment in flood-affected and surrounding areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 2.831 billion Japanese Yen for the project of flood management enhancement in the Indus basin. The Government of Japan decided to provide grant of 1.503 billion (approx. USD 9.91 million) for the project of recovery of maternal and child health equipment in flood-affected and surrounding areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 2.831 billion (approx. USD 18.67 million) for The Project for Flood Management Enhancement in the Indus basin under grant in aid assistance, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. The agreement was signed and exchanged between Mr. TAKANO Shuichi, Charge d' Affairs ad interim of Japan and Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs on Tuesday. On the same occasion, the grant agreements of both the projects were signed and exchanged between Mr. Naoaki Miyata, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan Office and Mr. Muhammad Yahya Akhuzada, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Under the



health grant aid, the project will procure and install essential medical equipment in 21 health facilities of Hazara Division to enhance maternal and child health (MCH) services by reducing maternal and neonatal mortality rates in KP province, particularly in Hazara division. By 2029, the project's expected outcomes include increased institutional

deliveries, caesarean sections, and ultrasound examinations that will significantly contribute to the reduction in maternal deaths and improving health outcomes. These improvements will enhance care quality, increase patient trust in the healthcare system, and ensure equitable access to high-quality health services for all in Hazara. Through targeted interventions and alignment with local and national health priorities, the project is set to make a substantial impact on health outcomes in KP province particularly in Hazara Division. Under Disaster Management, the project will install 45 hydrological and hydraulic observation network in KP and Punjab and rehabilitate the river structures in KP.

The objective is to reduce the Pakistan's economic loss by improving the quality and quantity of fundamental data needed for future river management and enhancing the strength of river structures against flash floods in the Indus River and its tributaries. The project will also incorporate the concept of "Build Back Better". Charge d' Affairs ad interim Mr. TAKANO said "with the two projects, Japan has almost fulfilled the pledge of \$77 million, which was made at the Geneva conference in January 2023. I hope for the safety of the people involved in the projects, their successful completion, and their contribution to improving social welfare for the vulnerable population in the region." Chief Representative Mr. Miyata said "I am confident that the health project will improve the health facilities and will achieve its goal of reducing the maternal and child mortality and better accessibility to quality health care." And through Flood Management Enhancement Project, it is expected to reduce the risk of human sufferings and economic losses in future floods, he said. The Government of Japan and JICA continue to enhance its cooperation for improved health services and disaster risk reduction to build back better assistance to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Foolproof security to be ensured during Christmas

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Arsalan Shahzeb met a delegation of the Christian community on Tuesday to discuss security measures regarding Christmas. According to police spokesperson, the meeting was attended by DSP Security, along with key representatives from the Christian community, including Pastor Alliance Initiative Chairman Malik Kamran Naz, Vice Chairman Aneek Parvaiz, General Secretary Yeshua Masih, Shahid Khokhar, Advisory Board Member Bishop Farukh Javed, and Bishop Warem Masih. SSP Shahzeb assured the delegation that the Islamabad Police is taking all necessary steps to ensure the safety of the Christian community and their religious events. He emphasized that comprehensive security will continue to be provided for programs held at their places of worship. Shahzeb stated that the purpose of the meeting was to reassure the Christian community that Islamabad Police is always available for their security and considers itself accountable for their protection. He added that all churches in Islamabad are being provided with foolproof security. Additionally, SSP acknowledged the Christian community's cooperation with Islamabad Police and expressed hope for continued collaboration in the future.—APP

Chinese companies bring advanced solar technology to Pakistan

Commenting on another successful year for the solar power plant in Pakistan, Xu Hongchang, Deputy Plant Manager at Zonergy Corporation Pakistan, highlighted that 2024 was a transformative year for the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Power Plant as they had the privilege of witnessing and contributing to significant advancements in Pakistan's renewable energy sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As 2024 draws to a close, China and Pakistan continue to enhance a successful partnership aiming to enhance Pakistan's renewable energy capacity. The two countries have been collaborating on several solar power projects, primarily under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). During the outgoing year, China and Pakistan have fostered collaborations between public and private sectors to fund and develop renewable energy projects. China has actively invested in solar power projects in Pakistan, contributing to the development of large-

scale solar parks like the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park in Bahawalpur, which now provides electricity to 200,000 households. Through this project, the Chinese company has brought advanced solar technology and expertise to Pakistan, helping the efficiency and capacity of solar power installations. Commenting on another successful year for the solar power plant in Pakistan, Xu Hongchang, Deputy Plant Manager at Zonergy Corporation Pakistan, highlighted that 2024 was a transformative year for the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Power Plant as they had the privilege of witnessing and contributing to significant advancements in Pakistan's renewable energy sector.

In an interview with Gwadar Pro, he said "throughout the year, we collaborated with a team of dedicated professionals to oversee plant operations, optimize performance, and ensure the smooth generation of solar power. Our 300 MW facility served as a model of efficiency, producing clean electricity to power thousands of households and reducing the country's reliance on fossil fuels." Xu noted that one of the year's highlights was the successful implementation of advanced monitoring systems, significantly enhancing the plant's energy output. By integrating cutting-edge predictive maintenance technologies, they minimized downtime

and set new benchmarks for operational excellence. He said their team conducted yearly testing of the solar power station to ensure compliance with performance benchmarks and identify areas needing improvement. The fault rectification process was streamlined through the implementation of a centralized fault reporting system, which facilitated faster issue resolution by categorizing faults and assigning them to specialized teams. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adopting best practices, they ensured that the plant maintained its status as a benchmark for efficiency in the region.

OEC to export experts in education to Libya

ISLAMABAD: Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) an attached department of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) would export the experts in education to Libya. An official source told APP here on Tuesday, he said that due to the hard-working workforce, the demand for skilled and unskilled workers increasing day by day in different countries of the world. He said that already a number of Pakistani teachers performing their jobs in the education sector of Libya and other Arabic states for many years with good reputations. He said that a well-reputed international institution seeking a job as a Principal in their institute on an urgent basis from Pakistan. The services of a well-educated male principal who meets the prescribed qualifications and experience required urgently. He said that candidates must have a minimum master's degree in education, administration, or a related field and a minimum five years of experience in educational institutions as principals. The applicant will submit/attach the deposited Bank challan amounting to Rs. 1000/- generated at the time of online.—DNA

Abbasi warns PTI for using 'Pashtoon Card' for political gains

ISLAMABAD: Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Tuesday cautioned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser against exploiting the 'Pashtoon Card' to disrupt national peace. Speaking on a Point of Order in the National Assembly, Abbasi said that Pakistan's enemies have historically sought to destabilize the country by inciting ethnic and provincial divides. He urged PTI to avoid using such tactics for political power.—APP

Cleft lip and palate patients to get free check-up

ISLAMABAD: Specialized team of senior doctors will start free checkup and necessary surgeries for cleft lip and cleft palate, in Islamabad. The surgeries, treatment, medicines, hospitalization, stay and food will be provided absolutely free to the patients by Islamabad Cleft Lip and Palate Association (ICLAPA). The Association announced that Patients will be examined on Friday 17th January, 2025 from 14:30 p.m. onward. The patients will be given exact date and time of the surgery when their examination (OPD) takes place on Friday 17th January 2025. Children with cleft lip and cleft palate will be operated upon, by a team of distinguished team of doctors and para-medical staff members who have been performing this task over several years. The children were operated upon with 100 percent success, and completely cured. Their entire lives have changed since then. Patients are now being registered for Friday 17th January, 2025. The patient also feels difficulty in speaking, living a normal life for taking food and drink, besides suffering psychologically. Patients are discharged after around two days, following the surgery and removal of stitches. The ICLAPA operates as a registered charitable institution, and is funded by purely private donations, and contributions from 'zakat' and mainly from its own members. The ICLAPA also has invited volunteers of all age groups, especially doctors, medical and other students, from all cities, to assist in its charitable work.—DNA

Industrial growth declines by 0.64%

The provisional quantum indices of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) for October 2024, with the base year 2015-16, have been developed based on the latest data supplied by the source agencies

ISLAMABAD: The Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) in the country witnessed a negative growth of 0.64 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The LSM however grew by 0.02 percent on year-on-year basis (YoY) in October 2024 when compared to the same month of last year and 111.60 percent on month-on-

month (MoM) basis when compared to September 2024. The provisional quantum indices of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) for October 2024, with the base year 2015-16, have been developed based on the latest data supplied by the source agencies. The main contributors towards overall growth of -0.64% are, Food (0.28), Tobacco (0.41), Textile (0.45) Garments (2.44), Petroleum Products (0.09), Automobiles (0.69),

Cement (-0.76), Iron & Steel Products (-0.63), Electrical Equipment (-0.71), Machinery and Equipment (-0.31) and Furniture (-2.39). The production in July-October 2024-25 as compared to July-October 2023-24 has increased in Food, Tobacco, Textile, Wearing apparel, Coke & Petroleum Products, Automobiles and Other Transport Equipment while it decreased in Rubber Products, Non Metallic Mineral Products.—APP

Webinar on Fire Safety & Fire Fighting

ISLAMABAD: National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a webinar on "Fire Safety and Fire Fighting" on December 23 (Monday). The webinar aimed to create awareness, bring attention to the dangers around us at all times and in all locations, and highlight the importance of being prepared. The course emphasizes the dangers of fire, how we can work together to reduce the risk of an outbreak, and what to do if such an event occurs, said an NPO document shared here on Tuesday. The workshop provides information about fire safety in the workplace, common causes of workplace fires, fire hazards, the importance of the 5 Cs in safety, types of fires, safety signage, awareness of the safety team.—APP

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Briefs

Two bootleggers arrested with 200 liquor bottles

RAWALPINDI: New Town police have arrested two bootleggers and recovered 200 liquor bottles from their possession. According to a Police spokesman, New Town police arrested two bootleggers namely Kashif and Waseem who were allegedly involved in supplying liquor in different areas of New Town police station. He informed that police conducted raids and arrested Kashif with 150 liquor bottles and Waseem for having 50 liquor bottles and 20 liters unpacked liquor. Separate cases have been registered against both the accused and further investigations are under process.

Superintendent of Police, Rawal appreciating performance of police party directed to accelerate operation against drug peddlers and bootleggers.—APP

Positive criticism by writers deserves encouragement

RAWALPINDI: Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has said that writers who highlight social, moral and political issues through their writings and present feasible suggestions for their possible solutions deserve full encouragement and appreciation. "As Governor of a province, it has always been my endeavor to keep the positive suggestions and positive criticisms of writers and poets for improving the performance of government institutions and solving the problems faced by the people", he said. He underscored that writers, being a sensitive segment of our society, show the real picture of society which is reflected from their writings. Governor Punjab expressed these views while talking to Deputy Director Public Relations Rawalpindi Tabinda Saleem, who met the Governor of Punjab and presented the governor her new book "Lafz Boltay Hain". Tabinda Saleem told the Governor Punjab that her upcoming book contains social and public issues and their possible solutions and suggestions.

Crackdown intensified on alms-seekers

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, operations targeting alms-seekers continued across the capital city. According to the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration spokesman, the Assistant Commissioner (Saddar) carried out a series of raids in G-11 and F-11 sectors late night and apprehended eight professional beggars. He said that in a concerted effort to address the issue comprehensively, professional beggars were targeted to make the federal capital a liveable place for the citizens. Memon urged the citizens to discourage professional beggars and called on the public to avoid giving money to individuals begging in public places, as it could inadvertently support these networks.—DNA

ICCI hosts Quran translation launching ceremony

In his closing remarks, Nasir Mansoor Qureshi paid tribute to Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan's remarkable achievements as a prominent industrialist, philanthropist, and scholar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted an impressive ceremony to launch the 'Quran Translation' of renowned scholar, business leader, and philanthropist Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan. The ceremony was presided over by Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the ICCI. Distinguished guests included Patron-in-Chief United Business Group S.M. Tanveer, Secretary General of the United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari, ICCI former Presidents including Abdul Rauf Alam, Executive members, members and a large number of men and women. In his address, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan emphasized the importance of implementing the teachings of the Quran in daily life. He stated that the Quran provides comprehensive guidance on all aspects of life, including personal conduct, social interactions, and spiritual development. By adhering to its teachings, individuals can achieve inner peace, moral integrity, and fulfillment in this world. Senator Khan urged the audience to venture into Quranic studies with special devotion to its meanings and translation. He emphasized that by implementing the Quran's



principles in daily life, individuals can foster a more harmonious and prosperous society. In his closing remarks, Nasir Mansoor Qureshi paid tribute to Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan's remarkable achievements as a prominent industrialist, philanthropist, and

scholar. He highlighted Senator Khan's outstanding contributions to various fields, including education, healthcare, and the promotion of Quranic teachings. Qureshi expressed his gratitude to Senator Khan for choosing the ICCI as the platform for launching

his Quran translation. He stated that the Chamber was honored to host this significant event and was confident that this translation would prove instrumental in changing lives and emerging as good Muslims. Qureshi assured that the ICCI would continue to

perform such sacred duties in the future also, aiming to benefit its members and promote Islamic values. At the end of the ceremony translation of the holy Quran by Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan was also distributed among all the participants.

Bakhtawari welcomes 200 basis point reduction in SBP's policy rate

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized that the business community is the backbone of the economy, and UBG will continue to play an active role in addressing their concerns

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Member Central Core Committee UBG (FPCCI) and former President ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, welcomed the State Bank's decision to reduce the interest rate by 200 basis points, stating that this success is the result of the continuous efforts of the business community and the concrete steps taken under the leadership of UBG Patron-in-Chief, S.M. Tanveer. He made these remarks during a meeting yesterday with Raja Sajjad

Akhtar, Group Leader of Jhelum Chamber of Commerce, and Johar Ali Raki, Group Leader of Gilgit-Baltistan Chamber of Commerce. During the meeting, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari paid tribute to the visionary leadership of S.M. Tanveer, highlighting that his selfless services have not only united the business community but also played a pivotal role in influencing critical economic decisions at the governmental level. He stated that S.M. Tanveer has always highlighted

the issues faced by the business community and taken practical steps to resolve them, benefiting both the business sector and the economy at large. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized that the business community is the backbone of the economy, and UBG will continue to play an active role in addressing their concerns. He urged the government to further reduce the interest rate to revive the economy, create more investment opportunities, and provide relief to the common citizens.

He noted that lower interest rates are essential for investment and industrial growth in the current economic scenario. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari added that under S.M. Tanveer's leadership, significant progress has been made in resolving the challenges faced by traders. He praised the efforts of UBG and the unity of the business community, calling it the key to economic improvement. He further affirmed that UBG will continue to raise its voice on every platform to protect the rights of traders.

Number of int'l students on rise at AIOU

ISLAMABAD: The number of international students at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is increasing each semester compared to the previous ones. According to the AIOU, in the Fall 2024 admissions, the number of international students rose from 740 to 1,007, including 474 male and 533 female students. This semester, 267 new international students enrolled. The countries from which these students have enrolled include the United Kingdom, Japan, China, the United States, Australia, Russia, South Korea, Ireland, Canada, France, Spain, Sweden, Greece, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, Taiwan, Botswana, South Africa, Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Qatar, Iraq, Kurdistan, Jordan, Oman, and Kuwait. The Directorate of International Collaboration and Exchange recently organized an online orientation session for the newly enrolled international students. During the session, Director of International Affairs Dr. Zahid Majeed briefed students about the university's admission and examination procedures, guidance regarding textbooks, methods for writing and submitting assignments, and participation in online midterm and final exams for BS students. International students expressed their satisfaction with the university's education system and facilities, stating that they feel proud to study at one of Pakistan's leading universities. The Vice Chancellor of the university, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, said that the university is celebrating its golden jubilee and takes pride in having produced 5 million graduates in the past 50 years. Dr. Nasir further stated that enrolling students from 36 countries is a significant achievement for the university, and they aim to spread the light of knowledge to every country in the world.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: CDA gardeners preparing greenbelt for plant saplings near Zero Point in the Federal Capital.

Pakistan's e-commerce revenue expected to reach USD 5b in 2024

China's highly developed supply chain system can provide Pakistan with a series of practical experiences," Aurang Zeb Khan, Vice President of OPAY Pakistan, who had successfully promoted Shoplus, a local B2B2C e-commerce solution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's e-commerce revenue is expected to reach USD 5 billion in 2024, and the industry will maintain a compound annual growth rate of 5.92% between 2024 and 2029, as well as is expected to reach USD 6.7 billion in 2029. "Pakistan's e-commerce sector contains golden opportunities, but the current B2B platform is not well developed, especially in remote areas, where many local merchants need to purchase goods from wholesalers. China's highly developed supply chain system can provide Paki-

stan with a series of practical experiences," Aurang Zeb Khan, Vice President of OPAY Pakistan, who had successfully promoted Shoplus, a local B2B2C e-commerce solution, told media. Drawing from his experience as the former CEO of Shanghai Cheezmall, where he championed the innovative B2B2C business model, Zeb Khan has facilitated the integration of global supply chains through new platform Shoplus, which could not only connect Chinese suppliers directly with retail outlets in Pakistan, but also extends comprehensive value-added services, including overseas warehousing, logistics, and payment solu-

tions. "Pakistan has a population of 241 million, 64% of whom are under the age of 30, meaning the demographic dividend is a major advantage for the development of e-commerce," said Naiel Oberoi Ikram, Pakistan partner of Gobi China, a Chinese venture capital firm. "In the past five years, Pakistan's e-commerce consumption has grown from USD 1.7 billion to USD 4.7 billion, a growth rate of 176%." Meanwhile, e-commerce also dominates the hot sectors attracting investment in Pakistan. In 2021, the total investment and financing of Pakistani startups reached a record high of USD 365 million, among which e-commerce absorbed

the most investment and financing, totaling USD 174 million, accounting for 25% of the total. E-commerce will still be the most favored industry by capital in 2022 and 2023. In 2023, 34.4% of Pakistan's total investment and financing went to this sector. The booming growth of the user scale also indicates that e-commerce is booming rapidly in this South Asian country. From the perspective of user quantity, the total number of Pakistani e-commerce users is expected to reach 6.9 million in 2024 and is expected to further increase to 14 million in 2029. From the perspective of user value, the average revenue per user (ARPU) in 2023 has reached USD 770, far exceeding the

South Asian average of USD 280. Rich potential of such an emerging market naturally attracts international and local platforms. As of November 2024, Daraz, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Alibaba, is Pakistan's leading e-commerce platform, with more than 9.4 million active users in November. Moreover, Temu, the overseas version of another Chinese giant Pinduoduo, has risen rapidly and ranked second in the list of active users of shopping apps in Pakistan the same month. With Alibaba's strong infrastructure capabilities and mature market experience, Daraz has gradually become Pakistan's largest e-commerce platform.

BJP/RSS secretly implementing Hindutva agenda to colonize IIOJK: APHC

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has said that the BJP-led Indian government, in collusion with the RSS, was conspiring and secretly implementing its nefarious Hindutva agenda to colonize Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). APHC spokesperson Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas, in a statement issued in Srinagar, said that the BJP-led Indian government under Narendra Modi is forcefully and covertly implementing the sinister Hindutva plans to colonize the occupied territory. This includes weakening Kashmir's economy, exploiting its local resources, and altering its demographic composition. He pointed out that India's colonial occupation of Jammu and Kashmir began when Indian troops illegally landed in Srinagar on October 27, 1947. Referring to the Land Grant Rules-2022, he said that the Modi regime is employing another colonial tactic to seize Kashmir's land and hand it over to Indian citizens. The spokesperson stated that notifying the new land grant rules is part of the Modi regime's broader strategy to dispossess Kashmiris. He added that the revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A on August 5, 2019, removed legal barriers, allowing non-locals to settle in IIOJK and threatening its demographic makeup. Highlighting the planned railway project in Kashmir, he emphasized that it is not just a development initiative but a larger strategy aimed at disempowering Kashmiris, confiscating their land, and altering the territory's identity. "Under the guise of infrastructure development, vast tracts of fertile land are being acquired without proper compensation or consultation with the locals. This is not development; it is dispossession," he asserted. Expressing grave concern over the proposed Bijnora-Pahalgam railway line, the statement noted that it will render thousands of people landless and result in massive joblessness among Kashmiri Muslims, as tens of thousands of apple-bearing trees will be cut down in Kashmir's most fertile lands. He said the manner in which work on the project is being carried out reflects the Modi regime's ulterior motives. The spokesperson added that the Indian Army's BEACON has already taken charge of the route from Pahalgam upward, highlighting the sinister intent behind the project.—W

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Digital nationalism

THE internet was once heralded as a force that transcended borders, connecting people and businesses in a seamless global network. That vision, however, is rapidly unravelling. Governments are asserting sovereignty over their digital domains, rewriting rules for global tech giants. Driven by national security concerns, economic priorities and geopolitical rivalries, this shift is fracturing the digital economy – with profound consequences. By 2022, the digital economy accounted for 15.5 per cent of the global economy, projected to grow to 17 per cent by 2028, with over two-thirds of new value creation expected from digitally enabled platforms over the next decade. Yet the dream of a borderless ecosystem is giving way to a reality of increasingly fragmented markets. Policies mandating local data storage, production and partnerships are raising compliance costs and eroding the interconnectedness that once defined the digital era. Indonesia has emerged as a leader in this shift. Apple's US\$100 million investment offer fell short of the country's ambitions. The government then said in early December that the company is planning a US\$1 billion investment tied to stringent local component requirements. Apple must ensure that at least 40 per cent of its smartphone components sold domestically are made locally. This aligns with the country's Making Indonesia 4.0 road map, which prioritises high-value exports in electronics, chemicals and advanced technologies. TikTok's operations in Indonesia were similarly upended by a ban on e-commerce on social media platforms, forcing ByteDance to spend US\$1.5 billion on a controlling stake in Tokopedia, a leading local e-commerce platform. These developments highlight government efforts to ensure technology serves domestic interests. China offers the clearest precedent for digital sovereignty. For decades, Beijing has fortified its digital borders with policies prioritising national security and local innovation. The Great Firewall and strict data localisation laws have fostered an ecosystem where domestic champions like Alibaba Group Holding (the owner of the Post) and Tencent Holdings thrive without foreign competition. These policies have driven remarkable growth: China's digital economy expanded from 11 trillion yuan (US\$1.52 trillion) in 2012 to nearly 54 trillion yuan last year, accounting for 43 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. Its 10.3 per cent nominal growth last year highlights the strategic value of a protected ecosystem, showing how digital nationalism can fuel innovation and economic growth. Yet China's model also reveals the risks of isolation, as fragmented ecosystems limit global interoperability and deepen divides in innovation networks. The United States now grapples with similar tensions. TikTok, a cultural phenomenon with 170 million monthly American users, has become a lightning rod in the US-China tech rivalry. ByteDance's legal battles to avert a ban underscore the significance of the platform, which earned US\$16 billion in US revenue last year. Protests at US Congress after House passes bill that could potentially ban TikTok nationwide While national security concerns dominate the rhetoric, the larger issue is geopolitical competition – a race for technological dominance in an increasingly multipolar world. Elsewhere, the European Union has pioneered a regulatory approach, using tools like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Digital Services Act to balance market access with user protections. GDPR alone has cost US tech firms over US\$4.7 billion in compliance expenses, underscoring the financial burdens of digital sovereignty.

US foreign policy

I HAVE often thought Shakespeare's Macbeth is a lot like many traditional Japanese ghost tales. A dodgy character kills someone to achieve his goal. The victim's ghost comes back to haunt him, leading to his downfall. The ghost may be real or a manifestation of his guilt. No matter, he still ends up dead. That may be why Jeff Rich, a wonderful historical essayist and YouTuber from Australia, has posted a still from Throne of Blood, Akira Kurosawa's film version of Macbeth, in a new video essay titled, "China never entered the Thucydides Trap that US history invented". I only recently discovered his channel The Burning Archive, which focuses on the history behind contemporary geopolitics, even though it has been running for a decade. Well, better late than never. China, he argues, is the ghost of Banquo who comes back from the dead to haunt the United States, the Macbeth of nations. I don't know if he is right or not. There are many things he says that I might like to challenge, but the analogy is intriguing. But first, a bit of scene setting. China is far more inward-looking and isolationist than the US. It prefers preservation over expansion, and neither goes out to seek monsters to destroy nor to spread its "universal values". It can live and work equally well – or badly as the case may be – with democracies and autocracies. It has no inherent preference for one set of governments over others. Why is that? Rich quoted George Yeo, a former foreign minister of Singapore, who offered a historical explanation at the Cambridge Union recently. "China is unique because it is unusually homogeneous. For a population of 1.4 billion, it is 92 per cent to 93 per cent Han," Yeo said. "This homogeneity is not a happenstance, it's not the result of the whim of a leader or a set of policies. It is in the DNA of the culture and civilisation ... The Chinese prefer living in a society that is mostly Chinese, and every time there's a crisis, they will impose controls. Like during Covid, the Chinese may complain but they will comply. But the non-Chinese will not be able to take it and they leave. And to some extent, China welcomes them to leave. Then it can batten the hatches, pull up the drawbridges, shut the gates, and preserve itself." Preservation, stability and equilibrium – those are the goals aimed at by Chinese leaders for their society. They are very different from political and social priorities of the West, especially the US, which prides itself to be disruptive and expansionist. Rich argues the West is essentially reading its own dynamism and disequilibrium into the Chinese, and so has come to the conclusion that Beijing wants to replace the US as the world's hegemon and upend the global liberal order over which America presides. Beijing has no such design, and has said so openly many times. But it always falls on deaf ears. "The Americans scrambled for power in the 20th century over the dead bodies of tens of millions of Eurasians. Its greatness rose on the backs of its betrayed ally," Rich wrote. Macbeth's new world order is achieved through bloodshed and murder, but you won't read about it in standard history books. That's the post-1945 liberal world order built on blood and corpses which have all been whitewashed. "Macbeth killed his king, Duncan. Fear of a life without hegemony then drove Macbeth to murder again, this time his ally, Banquo," Rich wrote. "At a banquet celebrating Macbeth's new world order, however, Banquo returns as a ghost. Macbeth fears the dead have come to 'push us from our stools'. The ghost inspires fear and madness, as much as guilt and remorse."



Sunshine gold dethrones black gold

Qamar Bashir



Scientists explored several options to reduce dependence on oil, including nuclear fusion, where hydrogen atoms fuse to form helium, releasing immense energy. However, the extreme heat generated by fusion reactions proved too intense for any material currently known to mankind to withstand, making the technology unviable for practical energy generation. Alcohol-based fuels, like ethanol blends, were also introduced as alternatives, but motorists often criticized their performance

Oil has been a dominant force shaping global economies over the past two centuries, acting as both a maker and breaker of fortunes. Fluctuations in oil prices and supply chain disruptions have historically been a nightmare for governments worldwide. Low oil prices in the mid-20th century encouraged the production of large, fuel-efficient vehicles, the conversion of coal-based power plants to oil-based ones, and the industrial shift to oil as a primary energy source. This transition boosted the economies of oil-producing nations, significantly raising the quality of life for their populations. Once regarded as an efficient and clean source of energy, oil—often called "black gold"—evolved into a potent political and security tool for oil-rich nations. By the mid-1970s, oil-producing countries, especially OPEC members, realized the political leverage and economic influence they wielded. The 1973 oil embargo, led by Arab nations, demonstrated how increased oil prices could disrupt global economies and even trigger regime changes. Oil became a weapon that could bring even powerful nations to their knees. In response, oil-importing nations began transforming their industries by developing nuclear power plants and producing fuel-efficient vehicles. However, their reliance on oil persisted. Devastating nuclear plant disasters, such as Chernobyl (1986) and Fukushima (2011), shifted the focus towards renewable energy sources. Scientists explored several options to reduce dependence on oil, including nuclear fusion, where hydrogen atoms fuse to form helium, releasing immense energy. However, the extreme heat generated by fusion reactions proved too intense for any material currently known to mankind to withstand, making the technology unviable for practical energy generation. Alcohol-based fuels, like ethanol blends, were also introduced as alternatives, but motorists often criticized their performance. This compelled scientists to turn to renewable energy sources such as wind, ocean waves, and solar power as the most promising avenues for reducing reliance on oil. Among these, solar energy emerged as a frontrunner, steadily challenging the dominance of "black gold" with increasing effectiveness. Recognizing the vast potential of solar energy, countries around the world began making substantial investments in developing innovative technologies to harness it. Global investment in solar energy has surged, with China leading at over \$100 billion in 2023, pioneering perovskite-silicon tandem cells with efficiencies exceeding 30%, and dominating low-cost panel production. The United States follows, investing \$56 billion, achieving breakthroughs like quantum dot solar cells with 39.5% efficiency and advanced grid-scale storage. India, at \$25 billion, excels in agrivoltaics and bi-facial cells (22% efficiency), while Germany, with \$19 billion, advances thin-film solar cells (26% efficiency) and decentralized storage. Japan, investing \$17 billion, developed multi-junction cells achieving 47% efficiency and floating solar farms. The global shift to solar energy has enabled significant economic savings by reducing reliance on oil imports. China leads with annual savings of \$13 billion through extensive solar adoption in industries, followed by the United States at \$11 billion due to reduced oil usage in power generation. India saves \$9 billion annually, leveraging solar for rural electrification and industrial needs, while Germany's \$8 billion savings result from replacing oil-fired power plants. Japan (\$6 billion) benefits from residential and industrial solar systems, and Australia (\$4.5 billion) achieves savings through rooftop solar and large-scale farms. Collectively, the top ten sunshine gold nations save over \$60 billion annually, demonstrating solar energy's role in enhancing energy security and cutting costs. If solar cell efficiency continues to improve, reaching consistent 40-50% efficiency in the coming decades, solar energy could progressively replace oil across various sectors. By 2035, solar could significantly reduce oil demand for electricity generation, which accounts for 10-15% of current usage, especially with advancements in energy storage and grid integration. By 2050, with widespread adoption and enhanced technology, solar could replace 70-80% of global oil demand, particularly in electricity, transportation (via electric vehicles), and industrial heating. A complete replacement of oil by solar energy is plausible by the 2060s, contingent on overcoming technological, political, and infrastructural barriers. This transition would bring profound economic changes. Oil-importing nations would save trillions, enhance energy security, and reduce geopolitical risks, while oil-exporting countries could face se-

vere economic disruptions, necessitating diversification. Global energy markets would shift towards renewables, fostering job creation in solar industries but challenging oil-dependent economies. Additionally, transitioning to solar energy would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, offering environmental and health benefits. Good news is that sunshine gold (solar energy) does not hold the same economic and security value for producing and consuming countries as black gold (oil). For sunshine-producing countries with abundant sunlight, solar energy offers economic opportunities through domestic use and export, but unlike oil, it cannot be monopolized or wielded as a geopolitical weapon. Solar energy's decentralized nature makes it accessible to many, reducing the ability of any one country to dominate it. For sunshine-consuming countries, solar energy provides significant economic benefits by lowering energy costs and enhancing energy security, reducing reliance on foreign oil. However, the security value of solar energy will depend on technological advancements, such as storage and grid infrastructure, and international cooperation. To foster a win-win situation between sunshine-rich and non-sunshine countries, the global community must right now prioritize equitable collaboration in renewable energy development and trade. This would involve cross-border energy sharing through advanced grids and storage technologies, technology transfer, and joint R&D to adapt renewables to diverse climates. Establishing global green funds, fair carbon credit systems, and hybrid energy solutions can ensure financial and energy access equity. In addition, international cooperation should be emphasized for fair revenue distribution, capacity building, and private sector engagement, alongside ethical resource management and community empowerment. By integrating diverse renewable energy sources, fostering innovation, and strengthening global climate agreements, the global community should create a sustainable and inclusive energy future that addresses economic disparities and mutual dependencies.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister at Embassy
of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC

18th Speakers' conference: Strengthening parliamentary excellence

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Attendees of the 18th Speakers' will include Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan; Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab; Syed Awais Qadir Shah, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh; Mr. Babar Saleem Swati, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Capt. (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai

CONSULTATION, or Shura, is a deeply rooted principle in Islamic teachings that embodies the democratic essence of collective decision-making. It emphasizes seeking collective wisdom, ensuring justice, and fostering unity. The Quran highlights its importance, stating: "And those who have responded to their master and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and they spend from what We have provided them" (Surah Ash-Shura, 42:38). This verse underscores the emphasis on dialogue and inclusive governance as fundamental to societal harmony. The life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provides timeless examples of Shura in practice. During critical moments like the Battle of Uhud and the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Prophet actively sought the counsel of his companions, valuing their insights and fostering a culture of collective wisdom. This practice ensured that decisions were not influenced by personal inclinations but guided by shared accountability and divine direction. It became a cornerstone of governance in the early Islamic state, promoting justice, inclusivity, and trust. Shura aligns closely with modern principles of parliamentary democracy. In Pakistan, the National Assembly and Parliament serve as contemporary platforms for consultation, where representatives deliberate on matters of national importance. These institutions reflect the spirit of Shura, particularly in their role in legislation, policy-making, and oversight. However, their success hinges on the sincerity, transparency, and commitment to justice of those involved—values that are integral to Islamic governance. In today's polarized political climate, democratic institutions often struggle with challenges stemming from partisanship and erosion of trust. Such issues dilute the essence of consultation, reducing it to a procedural formality rather than a meaningful exchange of ideas. Islam, however, treats Shura as a moral and spiritual obligation. Leaders are held accountable not only to their people but also to

Allah, emphasizing the need for humility, honesty, and a genuine commitment to public welfare. For Pakistan, a country founded in the name of Islam, embracing the true spirit of Shura is both a moral imperative and a practical necessity. By fostering mutual respect, inclusivity, and purposeful dialogue, the National Assembly can bridge divides, build consensus, and better serve the aspirations of its people. Islamic history offers numerous examples of leaders who, guided by the principles of Shura, upheld justice and ensured the welfare of their communities. These examples remind us that consultation is not merely a procedural step but a path to societal harmony and progress. The upcoming 18th Speakers' Conference in Islamabad, from December 18 to 20, 2024, is a modern embodiment of Shura in governance. This prestigious event, hosted by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, will gather presiding officers from Pakistan's national and provincial legislatures. The conference aims to strengthen democratic processes through dialogue and collaboration, with a focus on shared challenges and legislative advancements. It provides a platform where legislative leaders can share best practices, discuss strategies for strengthening democratic institutions, and coordinate actions on matters of common interest. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq's role in arranging this conference cannot be overstated. His efforts ensure that the 18th Speakers' Conference will not only be a landmark event for Pakistan but also a beacon of hope for parliamentary cooperation. The initiative comes after over a decade of the 17th Speakers' Conference held in Islamabad on 13th-15th April, 2014, which was also hosted by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. Attendees of the 18th Speakers' will include Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan; Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab; Syed Awais Qadir Shah,

Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh; Mr. Babar Saleem Swati, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Capt. (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan; Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly and Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Speaker of the Azad Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, along with their respective parliamentary delegations. This conference is poised to set a new precedent for parliamentary collaboration in Pakistan, paving the way for a more effective, transparent, and inclusive legislative process. In Pakistan, the tradition of holding the Speakers' Conference commenced on 10th July, 1972 with the then Honorable Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Mr. Fazal Elahi Chaudhry hosted the inaugural meet in Karachi. This marked a significant step in Pakistan's parliamentary development, offering a forum for speakers of national and provincial assemblies to discuss challenges, strengthen democratic processes and promote inter-parliamentary cooperation. The 18th Speakers' Conference is set to build on this legacy with a comprehensive agenda devised through consultations with presiding officers across the country. Key objectives include institutionalizing the annual conference tradition, standardizing practices and procedures for parliamentary excellence, and fostering collaboration through a concurrent Secretaries' Conference. The discussions will address pressing issues such as the review of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, institutional reforms, parliamentary accountability, transparency, and the integration of technology in legislative processes. In the spirit of Shura, the 18th Speakers' Conference serves as a reminder of the transformative power of consultation in addressing challenges, fostering unity, and advancing the collective welfare of society. It highlights the enduring relevance of Islamic principles in contemporary governance, offering a pathway to justice, harmony, and progress for Pakistan and its people.

Briefs

Govt rules out talks with PTI at 'gun point'

FROM PAGE 01

"It is the provincial government's duty to establish law and peace in their respective provinces." "Political responsibilities come after constitutional ones," he said, adding that the members of national or provincial assemblies have taken an oath of allegiance to the Constitution. Asif noted that no formal talks have been held with the Imran Khan's party yet, emphasising that if they all belong to this House, then matters must be resolved in this building. He also termed the PTI's formation of a negotiation committee "meaningless", saying that nothing matters when seriousness is lacking. Referring to the recently-held Islamabad protest, he slammed the PTI's "double standards" for not condemning the martyrdom of Rangers and police personnel. "Who martyred the security officials [...] there should be no selection in condemnation." Recalling his days during imprisonment, Asif said that the authorities "took away" his blanket from him in the prison at 6°C. He said he spent twelve nights at the prayer rug, but "did not beg". "Politicians should be tolerant," he said, adding that complaining destroys self-respect.

Gohar urges political dialogue...

FROM PAGE 01

Afghanistan will come to talk to us. He said he respects Khawaja Asif, but he spits fire. He suggested forming a committee comprising of the PML-N, the PPP and the MQM to resolve issues. "We have to pull the country out of the current situation. We have to put our country ahead of our ego." Marwat said that the people have elected us. "I cannot go to my constituency. The Taliban have occupied it. There is unrest [in the country]. Inflation is rising." He said yesterday Khawaja Asif stated that the PTI will have to take the initiative [for talks]. The PTI founder has formed a committee. Rana Sanullah should form a committee comprising the PPP, the MQM and other parties' members.

Pakistan committed to CICA's...

FROM PAGE 01

connectivity to foster economic integration and sustainable development. The deputy prime minister and foreign minister emphasized the vital role of connectivity initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in promoting shared growth, facilitating infrastructure development, and enhancing trade and energy links across Asia. These projects, he noted, can serve as catalysts for regional economic cooperation and prosperity. Pakistan is a founding member of CICA, a multinational forum aimed at enhancing cooperation and confidence-building among its 28 member states to promote peace, security, stability, and prosperity in Asia.

Dozens of Pakistanis still...

FROM PAGE 01

ongoing at the accident site, hopes of finding survivors have been extinguished, Express News reported. According to ambassador, five boats were carrying Pakistanis illegally from Libya, and the accident occurred due to the overcrowding of the boats. The boat carrying Pakistanis had a crack, causing it to sink. There were 80 Pakistanis aboard this boat. The ambassador further revealed that a significant number of missing individuals were children. Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has confirmed that four Pakistanis were killed in the incident. The spokesperson confirmed their identities, and the Pakistani mission in Athens is coordinating with Greek authorities for the repatriation of the bodies and to assist the survivors.

Hafeez inaugurates Iftikhar memorial Tennis C'ship

Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar highlighted the importance of infrastructure development to support sports like tennis

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan cricket captain Muhammad Hafeez and Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar inaugurated the Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad Memorial National Ranking Tennis Championship 2024 during a grand opening ceremony at the Sports Board Punjab Tennis Courts, Nishat Park Sports Complex. The event was attended by Pakistan tennis icon AisamulHaq Qureshi, who is also President of Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) and grandson of Khawaja Iftikhar, the family of the late Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad, top national players, and tennis enthusiasts. Muhammad Hafeez, widely known as "The Professor," served as the chief guest, while Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar graced the occasion as the guest of honour. Speaking at the event, Hafeez lauded AisamulHaq Qureshi's contributions to tennis. "Aisam is a true champion and a torchbearer for tennis in Pakistan. Under his leadership as President of Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF), the sport will continue to thrive and gain nationwide recognition. This championship is a wonderful tribute to his grandfather, late Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad, a tennis legend who served the game with dedication across the Subcontinent." Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar highlighted the importance of infrastructure development to support sports like tennis. He said, "It



is our responsibility as the government to provide the necessary facilities, and it is individuals like AisamulHaq who bring life to these courts through their passion and initiatives. Aisam has served tennis both as a player and now as PTF President, and his efforts to elevate the game are truly commendable." The Minister further directed the relevant authorities to upgrade the Sports Board Punjab Tennis Courts, particularly the center court, to ensure it meets international standards and can host global tournaments. He added: "Tennis is an incredible sport, and I have personally started playing it. The government will continue to support initiatives that promote such sports in the country."

PTF President AisamulHaq Qureshi expressed gratitude to Muhammad Hafeez and Faisal Ayub Khokhar for their support and presence, which added prestige to the event. He remarked: "Muhammad Hafeez has been an icon for Pakistan cricket, and his endorsement of tennis is a tremendous boost for the sport. I am also thankful to Punjab Sports Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar for his all-out support in organising this championship. With a significant prize pool and participation from top-ranked national players, this tournament promises to be both competitive and entertaining for the tennis community." He further added: "The championship is a fitting tribute to my grandfather, late Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad,

who was a pioneer of tennis in the Subcontinent." Meanwhile, main round matches were also decided on Tuesday. In the men's singles matches, the match of the day was played between Ace Tennis Academy's Ahmed Nael Qureshi, who stunned the higher-ranked player, Abdullah Adnan, with a score of 6-3, 6-4.

In other matches, BarkatUllah beat ShehryarAnees 6-2, 6-2, Yousaf Khalil beat AhteshamHumayun 6-1, 6-4, M Shoaib beat ShahzadMhan 6-3, 6-3, Aqeel Khan beat Bilal Asim 6-1, 3-6, 6-1, M Abid beat Ahmed Ch 6-2, 6-3, AbubakarTalha beat Haider Ali Rizwan 6-1, 6-3 and MuzammilMurtaza beat Uzair Khan 6-2, 6-1. In the men's doubles, Ahmed Nael Qureshi/Heera Ashiq beat Shahzad Khan/Sami Zeb Khan 6-1, 6-4. In the women's singles matches, S Ayesha Shahid beat Sania Zara 6-1, 6-2, Zunaisha Noor beat Rahatul Ain 6-1, 6-3, Laiba Iqbal beat Momina Imran 6-0, 6-2, FajarFayyaz beat Aima w/o and Bismal Zia beat Zeevar w/o. In the boys U-18 singles, Asad Zaman beat Rayan Ahmed 6-1, 6-1, M Salar beat Rayyan Khan 6-3, 6-1. In the girls U-18 singles, HajraSuhail beat FajarFayyaz 6-1, 6-1, Bismal Zia beat Zara Khan 6-0, 6-0, Sania Zara beat NidaAkram w/o, Zubaisha Noor beat LabikaDurab 4-6, 6-1, 6-1.

In the boys U-14 singles, Rashid Ali beat AnsarulUllah 4-0, 4-0, M Junaid beat Hamza Ali 4-0, 4-1, Razik Sultan beat Aalay Hussain 5-4 (3), 4-0, M Ayan beat Zayd Zaman 4-1, 4-1, S MahdShehzad beat Ibraheem Gill 4-1, 4-2, Arsh Imran beat M Ayan Khan w/o.

New Zealand thrash England by 423 runs in Southee's farewell Test

Southee picked up 391 Test wickets and is the second-highest wicket-taker for New Zealand

SPORTS DESK

HAMILTON: New Zealand defeated England by a staggering 423 runs on Tuesday at Seddon Park, Hamilton, securing a consolation win in the final Test of the series. The victory, which came in Tim Southee's farewell match on his home ground, allowed the Black Caps to finish the series on a high note after suffering heavy defeats in the first two matches. Coming off an impressive 3-0 series sweep in India, New Zealand had been outplayed in Christchurch and Wellington but rediscovered their form in Hamilton. Their dominant win is the largest by runs in New Zealand's history, while also marking England's fourth-worst defeat by the same measure. Mitchell Santner claimed Player of the Match honors with his remarkable performance of 4-85 and a total of

seven wickets in the match. He also contributed with the bat, scoring 76 and 49 in the first and second innings, respectively. However, it was a collective team effort that led to the resounding win. Captain Tom Latham praised the team's ability to adapt to the conditions at Seddon Park. "To finish in that fashion is obviously pleasing," Latham said. "We knew we weren't quite at our best in the first two games, but the way we adapted here was very pleasing."

Southee, who was playing his final Test, took two

wickets in his last innings to bring his career tally to 391, the second-highest for a New Zealander, behind the legendary Richard Hadlee. "It's certainly sad to see one of the greats leave, but Tim has a bright future ahead of him in whatever he chooses," Latham added, as Southee was honored by Hadlee post-match. Chasing an improbable target of 658, England's hopes of a clean sweep were dashed as they were bowled out for 234 after lunch on day four. Captain Ben Stokes, battling a left hamstring injury, did



Louzan elected Spanish football federation head

Louzan beats Valencia region's Gomar to become RFEF president until 2028

MADRID: The Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) elected Rafael Louzan as its new president on Monday as it tries to move on from more than a year of turmoil sparked by former boss Luis Rubiales's forced kiss on star player Jenni Hermoso. Louzan, 57, head of the Galicia football federation since 2014, beat his counterpart in the Valencia region Salvador Gomar by 90 votes to 43 and will lead the RFEF to 2028. But his term could be short-lived as he faces a possible ban from holding public office following a conviction for abuse of office in a previous role. Spain's Supreme Court is assessing an appeal by Louzan, who could become the fourth RFEF president to be forced out of the job in less than eight years after Angel Maria Villar, in 2017, Rubiales and then Pedro Rocha. The succession of scandals to rock the RFEF began in August 2023 when Rubiales forcibly kissed Hermoso on the lips after Spain won the Women's World Cup in Australia. Rubiales, who denies any wrongdoing, relinquished his post in disgrace later that year amid a huge public outcry. He will stand trial in February 2025 with public prosecution requesting a sentence of two-and-a-half years in prison for sexual assault and coercion. - Agencies

Sammy named West Indies head coach for all formats

Sammy will assume control of the Test team from April 2025

DUBAI: Daren Sammy has been appointed as the new head coach of the West Indies men's cricket team for all formats, marking a significant step in his coaching career. The former skipper, who has already been in charge of West Indies' T20I and ODI teams since 2023, will assume control of the Test team from April 2025. This was confirmed by Cricket West Indies (CWI) Director of Cricket, Miles Bascombe, during an announcement in St Vincent. "It's always an honour to represent the West Indies in any format or position. For me, this news is not something I was expecting," Sammy said at the press conference. "Coaching was never something I saw myself doing, but I must admit that, the way things have been going, I've developed a much stronger passion and love for the job. I believe in processes, something we've been able to implement in the white-ball formats, and with this new role, I've already mapped out some of the areas and processes we'll need to follow in order to be successful [in Test cricket]. I'm a patient man, and once I trust the process and understand the requirements from the director of cricket, then

the plan gets into action. "So, I'm really excited about the added responsibility and the new journey—one that I think my team and I will be well-prepared for." The 40-year-old has had a strong run as head coach of the white-ball teams, with notable successes in both ODIs and T20Is. Under his leadership, the West Indies won 15 of 28 ODIs since May 2023, including four out of seven bilateral series. In T20Is, they won four series at home against India, Australia, and South Africa, although they lost to Sri Lanka, England, and Bangladesh. Overall, they secured 20 wins from 35 T20Is during the same period. However, the Test team's record under Andre Coley, who served as head coach since May 2023, has been less impressive. The West Indies have lost seven Test matches, drawn two, and won two, with their most notable achievement being an eight-run victory against Australia in Brisbane earlier this year. Despite this, they have struggled in the World Test Championship (WTC) and remain at the bottom of the points table. "Post our current World Test Championship campaign, we are going to be expanding Mr. Sammy's role to encompass all formats," Bascombe announced. "So when we host Australia next summer, Daren Sammy will be the head coach of all senior men's teams. I want to take this opportunity to thank Andre Coley, who has served well.

Hasan Nawaz's helps Lions stun leaders Stallions

The victory lifts Lions to the third in Champions T20 Cup standings

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Opening batter Hasan Nawaz's quickfire half-century remained the cornerstone of Lions' three-wicket victory over leaders Stallions in the 14th match of the Champions T20 Cup here at the Rawalpindi Stadium on Tuesday. Put into bat first, the Stallions managed to score 168 all out from their allotted 20 overs despite in-form Hussain Talat's 43 runs down the order. Openers Shamil Hussain and MazaSadaqat gave the Stallions a decent start with a 46-run partnership, lasted with the former's dismissal in the sixth over. Hussain scored a run-a-ball 18. Skipper Mohammad Harris then joined Sadaqat for a brief 17-run partnership and walked back in the ninth over after scoring a nine-ball seven. Following his dismissal, the Stallions lost two more wickets in quick succession, including that of set opener Sadaqat, who scored an anchoring 34 off 27 deliveries. Experienced batter Shoaib Ma-

lik and Hussain Talat then joined hands to launch recovery and had added 40 runs for the fifth wicket until right-arm pacer Musa Khan broke the budding partnership by getting rid of the former, who scored 22 off 16. His dismissal sparked a middle-order col-

lapse, which saw the Stallions losing wickets at an alarming rate. But, Talat remained firm and ticked the scoreboard single-handedly before finally perishing on the penultimate delivery of the innings. Talat remained the top-scorer for the Stal-



lions with a 29-ball 43, laced with five fours and a six. Musa led the bowling charge for the Lions with three wickets, while Khushdil Shah and Shahid Aziz bagged two each. In response, the Lions chased down the 169-run target for the loss of seven wickets and six balls to spare, thanks to Hasan's sensible half-century. The opening batter single-handedly oversaw the Lions' pursuit until his dismissal in the 15th over and remained the top-scorer for the side with a 54-ball 74, studied with eight fours and three sixes. Following his dismissal, the Lions suffered another massive dent to their pursuit as Khushdil perished for a run-a-ball 10, leaving them needing 40 runs from 22 deliveries. But a match-defining 34-run partnership between RohailNazir and Shahid, coming from just 13 deliveries, steered Lions over the line. Rohail scored an unbeaten 26 off 12 deliveries, while Shahid made 13 off six balls. For the Stallions, Shoaib Malik and Sadaqat bagged two wickets each, while Usman Tariq, Mohammad Ali and Mohammad Amir Khan shared three wickets between them.

Pak appoints new envoys to Canada, Doha

FROM PAGE 01

Senior diplomat Muhammad Saleem Khan is expected to arrive in Canada by December 29 to take charge as the new High Commissioner. Amir Shoukat who was Pakistan Ambassador in Switzerland has been appointed as ambassador to Egypt.

CTD captures...

FROM PAGE 01

He added that weapons, detonators, other equipment and provocative literature were recovered from the suspects including Tufail, Siddique, Shabbir, Ibrahim, Rash-eed, Umar, Saddam, Waqas Murtaza and Adnan. The spokesman said teams of CTD conducted 4,480 combing operations and arrested 431 suspects in one week.

PM praises KSA's...

FROM PAGE 01

Shehbaz Sharif said that we are active in expanding economic and financial ties with Saudi Arabia as agreements worth two point eight million dollars have been signed between the two countries, in which work has been started on many aspects. He expressed hope that both the countries will start getting the fruits of these agreements soon. He highlighted the role of two point five million Pakistani's community in Saudi Arabia and said that they act as a profound bridge between the two countries. Commenting on the Pak-Saudi relationship, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan's longstanding relationship with Saudi Arabia is a very important pillar of its foreign policy.

Fazl warns to take issue...

FROM PAGE 01

were issued for students. Hence, he said, that agreement was broken by the government. Then they talked about the education ministry and President Asif Ali Zardari raised an objection in the bill on October 28, which was corrected by the NA speaker terming it a human error, before sending it back to the President House. "Which meant the bill was received by the President's House on October 28," he added. Maulana Fazl emphasised the president had the right to raise objection once but not the second time. If the president did not sign the bill, then it became an act after 10 days, he maintained.

Govt's efforts success...

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He said that his party always promoted mutual political respect and added that the leadership of PML-N had never encouraged its workers to promote politics of hate. Tarar said that in the past, PPP and PML-N were political opponents but both parties never engaged in political animosity. While recalling the 2013 elections when the PTI founder fell off a container, he said PML-N halted the election campaign, and senior leadership Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Rana Sanullah along with other leaders visited Shaikat Khan Hospital to inquire about his health. "This was our goodwill gesture," he added.

PM orders...

FROM PAGE 01

Kurram district Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the federal government to coordinate with KP government to address the issue immediately. "The shortage of medicines in Kurram must be resolved without delay," he emphasized. The cabinet also granted in-principle approval to the National Registration and Biometric Policy Framework. Under the initiative "One Nation, One Identity", the framework aims to create a unique ID for every Pakistani by consolidating citizens' data, including:

- Passports
- National identity cards
- Vaccination records
- Court and police records

The policy will enable integration and accessibility across major databases, including NADRA, the State Bank of Pakistan, SECP, and FBR.

Briefs

Rupee sheds 10 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 10 paise against the US dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs 278.27 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.17. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.80 and Rs 279.30 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by 14 paise to close at Rs 292.14 against the last day's closing of Rs 292.28, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.80, whereas an increase of Rs 2 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 353.44 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 351.44. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal surged by 03 and 04 paise to close at Rs 75.76 and Rs 74.06, respectively.—APP

PSX turns bearish, loses 1,308 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 1,308.72 points, a negative change of 1.13 percent, closing at 114,860.69 points as compared to 116,169.41 points on the last trading day. A total of 1,252,980,316 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,470,661,659 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 62.722 billion against Rs. 66.628 billion on the last trading day. As many as 470 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 134 of them recorded gains and 297 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 39 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom 151,921,663 shares at Rs 1.88 per share, Pak Elektron with 107,502,606 shares at Rs 38.11 per share and Cnergico PK with 58,285,174 shares at Rs.7.08 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.180.02 per share price, closing at Rs.21,000.02, whereas the runner-up was Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited with Rs 29.78 rise in its per share price to Rs 789.88. Mari Petroleum Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 89.97 per share closing at Rs 809.76 followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs 74.88 decline to close at Rs 7,511.48.—APP

Taiwan receives first batch of US-made Abrams tanks

TAIPEI: Taiwan has received 38 advanced Abrams battle tanks from the United States, the defence ministry said Monday, reportedly the island's first new tanks in 30 years. Washington has long been Taipei's most important ally and biggest arms supplier — angering Beijing, which claims Taiwan as part of its own territory. The M1A2 tanks — the first batch of 108 ordered in 2019 — arrived in Taiwan late Sunday and were transferred to an army training base in Hsinchu, south of the capital Taipei, the defence ministry said. The M1A2s are the first new tanks to be delivered to Taiwan in 30 years, the semi-official Central News Agency said. Taiwan's current tank force consists of around 1,000 Taiwan-made CM 11 Brave Tiger and US-made M60A3 tanks, technology that is increasingly obsolete. Abrams tanks, which are among the heaviest in the world, are a mainstay of the US military. Taiwan faces the constant threat of an invasion by China, which has refused to rule out using force to bring the self-ruled island under its control.—APP

EU, Turkiye discuss inclusive Syria govt, refugee returns

Erdogan stressed the importance of establishing an inclusive government in Syria following the overthrow of Bashar Assad and called on the European Union to support the return of Syrians who fled the country's civil war, many of whom are now in Turkey

DUBAI: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen discussed key issues surrounding Syria on Tuesday, focusing on the need for an inclusive administration and the return of Syrian refugees. Erdogan stressed the importance of establishing an inclusive government in Syria following the overthrow of Bashar Assad and called on the European Union to support the return of Syrians who fled the country's civil war, many of whom are now in Turkey. Von der Leyen agreed on the need for an inclusive government and outlined the EU's intention to engage directly with Syria's new Islamist-led government, primarily led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). Despite HTS's roots in Al-Qaeda, Western nations, including Turkey, have engaged with the group after Assad's ouster, though it is still



officially designated as a terrorist organization. The EU plans to increase its engagement with HTS and other factions to help guide Syria toward stability. Von der Leyen also warned about the potential resurgence of Daesh in Syria, stressing that this threat "must not" be allowed to materialize. Erdogan highlighted Turkey's ongoing efforts to combat Daesh and Kurdish militant groups, which it considers terrorist organizations, and reiterated his government's commitment to preventing a "terror corridor" along its border with Syria. In related developments, Turkey reopened its embassy in Damascus, and the EU is planning to reopen its mission in Syria, following "constructive" talks with Syria's new leadership. These moves indicate a shift in the West's approach to the Syrian conflict and its aftermath. —Agencies

Israeli airstrikes kill extended families in two Gaza homes

The war began when the Palestinian militant group Hamas stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking more than 250 hostages back to Gaza, according to Israeli authorities. Israel then launched an air and land offensive that has killed more than 45,000 people, mostly civilians, according to authorities in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip

CAIRO: Huge Israeli airstrikes killed extended families in homes in two parts of the northern Gaza Strip on Tuesday, while tanks in the south pushed toward a humanitarian zone on the Mediterranean coast, forcing displaced families to take flight again. Medics said at least 10 people were confirmed killed in an airstrike on a house in the Daraj suburb of Gaza City that destroyed the building and damaged nearby houses. Further north, in the town of Beit Lahiya which has been under Israeli siege since early October, at least 15 people were believed to be dead or missing under rubble of

a house hit by an airstrike around dawn, said medics. Rescuers were unable to reach the site to confirm the toll. At least 10 other Palestinians were killed in separate strikes elsewhere in Gaza City and Beit Lahiya, medics said. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on Tuesday's strikes. Israel says it targets militants and blames any harm to civilians on fighters for operating among them, which the fighters deny. In Beit Lahiya Israel has been operating since October in what it calls an offensive to prevent Hamas fighters from regrouping; Palestinians say the army aims to depopulate a buffer zone

on the enclave's northern edge, which Israel denies. In the southern part of the enclave, in Rafah near the border with Egypt, Israeli tanks pushed deeper toward the western area of Mawasi, forcing dozens of families to flee northwards toward Khan Younis, residents said. Hours later, residents said the army blew up several houses in the area and set several tents ablaze. Israel has previously designated Mawasi, along the Mediterranean coast, as a humanitarian area. Thousands of Palestinians have lived there in tents for months, having obeyed Israeli orders to move there from other areas for safety. Footage circulating on so-

cial media showed lines of thick black and grey smoke rising from the area beside the tent encampment. Reuters could not immediately verify the time or exact location of the images. The war began when the Palestinian militant group Hamas stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking more than 250 hostages back to Gaza, according to Israeli authorities. Israel then launched an air and land offensive that has killed more than 45,000 people, mostly civilians, according to authorities in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip. The campaign has displaced nearly the entire population and left much of the enclave in ruins.—Agencies

US strikes Houthi command and control facility in Yemen

WASHINGTON: American forces carried out an air strike on Monday against a Houthi command and control facility that was used by the Yemeni rebels to coordinate attacks, the US military said. The Houthis began striking ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in November 2023, part of the region-wide fallout from Israel's devastating war in Gaza, which militant groups in multiple countries have cited as justification for attacks. "The targeted facility was a hub for coordinating Houthi operations, such as attacks against US Navy warships and merchant vessels in the southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden," the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement. "The strike reflects CENTCOM's ongoing commitment to protect US and coalition personnel, regional partners, and international shipping," it added. The Yemeni rebels say their attacks — a significant international security challenge that threatens a major shipping lane — are in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. Anger over Israel's ongoing military campaign in the small coastal territory, which began after an unprecedented Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, has stoked violence involving Iran-backed groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. The United States and other countries have deployed military vessels to help shield shipping from the Houthi strikes, and the rebels have periodically launched attacks targeting American military ships. Washington's forces have also carried out frequent air strikes on the Houthis in a bid to degrade their ability to target shipping and have sought to seize weapons before they reach the rebels, but their attacks have persisted.—DNA

Ireland 'won't be silenced' over Israel's conduct in Gaza

LONDON: Ireland's leader has said his country will "not be silenced" in its criticism of Israel's war in Gaza after Tel Aviv closed its Dublin embassy. Taoiseach Simon Harris accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of "the diplomacy of distraction," and said Ireland had unequivocally supported Israel's right to defend itself. But Harris leveled strong criticism of Israel's conduct in Gaza, and said he is proud of Ireland's support for the Palestinians. "You know what I think is reprehensible? Killing children, I think that's reprehensible," he told reporters. "You know what I think is reprehensible? Seeing the scale of civilian deaths that we've seen in Gaza. You know what I think is reprehensible? People being left to starve and humanitarian aid not flowing." The embassy closure followed Ireland's decision last week to support an International Court of Justice petition accusing Israel of genocide. Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said the decision had "not been motivated by anything other than respect for international humanitarian law." He added: "The utilisation of the international courts by Ireland ... where there can be international accountability for war crimes in any part of the world, including in Gaza, should not be seen as a hostile act."—APP

Philippines launches national halal office to boost global market presence

MANILA: The Philippine government launched on Tuesday the National Halal Industry and Development Office to coordinate the country's efforts to become a top player in the global halal market by next year. The predominantly Catholic Philippines — where Muslims constitute about 10 percent of the almost 120 million population — has been working to tap into the global halal market, which is estimated to be worth more than \$7 trillion. The Department of Trade and Industry is establishing NHIDO "to propel the Philippines to the forefront of the global halal industry by 2025," it said in a statement. "This strategic move aligns with the country's goal to boost the domestic halal market and expand the export potential of Filipino products and services." In the Philippines, efforts are underway to double the number of its halal-certified products and services, raise 230 billion pesos (\$3.9 billion) in investments and generate around 120,000 jobs by 2028.—APP

Top UN envoy underscores need for credible, inclusive, 'Syrian owned' transition

UNITED NATIONS: The UN's top Syria envoy, Geir Pedersen, has held talks in Damascus with the head of the new administration as well as the prime minister of the caretaker Government, stressing the imperative need for a "credible and inclusive Syrian owned and led political transition." The UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria also called on Monday for all parties to prioritize the protection of civilians as the country grapples with a worsening humanitarian crisis and ongoing violence, including in the Golan. Pedersen, the special envoy, arrived in Damascus over the weekend, and on Sunday help meetings with key figures including leader of the new administration, Ahmed al-Sharaa — who formerly went by the nom de guerre, Mohammad Al-Jolani — and Mohammed al-Bashir, prime minister of the caretaker Government. The UN envoy emphasized the need for a credible and inclusive Syrian-owned and led political transition based on the principles of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). The United Nations is committed to rendering all assistance to the Syrian people," he said, according to statement from his office.—APP

Father, stepmother jailed in UK for 10-year-old Sara's murder

LONDON: The father and stepmother of Sara Sharif, a 10-year-old girl who was found dead in her home in Britain, were on Tuesday jailed for 40 and 33 years respectively for her murder after a trial which heard harrowing details of Sara's treatment. Sharif was found dead in August 2023 at her home in Woking, a town southwest of London, after what prosecutors said was a campaign of "serious and repeated violence." The family fled to Pakistan immediately after Sara Sharif was killed, before they were arrested in September 2023 at London's Gatwick airport after flying from Dubai. Prosecutor Bill Emlin Jones told jurors at the start of the trial that Sara had suffered injuries including burns, multiple broken bones and bite marks. Sara's father Urfan Sharif, 43, and his wife Beinaash Batool, 30, stood trial at London's Old Bailey court charged with her murder, which they denied. Last week, the jury convicted Urfan Sharif and Batool of Sara's murder. Sara's uncle Faisal Malik, 29, was found not guilty of murder but guilty of causing or allowing Sara's death. Sharif and Batool appeared in the dock at the Old Bailey, where they heard a statement read on behalf of Sara's mother Olga Domin who called them "executioners." "You are sadists, although even this word is not enough for you," her statement read. "I would say you are executioners." Judge John Cavanagh sentenced Sharif to a minimum of 40 years in prison and Batool to a minimum of 33 years. Malik was sentenced to 16 years. "The courts at the Old Bailey have been witness to many accounts of awful crimes, but few can have been more terrible than the account of the despicable treatment of this poor child that the jury in this case have had to endure," Cavanagh said.—APP

Pak Navy participates in multilateral exercise Mavi Balina

DNA

DALAMAN: Pakistan Navy ATR Aircraft from the 29 Anti-Submarine Warfare Squadron participated in multilateral exercise Mavi Balina-2024 at Dalaman, Turkiye. Exercise Mavi Balina-2024 is a Turkish-led multinational Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise, involving over 30 platforms, including ships, submarines, aircraft, and UAVs, said a press release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pak Navy) here Tuesday. The exercise was conducted in the Eastern Mediterranean and aimed at practicing submarine operations and ASW procedures. Naval and air force assets from Turkiye, NATO, the USA, Pakistan, Greece, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) teams from Turkiye and Azerbaijan participated in this multilateral exercise. "Pakistan Navy is a regular participant in exercise Mavi Balina. The interaction between Pakistan and other participating navies during the Harbour Phase included mutual visits, tabletop discussions, and planning sessions. The



extensive Sea Phase culminated in detailed analysis sessions," it said. "Pakistan Navy's active participation in the exercise underscores its unwavering commitment to fostering relations between the two brotherly countries, Pakistan and Turkiye, and strengthen-

ing bonds with leading navies. These collaborative engagements enhance interoperability, provide mutual training opportunities, and contribute to resilience in safeguarding shared interests and promoting peace across the region," the press said.

Xinjiang plays pivotal role in Pak-China bilateral relationship: Hashmi

Pakistan, the envoy said, sees immense potential for collaboration with Xinjiang in areas that can directly impact the lives of our people and proposed four concrete steps to deepen this cooperation

URUMQI: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi said that Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region role in bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China is pivotal. As a neighboring region, it has always been a gateway for trade, culture, and cooperation between our peoples. Today, Xinjiang stands as a vital node of President Xi Belt and Road Initiative, of which China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the pioneering project. He made these remarks while addressing at the International Symposium on Employment and Social Security in Xinjiang. Ma Xingrui, Secretary of CPC Committee of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Er-

kin Tuniyaz, Chairman of People Government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, representatives of SCO, OIC, NGOs, Think Tanks and scholars were present. Ambassador Hashmi said that the recent conversion of the Khunjerab Pass into an all-weather route is a testament to the strength of our partnership and a cornerstone of our connectivity endeavors. This milestone is more than an infrastructure achievement—it is an enabler of opportunities. It will connect markets, create jobs, and foster deeper cultural exchanges, paving the way for a brighter future, he added. Appreciating Xinjiang success in employment and social security, he

said that it is not only a reflection of visionary leadership but also a lesson in the power of focused, inclusive policies. Pakistan, he said, sees immense potential for collaboration with Xinjiang in areas that can directly impact the lives of our people and proposed four concrete steps to deepen this cooperation: First, through development of skills development program, we can equip our youth with skills in emerging sectors such as technology, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing. Xinjiang expertise can complement Pakistan vast human resource potential to create a skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of the modern economy. Secondly, we can leverage Xinjiang advancements in agricultural technology and Pakistan fertile lands to modernize farming practices, increase productivity, and enhance



food security. This collaboration can generate employment in rural areas and address critical challenges like water management and climate resilience. Thirdly, Joint ventures in textile and light manufacturing industries can harness Xinjiang industrial strengths and Pakistan raw materials, creating jobs and driving economic growth in both regions. Fourthly, our two countries should now aim to build dedicated trade and logistics hubs to capitalize on the enhanced connectivity brought by the all-weather route. These hubs can serve as engines of regional commerce, unlocking opportunities for businesses and communities alike.—Agencies

Briefs

South Korea's martial law commander arrested

SEOUL: Gen. Park An-su, the commander of short-lived martial law in South Korea, was arrested on Tuesday, becoming the fifth person to be taken into custody. Park is the army chief of staff who served as martial law commander after President Yoon Suk Yeol imposed martial law on Dec. 3. The Defense Ministry suspended Park from his duties after he offered to resign. A court issued an arrest warrant for the commander on charges of playing a key role in an insurrection and abuse of power, according to the Yonhap news agency. Authorities have so far arrested former Defense Minister Kim Yong-hyun, Lt. Gen. Yeon In-hyung, head of the Defense Counterintelligence Command; Lt. Gen. Kwak Jong-keun, head of the Army Special Warfare Command; and Lt. Gen. Lee Jin-woo, head of Capital Defense Command. - Agencies

KP CM waiting for Imran's call

DNA
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has said they are waiting for PTI founder Imran Khan's call for civil disobedience movement. Speaking to the media at Peshawar High Court, Ali Amin Gandapur responded to the questions about civil disobedience movement and added he was waiting for instructions from the PTI founder in this context. Gandapur assured that once PTI's founder issues the call, the civil disobedience movement will begin. KP CM stated that he is the representative of the entire province and does not require clearance from anyone. He also revealed that he was not allowed to meet the PTI founder the previous day.

National unity crucial amid challenges

SHAMIM SHAHID
PESHAWAR: Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khair Azad has highlighted the importance of national unity during the challenges Pakistan is facing, stating that love for one's country is an essential part of faith. Speaking at a conference in Peshawar, he described Pakistan as a great blessing from Allah, urging citizens to emulate the sacrifices of nation's founders to preserve the country. Maulana paid rich tributes to the sacrifices of the armed forces and civilians in incidents such as Kurram and other regions. He said all provinces formed one united Pakistan. He called for making "Paigham-e-Pakistan" fatwa a household narrative, reiterating that terrorism and sectarianism were declared forbidden in the decree.

Amb. Jemal presents his credentials

President Zhaparov lauds Ethiopia's climate reforms

He underscored Ethiopia's commitment to addressing contemporary regional and international challenges and articulately explained Ethiopia's role as a leading nation in African development

NEWS DESK

BISHKEK: H.E. Dr. JemalBekerAbdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Designated to Kyrgyzstan with residence in Islamabad formally presented his credentials to H.E. SadyrZhaparov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, on 17th December, 2024. Ambassador Dr. JemalBeker, who is currently in Bishkek on a working visit, presented his credentials to the President during a ceremony held at the President House. Last week, the Ambassador also presented his credentials to the Speaker of the Parliament of Turkmenistan. With residence in Islamabad, Ambassador Dr. JemalBeker is a Non-Resident Ambassador of Ethiopia to the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. During the credentials' submission today, Ambassador Dr. Jemal conveyed heartfelt greetings of H.E. TayeAtske Selassie, President of the FDR Ethiopia, to the President and people of the Kyrgyz Republic as well as his good wishes for prosperity and development of Kyrgyzstan. In his remarks, Ambassador Dr. Jemal highlighted the significant reforms undertaken by the FDR Ethiopia in political, economic, so-



cial, and foreign policy spheres which have not only enhanced global outreach of Addis Ababa, but also helped achieve economic progress through green development. He underscored Ethiopia's commitment to addressing contemporary regional and international challenges and articulately explained Ethiopia's role as a leading nation in African development, peacebuilding, and

fostering economic, political, and social cooperation across the continent. He specifically highlighted the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam which was constructed on the basis of the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization of resources, and also with the spirit of pan-Africanism. On top of that, the Ambassador said H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethio-

pia, launched the Green Legacy Initiative to address climate change issues through the initiatives of afforestation, environmental restoration and food security. He affirmed the commitment of the Government of the FDR Ethiopia to strengthen its bilateral relations with the Kyrgyz Republic by enhancing cooperation in diverse areas such as trade, investment, aviation, education and health. On the other hand, H.E. SadyrZhaparov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, appreciated the comprehensive reforms undertaken by Ethiopia, and commended Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed for addressing the climate issues through a multi-dimensional initiative like the Green Legacy. He also appreciated the initiatives taken by H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed for promoting sustainable development of mountain ecosystem. Such efforts should be supported and implemented globally, particularly in the countries directly affected by the climate change, the President remarked. The President reiterated his Government's desire to strengthen bilateral relations with Ethiopia. He said the Kyrgyz Republic looks forward to a robust friendship and partnership with the FDR Ethiopia, and assured the Ambassador of his full support in this regard.

Justice Mansoor proposes climate court

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, says a climate court should be established to tackle the country's environmental challenges. Addressing the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference via video link, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has said Pakistan's constitutional courts are addressing environmental matters. He noted that the country was facing severe climate change challenges and highlighted the role of the Climate Change Authority in tackling these issues. He referred to cases like the cement plant in KallarKahar, where environmental concerns such as water scarcity were addressed, and the CDA case, where the court directed that planning must be eco-friendly. Recommendations were also made to relocate marble crushing plants or adopt modern technology. Justice Shah stressed the critical need for climate finance, which is not reaching Pakistan. He suggested that both public and private sectors can contribute to climate finance, describing it as the new form of climate justice.

Indian border fire ravages Pakistani villages

DNA

KARACHI: A devastating fire originating from the Indian border has crossed into Pakistan, spreading over 8 kilometres and wreaking havoc in the Umerkot district. The blaze has engulfed several villages, including Niplo, SomoSamma, and Khokhrapar, destroying mud houses and huts. The dry and cold weather, along with parched trees and shrubs, has exacerbated the intensity of the fire. The fire reportedly began in three separate locations along the Indian border and has now reached the Umerkot tehsil, with fears of further spread. Umerkot's assistant commissioner has rushed to the affected areas along with firefighting teams to bring the situation under control. - Agencies

Zartaj Gul granted interim bail

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday granted interim bail to PTI leader Zartaj Gul in five cases related to the D-Chowk protest. Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra heard Zartaj Gul's bail applications. During the proceedings, the judge addressed the prosecution, instructing them to file any additional cases against the accused on the same date if applicable. Subsequently, the court approved interim bail for Zartaj Gul in five cases, against surety bonds of Rs5,000 each, until January 9.

CJCS, services chiefs honor Mehfooz Shaheed

RAWALPINDI: The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Service Chiefs, and the Armed Forces of Pakistan solemnly commemorate the 53rd martyrdom anniversary of Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, a paragon of extraordinary courage and unwavering patriotism. The valor and self-sacrifice displayed by Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed during the 1971 war at the Wagah border epitomize the indomitable spirit of the Pakistan Armed Forces. In the face of overwhelming adversity, his fearless assault on enemy positions, despite insurmountable odds, stands as a profound testament to his exceptional bravery and steadfast devotion to the nation. His unparalleled heroism not only exemplifies military excellence but also serves as a timeless embodiment of the resilience and selflessness that define the ethos of our armed forces. On this solemn occasion, we pay tribute to his enduring legacy, which transcends individual achievement and illuminates the collective valor of those who stand resolute in safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of Pakistan. His sacrifice remains an eternal inspiration, reinforcing the values of courage, resilience, and unwavering commitment to the motherland. - DNA

Turkish envoy unveils NPC conference hall

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The bonds between the people of Pakistan and Turkey are strong and enduring, with both nations standing by each other through joys and challenges, said Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, Irfan Neziroglu. He expressed these sentiments while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the newly refurbished main conference hall at the National Press Club (NPC) in Islamabad. The grand event took place yesterday, with Ambassador Neziroglu as the chief guest. The renovation of the NPC's conference hall was carried out by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). The ceremony began with the recitation of the Holy Quran by renowned Qari Syed Sadaqat Ali. The event was moderated by NPC Secretary Nayyar Ali. Commending the collaboration between NPC and TIKA, the Turkish Ambassador congratulated the press club's administration on organizing a successful ceremony.

He remarked that TIKA is dedicated to serving its Pakistani brothers and described the refurbished conference hall as a world-class facility. He lauded both NPC and TIKA for their efforts and praised the press club for its commendable services to its members. TIKA's Head of Department, Dursun Ali Yasagan, highlighted the exceptional friendship between Pakistan and Turkey. He reiterated TIKA's commitment to continuing its collaboration with the NPC. President of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Afzal Butt, thanked TIKA for its support and described the renovation as a proud achievement for NPC's current body, particularly Senior Vice President Ehtisham-ul-Haq. He also acknowledged the contributions of past NPC presidents, including Tariq Chaudhry, ShakeelAnjum, and Anwar Raza, in the club's development. NPC President AzharJatoi expressed gratitude to TIKA for its assistance and emphasized the administration's dedication to providing its members with state-of-the-art facilities.

Pakistan, KSA vow to address shared security concerns

Interior Minister meets Saudi counterpart to discuss mutual security interests, cooperation

FOREIGN DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Tuesday emphasised on strengthening bilateral collaboration, particularly in combating drug smuggling and addressing shared security concerns. The development came during a high-level meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi with his Saudi counterpart Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif in Riyadh wherein discussions regarding mutual security interests and cooperation took place. During the meeting, both leaders emphasised strengthening bilateral collaboration, particularly in combating drug smuggling and addressing other shared security concerns. Abdulaziz warmly welcomed Naqvi and his delegation, expressing the kingdom's continued commitment to supporting Islamabad. Naqvi, in return, highlighted the deep religious and fraternal ties between the two nations, stating, "Saudi Arabia has always stood by Pakistan during challenging times, and we deeply value this enduring partnership." The Pakistani delegation comprised Ambassador Ahmed Farooq, Director General of Passports and Immigration Mustafa Jamal Qazi, and Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Interior Riffat Mukhtar Raja.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia led by Chairman of the Council Dr. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al Sheikh called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Top Russian general killed in 'Ukrainian operation'

MOSCOW: Igor Kirillov, a senior general in charge of Russia's nuclear defence forces, was killed on Tuesday in a bomb blast in Moscow. International media citing a source in the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), has claimed responsibility for the bombing. During the early hours of Tuesday, Kirillov was killed by a bomb hidden in an electric scooter outside an apartment building on RyazanskyProspekt, Russia's investigative committee said in a statement. The attack site was 7km (4 miles) southeast of the Kremlin. The explosive device "had a capacity of some 300 grams in TNT equivalent", Russia's TASS news agency reported, quoting a law enforcement official. Pictures from the scene show a scooter with its handlebars blown off and damage to the entrance alongside the outside walls of the building. Kirillov's assistant was also killed. "Two body bags could be seen on the street," said Al Jazeera's YuliaShapovalova, reporting near the site of the blast. "Judging by the shattered windows, the blast wave reached at least the fourth floor, with about 10 apartments reportedly damaged." Kirillov, who was 54 at the time of his death, had served as chief of the Troops of Radiological, Chemical and Biological Defence since April 2017. Special forces in the Russian military, they operate under conditions of radioactive, chemical and biological contamination.

Kirillov was married with two sons. The Russian general was under sanctions from several countries, including the United Kingdom and Canada, for his role in the war in Ukraine. "Igor Kirillov, the head of the radiation, chemical and biological protection forces of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, and his assistant were killed," said the Russian investigative committee. Russia's investigative committee announced that a criminal case has been opened. Svetlana Petrenko, spokeswoman for the committee, said in a statement that Moscow is treating the bombing as a "terrorist" attack. Maria Zakharova, foreign ministry spokeswoman, paid tribute to Kirillov. She said he worked "fearlessly" for "the motherland" to uncover the West's chemical weapons-related crimes and other crimes. Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, said, "Realising the inevitability of its military defeat, [Ukraine] launches cowardly and despicable strikes in peaceful cities." SBU sources have claimed responsibility for the killing with several news media outlets, but Ukraine has not officially commented. A Ukrainian law enforcement official told Politico more on condition of anonymity. "Kirillov was a war criminal and an absolutely legitimate target since he gave orders to use banned chemical weapons against the Ukrainian military. - Agencies

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