



Pope calls for probe to determine if Israel's attacks in Gaza constitute 'genocide'

"According to some experts, what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide," the pope says, according to published excerpts of the book published by Italian daily 'La Stampa' on Sunday and posted on the internet.



Senate body on IT discusses nationwide internet disruption

The Senate Standing Committee on IT, chaired by Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan discussed the reasons behind the recent nationwide internet disruption and other pressing matters. Despite multiple invitations, the Minister for IT failed to attend the committee meeting for the third consecutive time. Senator criticized the absence of the Minister and Secretary for Information Technology, calling it negligence in defending the ministry's actions.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Briefing

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receiving a briefing from the Ministry of Finance regarding the country's economy and the meeting with the IMF delegation on Monday.



Photo: Online

Apex Committee meeting postponed at last minute

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Apex Committee meeting on the National Action Plan (NAP) against terrorism, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has been postponed. The meeting, originally scheduled for 2:30 today, was called off. A new date and time are yet to be announced.

The meeting was to include the Army Chief General Asim Munir, the DG ISI, heads of other intelligence agencies, federal ministers, all four chief ministers, and chief secretaries. Key topics

on the agenda included reviewing the implementation of the NAP, improving coordination between provinces and the federal government, enhancing intelligence sharing, and approving crucial decisions to ensure internal security.

The meeting was also expected to delve into the reasons behind the recent surge in terrorist activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, review the results of intelligence-based operations, and address the overall law and order situation.

PTI candidate Zaheer Khokhar wasting Election Tribunal's time by seeking adjournments: Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Monday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Zaheer Abbas Khokhar was wasting time of Election Tribunal by seeking several adjournments.

He was giving his reaction as Zaheer Abbas Khokhar took another adjustment in the application challenging election of Attaullah Tarar in NA 127, in February 8 general elections.

The minister said his lawyers appeared in the Election Tribunal and they were fully prepared having all the documents.

The opposite party had no evidence or proof, he maintained.



"Zaheer Abbas Khokhar wants to escape from the court, that's why he requested the court to adjourn the hearing," he remarked. "If he had evidence, why did Zaheer Abbas Khokhar ask for an adjournment," he asked.

Criticising Zaheer Abbas, he said he had challenged his (Tarar's) victory but now he was repeatedly seeking adjustments and wasting the time of the Election Tribunal.

PM satisfies with economic stability, investment boom

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that country's economy was on path to stability and due to steps taken in this regard, stock market was showing brisk business.

He said that foreign investment was a reflection of confidence in the government's policies.

The prime minister received

a briefing from the Ministry of Finance regarding the country's economy and the meeting with the IMF delegation, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister was briefed on the economic indicators and the current situation of inflation. The meeting was also briefed on the steps taken against tax evasion and those facilitating such theft.

The prime minister stressed

that public relief should be accorded priority on all other steps and they were taking all possible measures to fulfill public promises.

He also expressed satisfaction over the sliding down of the inflation rate to 7 percent from 38 percent and said the interest rate was lowered from 22 percent to 15 percent which would spur business activities and create jobs opportunities in the country.

The meeting was attended by ministers including Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Dr Mussadik Malik, Ali Pervaiz Malik, PM's coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and relevant senior officials.

Prime Minister Sharif further observed that due to surge in exports and record remittances, the country's foreign reserves had increased.

He also praised Punjab chief minister and the provincial

government for reforms in the agriculture sector.

The prime minister directed for accelerating actions against tax defaulters, and reiterated to bring the tax evaders and their facilitators to book.

"The country's economy can progress well when all the stakeholders meet their responsibilities. All sectors should pay taxes to play their role in the national progress," a press release quoted the prime minister as saying.

Seven policemen kidnapped in KP's Bannu ambush

Correspondent

BANNU: least seven policemen were abducted when unidentified armed men ambushed a police check post in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu on Monday, the police said as the province bordering Afghanistan deals with a surge in terrorism.

Police have confirmed their identities as Saleem, Aqal Rahman, Mewa Jan, Roshaan, Abdul Malik, Naimatullah, and Shad Muhammad. A search operation was under way in the area to locate and rescue them.



The policemen were taken from a police station in the Ahmadzai subdivision. The attack occurred in broad

daylight at the Rocha police checkpoint in the Bannu subdivision of Wazir. Armed assailants stormed the checkpoint, overpowering the policemen and making off with them.

They also took away all weapons and equipment.

Authorities noted that the Bannu Rocha checkpoint is situated in a "remote part" of the subdivision, emphasising their commitment to recovering the kidnapped officers swiftly.

In September, armed men kidnapped Assistant Sub-Inspector Sakhi Zaman from the

Circular Road in Bannu. His release was secured after a tribal jirga comprising elders and religious scholars also engaged in the search efforts.

Islamabad has witnessed a surge in militancy since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021, and accuses Kabul's rulers of failing to root out TTP members preparing attacks from their soil.

Last month, suicide bombers dressed as women in burkas killed four police officers as they stormed a police base in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu where a funeral was being held.

Visit of Chinese Special Envoy on Afghan Affairs



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese Special Envoy on Afghan

Affairs, Ambassador Yue Xiaoyong called on Foreign Secretary Ms. Anna Baloch today.

He also held detailed consultations with Additional Foreign Secretary (Afghanistan and West Asia), Ambassador Ahmad Naseem Warraich.

The two sides exchanged views on relations with Afghanistan. They reaffirmed the vital role of neighbouring countries for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

November 30 deadline set for VPNs registration, PTA chairman tells Senate panel

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority has set a deadline for VPN registration until November 30, PTA Chairman Major General (retd) Hafezur Rehman Pasha told a Senate panel on Monday.

"After this date, all unregistered VPNs will be blocked," he said while appearing in the Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology.

VPNs, or Virtual Private Networks, are commonly utilised worldwide to bypass restrictions and access blocked content. In Pakistan, users often employ VPNs to visit sites like X and others that are not accessible.

In its earlier statement, the PTA reported that it has blocked over 100,183 URLs that



contained blasphemous material, as well as 844,008 indecent websites. The authority also noted that around 20 million attempts to access indecent sites are made daily from within Pakistan, all of which are blocked at the international gateway level. Last week, the interior ministry

instructed the PTA to block "illegal VPNs" throughout Pakistan, alleging their use by terrorists to facilitate violent activities and access indecent and blasphemous content.

PPP Senator Palwasha Khan presided over the Senate panel meeting where lawmakers raised queries related to the crackdown on VPNs.

At the meeting, the PTA chairman said: "Freelancers using VPNs are at risk of incurring significant losses if they fail to register their services. The lack of registration could lead to an annual loss of up to \$400 million for these individuals."

He informed the panel that the authority was facilitating the VPN registration process, emphasising that the IT industry cannot function "effectively" without VPN access, which is essential for freelancers to conduct their work.

Islamabad admin bans public gathering ahead of PTI's Nov 24 protest

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad administration has imposed a ban on public gatherings, six days before Imran Khan's PTI protest scheduled to be held in the federal capital.

Section 144, a legal provision allowing district administrations to ban gatherings of four or more people for a specified time, remains in effect as tensions escalate.

Last week, several top PTI leaders were detained outside the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi for violating this order but were released shortly after receiving warnings from the police.

Incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan has issued a "final call" for nationwide protests



on November 24. Khan urged widespread participation from the legal community, civil society, and supporters abroad, labelling the upcoming protests as a crucial test for PTI's resilience and unity.

Section 144 has been enforced in Islamabad in response to concerns over "certain segments of society" planning unlawful assemblies that

could disrupt public peace.

The new regulations prohibit public gatherings of five or more people, citing potential risks of public disorder, annoyance, injury, and threats to human life and property. Authorities are especially wary of gatherings that could incite riots or sectarian violence within the district.

DR. Mukhtar urges dialogue and unity among IIUI officers

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Professor Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Acting Rector of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), called for a renewed spirit of openness and accountability during his recent address to university officers. Stressing the importance of candid dialogue and constructive engagement, he highlighted the need for transparent discussion on genuine concerns to bridge gaps between officers and the administration.

Dr. Mukhtar's address, marked by a call for equitable and merit-based progress, was part of a broader initiative aimed at nurturing a collaborative environment within IIUI. Emphasizing his commitment to these principles, he encouraged officers to embrace a culture of self-responsibility, mutual respect, and accountability.

In response to officers' concerns, which were met with attentive listening, Dr. Mukhtar pledged to address them gradually and concretely, acknowledging the importance of constructive, ongoing



dialogue. He underscored the role of educational institutions as "hubs of the legacy of the Prophets" and advocated for an Islamic renaissance that aligns with IIUI's unique identity as both an Islamic and international institution.

Concluding his address, Dr. Mukhtar reaffirmed the importance

of creating opportunities that honor IIUI's Islamic and international character, and he called upon university officers to work together for a brighter, more unified future.

Earlier, The Acting President of IIUI, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, in his address echoed this vision, calling for meaningful exchanges to foster a

positive institutional legacy. He said the administration is keen to revive the legacy and repute of the university.

The address of the Rector was also attended by the Vice President, Administration and Finance, Prof. Dr. Abdul Raheman, Incharge Female Campus, Dr. Amna Mehmood and other relevant high ups.

Sindh Cane Commissioner Announces Significant decrease in Sugarcane Transport Rates

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Cane Commissioner has announced a substantial reduction in sugarcane transport charges, effective November 15. Rates for distances between 1-10 miles have been slashed from Rs. 17.02 to Rs.15.69 per 40 kg, while rates for 21-25 miles have decreased from Rs. 24.77 to Rs. 22.84 per 40 kg.

This decision follows the recent drop in diesel prices to Rs. 258 per liter. The Cane commissioner will adjust rates accordingly if diesel prices fluctuate by Rs. 5 or more.

The move is expected to benefit sugar mills across Sindh, reducing their operational costs and boosting profitability.

Bitter words between car showroom owners and Assistant Commissioner

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Bitter words between Assistant Commissioner Qasimabad and car showroom owners. Action taken against illegal encroachment and car showroom shopkeepers at Wadho wah. The Assistant Commissioner Qasimabad Hatifial cheated the owners of Shorooms for thousands of rupees. Assistant Commissioner Qasimabad, municipal administration, police and traffic police took part in the operation.



Mayo urges PPP to stop support of Muslim League government

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: President of People's Party Human Rights Wing South Punjab, Former Advisor to Governor Punjab Salimur Rehman Mayo has said that if Bilawal Bhutto Zardari chairman PPP does not remove the concerns, the support of the Muslim League government should be stopped. He has proved that he is a public governor by opening the doors of the governor's house to the public, but due to the non-cooperation of the provincial government, frustration is spreading among the workers, which is not acceptable in any way, and the administration also does not give lifts to the members of the PP assembly. No respect is given to organizations, so President Asif Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari should consider the relationship with the present government and do not support the government without taking positive practical steps. If there is support, Muslim League (N) also has to give seats to the People's Party in Punjab and Center as per the agreement.



Timely admissions of deserving students should be ensured

Correspondent

SWAT: Fazal Hakim Khan Yousafzai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, has intervened to address the issue of hundreds of students being denied BS admissions in Swat due to seat shortages.

Yousafzai contacted the Minister of Education and Special Secretary Ghulam Saeed to start second shifts in various colleges, ensuring timely admissions for deserving students. He pledged to cover expenses from his own pocket if funding issues arise.

The decision benefits students seeking admissions in Swat colleges. Locals appreciate Yousafzai's proactive approach, demonstrating the government's commitment to education.

10-day cleanliness campaign inaugurated in Takht Bhai

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: The official inauguration of a 10-day cleanliness campaign in Takht Bhai was held, led by Tehsil Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Tehsil Municipal Officer Rehman Sher, and Assistant Commissioner Takht Bhai Junaid Khalid, who kickstarted the campaign by sweeping the streets. According to details, under the public agenda of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and under special instructions from Deputy Commissioner Mardan, the Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) of Takht Bhai has launched a special 10-day cleanliness campaign. The campaign will focus on urban areas for six days, while cleaning activities will be carried out in Jalala, Shergarh, Lund Khwar, and Hathiyani. Tehsil Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and Assistant Commissioner Takht Bhai Junaid Khalid personally started the campaign by sweeping the streets. On the instructions of Tehsil Municipal Officer Rehman Sher, all TMA staff, including clerical officers and field staff, removed plastic bags from the market and personally met shopkeepers to encourage them to voluntarily remove encroachments and actively participate in the cleanliness campaign.



On the first day of the campaign, awareness sessions were held in Neighbourhood Council Daman Koh Ward No. 3, Bajaur Korona, and Aslam Kalay, along with announcements in mosques regarding cleanliness.

Awareness Walk

ISLAMABAD: Nov18 – An awareness walk being held on Smog in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Good Health is a Great Blessing of Allah Almighty: Khakwani

Shahzad Anwar Amrohi

MULTAN: Chairman of Inner Wheel Club District 343 Mrs. Shaheen Moazzam Khakwani has said that good health is a great blessing of Allah Almighty. has been and today he is living the best life in today's era of inflation, free service is no less than a blessing. Allah Ta'ala will reward them for it. This institution run by the help of philanthropists is bringing smiles on the faces of disabled children and their parents. He expressed these views yesterday on the occasion of his visit to the Electrical Center Sharif Plaza. On this occasion, Dr. Maya said that hundreds of children have fully recovered from



here. The philanthropists should provide maximum assistance. By doing these disabled children Inner Wheel Club District 343 is playing

its best role here. On this occasion Mrs. Jaina Ijaz, Secretary of Inner Wheel District 343 said that all our clubs are working for the suffering

humanity and this is our mission. She said that even today we have given cash for one month's medicines and shoes.

Successful conduct of Convocation-2024 at COMSATS University Abbottabad Campus

Spokesman Report

ABBOTTABAD: Convocation-2024 was held at COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Abbottabad Campus on Monday, 18th Nov, 2024 in the Haroon Ur Rashid auditorium, Abbottabad campus. The founding rector of COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi was the chief guest of the ceremony. Rector COMSATS, Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar along with director Abbottabad Campus, Meritorious Prof. Dr. Imtiaz Ali Khan graced the event. The distinguished guests included the members of senate, syndicate

and academic council, deans' faculty of sciences, chairpersons and heads of different departments, faculty, and parents. The convocation was conducted in two sessions (31st convocation in morning and 32nd convocation in the evening) in which a total of 1296 students who have passed out in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 appeared. Students received degrees in disciplines of Engineering, Business Administration, Information Sciences and Technology, Sciences, and Health Sciences. The passed-out graduates included 954 Bachelors and 303 Masters students. Moreover, 58 students bagged medals

(gold, silver, and bronze) at institute and campus level for their outstanding academic performance in different fields. From session Fall 2023, at institute level, 3 gold medals, 2 silver medals, and 1 bronze medal while at campus level, 5 gold medals, 3 silver medals, and 1 bronze medal was given to the outstanding students. Similarly, from session Spring 2024, at institute level, 7 gold medals, 3 silver medals, and 1 bronze medal while at campus level, 12 gold medals, 11 silver medals, and 9 bronze medals were awarded to high achievers. Noteworthy, 39 students were awarded PhD degrees in the disciplines of Electrical Engi-

neering, Computer Sciences, Management Sciences, Pharmacy, Chemistry, Environmental Sciences, Development Studies, and Biotechnology.

The ceremony started with the name of Allah followed by convocation proceedings by conferment of medals and degrees to the passed out students (PhD, Masters and bachelor). Student representatives Mr. Changez Khan (morning session) and Miss Adan Zeb (evening session) expressed their gratitude on behalf of their fellows to the respected director, faculty, and parents.

The honorable chief guest Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi is a well-known

visionary academician who has 36 years of professional experience in the field of education. In the concluding remarks, Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi showed satisfaction towards the management and faculty of Abbottabad Campus for their continuous efforts in uplifting the name of COMSATS in higher education sector.

On this occasion, honorable director, Prof. Dr. Imtiaz Ali Khan presented the campus report in which he briefed the audience about the ongoing academic activities in COMSATS Abbottabad. He first congratulated the passing out grad-

uates and thanked their parents for choosing COMSATS Abbottabad for their children professional degree.

Moreover, he informed about the graduation of 110 Afghan students in this convocation. He also updated the audience about the start of academic activities at Dhamtor campus after the transfer of the Department of Computer Sciences and Software Engineering. He thanked the provincial and district government for their cooperation in the establishment of Dhamtor campus. He also thanked Pakistan Army for their support in the establishment of CUI Abbottabad campus.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:16 am
Zohr 11:53 am
Asr 3:25 pm
Maghrib 5:03 pm
Isha 6:30 pm

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

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
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
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266616

SLS collaborates with Traffic Police to address traffic challenges

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of British Council's Gold Partner Institute, SLS, Mr. Sarfraz Malik, held a productive meeting with the newly appointed DSP of Traffic Police, Mr. Tariq Shafi, at his office.

During the meeting, key traffic-related challenges faced by the community were discussed. Both parties expressed a shared commitment to addressing these issues effectively. Mr. Malik emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts between educational institutions and public departments to foster better civic environments.

DSP Tariq Shafi appreciated the initiative taken by SLS and assured his full support in implementing strategies to improve traffic management in the area. Both leaders agreed to work closely on awareness campaigns and practical measures to ease traffic flow and ensure public safety.

The meeting marks a promising step towards a sustainable solution for traffic-related concerns, demonstrating the power of partnership between public and private sectors.

Hamdard Shura Karachi discusses 26th Constitutional Amendment

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The monthly meeting of Hamdard Shura Karachi, on the theme "26th Constitutional Amendment: A Review," was recently held at the Hamdard Corporate Head Office. The event was attended by Ms. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, and chaired by Speaker General (Retd) Moinuddin Haider. Advocate Anwar Ahmad, a legal expert and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Law at Hamdard University, was invited as the guest speaker to explain the latest amendment in the national constitution.

General (Retd) Moinuddin Haider said "The nation remained anxious until the passage of the 26th Constitutional Amendment. The honourable members of the assembly debated this amendment for several months. However, we as a nation must ask about the amendment's actual benefit to the people. While it is said the amendment will speed up court cases, the nation's immediate concern is the soaring electricity bills. Why must law-abiding citizens bear the cost of those who evade taxes?"

Anwar Ahmed said "The 26th Amendment does not directly impact the common man, as it primarily addresses

the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts. A significant provision under this amendment is the abolition of interest by 2028. A special committee, comprising 12 members—8 from the assembly and 4 senators—has been established to oversee the process. This committee will select a Supreme Court judge from the three most senior judges.

Rizwan Ahmed said "All amendments from the first to the 26th have failed to prioritize public interest. The 26th Amendment also appears to reflect mutual favoritism among institutions rather than addressing the nation's real

needs. Pervez Sadiq said "Nations thrive by strengthening their key administrative systems and institutions. In Pakistan, the judiciary is an independent and empowered body. However, rather than reinforcing it, through the 26th Amendment, a passage has been opened to interfere in its operations. The judiciary's infrastructure is outdated and in poor condition.

Cdre. (Retd) Sadeed Anwar Malik said: "The 26th Amendment was passed by a majority vote, making any claims about hidden political party interests speculative rather than factual. Under this amendment, more judges will be

appointed, and the Suo Motu power has been transferred from the Chief Justice to the Judicial Committee."

Prof. Muhammad Rafi, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, Col (Retd) Mukhtar Ahmed Butt, Ibn-ul-Hassan Rizvi and Zafar Iqbal said: "The national curriculum does not include teaching law at any level, despite every citizen's fundamental right to understand the principles of law, logic, and basic civil and state rights. Justice and fairness are essential for the nation's development and progress. In Pakistan, 30 million children remain out of school, yet this issue seems to be ignored by the ruling class."

Hamdard Shura meeting

KARACHI: Advocate Anwar Ahmed, guest speaker of Hamdard Shura Karachi meeting is speaking on the topic of "26th constitutional Amendment. A review" at Hamdard Corporate Head Office. President of HFP Ms. Sadia Rashid, and Speaker Gen. (r) Moinuddin Haider are also present in the photo.



Photo: Spokesman

Heer Waris Shah is popular in all eras: Asma Butt

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Ms. Asma Butt, a well-known writer, director and chairperson of Dolphin Communication, said that Heer Waris Shah's were popular in all eras. Despite the passage of centuries, even today this unique story of love is heard and read with great interest in Punjab. Heer turned out to be a great and unique creation of the Sufi poet Waris Shah, which was repeated in every era by the efforts of different writers and directors. This folk story has a special place to remind us how we have forgotten our culture and traditions. Such dramas are very important to make our young generation aware of our culture.

She said Heer Waris Shah is a link in the struggle of Sufism. Heer Waris Shah is not only a romantic story, but it conveys the message of oneness of Allah, faith and trust in each other. Our folk heritage is the hallmark of our culture. Asma Butt said that this drama was written by Arshad Chahal, while I (Asma



Butt) performed the directorial duties. Nirmal Ali played the role of Heer, Kaleem Khan of Ranjha, Mehboob Ilyas played the role of Qedu, Naem Khan played the role of Heer's father, Sapna Shah played the role of mother, Kashif played the role of Badshah, While Saima Rehman, Jhalak Ali, Imran

Rushdi, Shehzadi and other actors played their respective roles. On this occasion, the literary, urban circles, artists, journalists who participated in the drama highly appreciated the efforts of Asma Butt. They said that after a long time an excellent drama was presented in the twin cities, In

which a large number of citizens participated and proved that if there is a director like Asma Butt who presents a quality stage drama, people will happily come to watch the drama with their families. Asma Butt praised the artists for their excellent performance and thanked the guests.

Sunridge Pakistan Food Festival Sponsored to support small women led businesses

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Unity Foods, one of Pakistan's largest food suppliers and producers, proudly served as the title sponsor of the Pakistan Food Festival, a vibrant event organized by the Sparks Business Club under their flagship brand Sunridge to celebrate the country's rich culinary heritage and champion women-led businesses.

This festival brought together over 60 small food ventures, providing them with a unique platform to showcase their distinctive offerings to visitors from across Karachi.

This partnership aligns with Unity Foods' ongoing commitment to fostering sustainable economic growth, specifically by empowering small, women-owned food businesses. At the heart of the festival, these entrepreneurs had the invaluable opportunity to promote their products, connect with a wider audience, and expand their reach, thus driving business growth and highlighting local talent. Through this sponsorship, Unity Foods underscored its dedication to not only supporting local entrepreneurs but also enhancing access to nutritious meals across Pakistan.

"Unity Foods is committed to strengthening Pakistan's food sector by championing diversity and entrepreneurship. By supporting these innovative women-led businesses at the Pakistan Food Festival, we aim to create a ripple effect that uplifts both the culinary sector and women entrepreneurs," said Nageen Rizvi, Head of Corporate Communications & Sustainability.

Held on November 15, 2024, at Habitt City, Karachi, the Pakistan Food Festival welcomed families, food enthusiasts, and community members to embark on a delightful journey through Pakistan's diverse and flavorful culinary landscape.

Growing cyber threats posing significant risk to the digital landscape of Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: At the recent Cyber Threat Intelligence Summit in Islamabad, Kaspersky presented a comprehensive overview of the surging cyber threat landscape worldwide, with a particular focus on Pakistan. Kaspersky revealed data from its Security Network, underscoring that financial malware and spyware attacks have increased, posing significant risk to the digital landscape of the country. Other prevalent threats include ransomware, phishing attacks and espionage-driven malware specifically engineered to steal sensitive information. Experts also warned about Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) groups like Lazarus and SideWinder leading sophisticated campaigns often aiming for espionage.



Ransomware remains one of the most prominent threats. During a ransomware attack a malware is used to block access to data or to encrypt files and demand payment for the decryption key. These attacks can severely disrupt operations, making critical data and systems inaccessible or lead to data loss. Kaspersky experts project ransomware-as-a-service to grow further in 2025.

According to Kaspersky Security Network statistics, 13.7% of users in Pakistan were attacked by web-based threats in the third quarter of 2024 (July-September). These web-based attacks range from phishing to maliciously embedded websites that compromise user data. 18.7% of users came across local threats that spread via USB drives, CDs, and encrypted file installers, bypassing detection and further endangering user systems.

The financial sector in Pakistan saw a sharp increase in cyber threats. From January to October 2024, Kaspersky recorded a 114% rise banking and financial malware compared to the same period of the previous year. These attacks specifically target digital financial operations, posing a substantial risk to individual and institutional financial security. One of the trends mentioned by Kaspersky experts is that financial cyberthreats for smartphones rise, and this is expected to continue in 2025.

AIOU hold pilot phase workshop on 'Art of Parenting'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A four-day workshop titled "Art of Parenting" was inaugurated yesterday at Allama Iqbal Open University. The training workshop aims to familiarize master trainers with two guides developed by the university, "Aghosh" and "Parwarish". Speaking at the opening ceremony, Dr. Khalid Chauhan, Director General of Research and Development at the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Pakistan, emphasized that Aghosh and Parwarish are crucial books for child upbringing. He encouraged master trainers to engage with the content and disseminate it to the community to realize the dream of an ideal society.

Raja Rashid Ali, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education, recited Amjad Islam Amjad's poem "Mere Betay Ne Aankhein Ek Nayi Duniya Mein Kholi Hain" and highlighted the increasing challenges of raising children in the modern era. He stressed the importance of parents and teachers focusing on children's character building. Prof. Dr. Fazal Rahman, Dean of the Faculty of Education, stated that tolerance and adaptability are key qualities to instill in children to create an exemplary society. He urged the master trainers to approach this task as a mission and a national need.

Senior Professor of the Faculty of Sciences, Dr. Irshad Ahmad Arshad, remarked that training parents in child upbringing is a timely initiative, and congratulated the Faculty of Education and Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, for addressing this



need. Chairman of the Early Childhood Education Department, Dr. Muhammad Athar Hussain, explained the objectives of

the workshop. He stated that master trainers will be trained on the guides, and they will, in turn, train parents and teachers in the community regarding

child upbringing. After receiving community feedback, the guides will be reviewed and finalized before being presented to policymakers for implemen-

tation. This workshop has been organized by the university in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Ministry

of Health, Aga Khan Foundation, Ministry of Human Rights, Prime Minister's Youth Program, and other institutions.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Head Office: **AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.**
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Phone: +92 51 2227123,
 WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
 Karachi office: **A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,**
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390
 Email: **spokesmankarachi@gmail.com**
 Lahore Office: **7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.**
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

Rebranding old fantasies will not save Israel

The paradoxical phrase “running away forward” is one of the most apt descriptions of the state of Israeli affairs right now. It seems that everything that Israel has done in the past year or so has been a mere attempt to deny, distract from or escape imminent scenarios — all of which are bleak.

Indeed, the last year has repeatedly proven that Israel’s military supremacy is no longer enough to win wars or decide political outcomes.

Moreover, the genocide in Gaza and the rapid theft of Palestinian land in the West Bank have exposed, like never before, the ugly face of Zionist settler-colonialism. Only those who are wholly indoctrinated or are paying no attention still argue that Israel stands for any kind of moral ideals or is a “light unto the nations.”

Also, incessant attempts by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to marginalize, if not entirely erase, the Palestinian cause have completely failed. The suffering, resistance and pride of the Palestinian people have made their cause a global one and, this time around, irreversibly so.

Yet, despite all of this, Israeli leaders continue to drag their people into endless quests toward arbitrary destinations, making promises of “total victory” and the like.

Monitoring the statements made by Israeli leaders and conversations in the right-wing Israeli press would leave one bewildered.

While more than 55,000 Israeli soldiers

have failed over the course of several weeks to finally subdue northern Gaza, Israeli settler leaders are busy making plans to auction real estate, envisaging new settlements and beach resorts inside the destroyed Strip.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported last month that Israel wants to build several settlement blocks inside Gaza. But how would Israel protect these areas when they could not protect southern Israel itself just a year ago?

In the West Bank, where an armed rebellion has been brewing but is yet to actualize on a mass scale due to the security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Netanyahu’s right-wing government is speaking of full annexation.

“The year 2025 will, with God’s help, be the year of sovereignty in Judea and Samaria,” Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said last week, referring to the West Bank. Whether or not Israel turns its de facto annexation of the West Bank into a de jure annexation, it will not alter its international legal status as an illegally occupied Palestinian territory. The same applies to the Palestinian city of East Jerusalem, which was officially annexed by the Israeli Knesset in 1980 under the so-called Jerusalem Law.

Not many in the international community are willing to accept Israel’s scheme

in the West Bank anyway, as they — save for Washington — still refuse to recognize Israel’s sovereignty over Jerusalem. In fact, the opposite is true, as determined by the International Court of Justice in July. Its ruling, which was backed by international consensus, resolved that “the state of Israel is under the obligation to bring an end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible.” The UN General Assembly subsequently fully embraced the court’s decision.

That aside, by annexing the West Bank, Israel would have fired a mercy shot at the PA, thus turning the entire territory into a platform of Palestinian popular resistance. How could Israel withstand that new war front when it is already struggling, if not outright failing, to secure any victories in Gaza and south Lebanon?

In a recent article, Israeli historian Ilan Pappé wrote about “Fantasy Israel” — a decades-old political construct that believes that the “West supports Israel because it adheres to a Western ‘value system’ based on democracy and liberalism.” This fictional Israel has been collapsing for years, long before the current war on Gaza, though the genocidal conflict accelerated the process. The collapse of “Fantasy Israel” “has exposed cracks in the social cohesion and in the readiness of many Israelis to devote as much time and energy to mili-

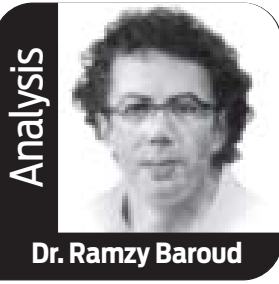
tary service as they did in the past,” Pappé argued.

Israel is now under the control of a different breed of politician, one that is armed with a massive and growing super-structure of an equally closed-minded and extremist intellectual base. These people are struggling with a whole different set of illusions, as they continue to convince themselves that they are winning when they are not; that they can impose their will on the Palestinians and the rest of the world when they cannot; and that the continuation of the war would allow them to finish a job — the total destruction of the Palestinian people — that, in their minds, should have been finished a long time ago.

Since this crowd is motivated by extremist religious ideologies, they are unable to abide by any form of rational thinking, even if it emanates from well-regarded Zionist figures inside Israel itself. “This war lacks a clear objective and it’s evident that we’re unequivocally losing it,” former Mossad deputy chief Ram Ben-Barak said in May.

None of this matters to Netanyahu and his right-wing ministers, of course. They continue to reference and recycle old religious dogmas, while fervently praying for miracles. In doing so, they insist on constructing a new “Fantasy Israel,” which is also set to collapse, as fantasies often do.

Dr. Ramzy Baroud is a journalist and author. He is editor of The Palestine Chronicle and nonresident senior research fellow at the Center for Islam and Global Affairs.



Dr. Ramzy Baroud

G20 Summit

The 19th G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, will count on the strong and consistent support of Global South countries to ensure the survival of multilateralism and an open global economy.

The G20 sits alongside similar entities such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. These groupings understand the way open trade contributes to global economic growth, which is the foundation for building prosperity, including in the Global South, according to China Daily on Monday.

As the largest developing country and a natural member of the Global South, China recognizes that sustainability rests on global cooperation that is not hindered by tariffs, unfair taxes, sanctions or political barriers that hamper trade, trade settlement and the exchange of ideas.

Unfortunately, the G20 consensus on these objectives may face opposition from the incoming administration in the United States.

The G20 meeting takes on particular significance because it must prepare for a more combative trade and economic future shaped by US delegates who cast a shadow over the G20 ambitions to build a just world and a sustainable planet, because it is unlikely the current US policy position will remain the same under the new administration.

The well-known pillars of US President-elect Donald Trump’s trade agenda are based on 20 percent to 60 percent tariffs, sanctions, protectionist barriers and the destruction of international organizations like the World Trade Organization.

As a premier forum for international economic cooperation, the G20 plays a critical role in steering the global economy through the significant challenges it faces. The task facing the G20 is to develop strategies to provide a bulwark against the US attack on free trade, which sits at the core of the economic challenges posed by inflation and stalled economic development.

China is one of the strongest of the G20 economies in its full support for free trade within the framework of WTO rules and procedures. China’s trade disputes with the European Union are resolved through the WTO using the structure that is a temporary substitute for the WTO appeals court. In its attempt to destroy the WTO, the US has blocked the appointment of appellate judges for seven years.

China is steadfast in its full support for the globalization of trade. The seventh China International Import Expo in Shanghai is evidence of global support for China’s role in the global economy.

President Xi Jinping’s scheduled participation in the G20 Summit in Brazil highlights China’s firm support for multilateralism and underscores its high regard for G20 cooperation.

China has become a major advocate for an equal and orderly multipolar world. Its strong stance against protectionist policies is matched with its consistent support for inclusive and universally beneficial economic globalization.

The 19th G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro takes place at a critical juncture because never have the forces against an open world economy been so strong.

China’s commitment to an open world economy has been tested over the past decades, and the China-proposed Global Development Initiative sheds light on global governance and G20’s solution for sustainable development.

Israel’s annexation juggernaut unlikely to be stopped

It was only a matter of when. It has always only been a matter of when. For years, Israeli leaders have craved the West Bank. Few hid their desire to annex it either wholly or in large part.

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich last week announced plans to annex the West Bank in 2025. There was little pushback in Israel or internationally.

Back in 2019-2020, when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last veered down this dangerous path, it was more of a political gambit. He used it to advance normalization with Arab states. It was a condition of the Abraham Accords that Israel suspend its annexation plans, though Netanyahu insisted they were only delayed.

What is different this time around? The settler movement is today even more firmly established at the heart of Israeli politics. The annexationists are in charge and not just the racist firebrands like Itamar Ben-Gvir and Smotrich.

The incoming Trump administration is packed full of potential appointees who, if not devoted annexationists, are firmly in the Israel can do no wrong camp. Mike Huckabee, Trump’s choice to be the American ambassador to Israel, has said: “I think Israel has title deed to Judea and Samaria. There are certain words I refuse to use. There is no such thing as a West Bank. It’s Judea and Samaria. There’s no such thing as a settlement. They’re communities, they’re neighborhoods, they’re cities. There’s no such thing as an occupation.” He is of course defiantly opposed to any two-state solution.

Watch out for Israeli plans to annex areas of Gaza as well. Given the trajectory of Israeli

crimes there, some ministers might be dreaming of devouring all of the Strip. Southern Lebanon might even follow.

But none of this is written in stone. Trump will be keen to reassert his claim as dealmaker-in-chief. He knows a full-scale annexation of the rest of the West Bank is contrary to getting any peace deal. Netanyahu will stake out the maximalist position on territory to make it look like a concession if he only annexes Area C, which constitutes about 60 percent of the territory.

The settlers, in cahoots with the Israeli army, have prepared the ground. The last decade has seen a rise in targeted violence against Palestinians in communities they aim to displace. But nothing has compared to 2024.

More than ever, Palestinians live in fear of the unrestrained violence of their illegal neighbors. The regional war also increases the opportunity for Netanyahu. As Israel is bombing Gaza and Lebanon daily, with regular strikes in Syria and even on Iranian territory, the West Bank segment of the war has been given backwater status in the global media. Yet the future of the West Bank is what fires up Israeli leaders. It is what they see as the historical heartland of Israel. Everything else is secondary.

Would annexation be a disaster? It would have to be annulled if there were to be a Palestinian state. It could lead to the dismantlement of the emaciated, impotent Palestinian Authority and the restoration of direct Israeli control over Palestinians in cities like Ramallah and Nablus.

Ethnic cleansing would accelerate. Settlers enjoy sovereignty as it is, living under Israeli civil law while Palestinians in the West Bank live under martial law. But they want the rural and

herding communities corralled into ever more crowded Palestinian cities. Given the asymmetry of this conflict, it would be years or even decades before this could be reversed.

Others argue that, given annexation has already effectively been in place for years, Israel being in full day-to-day control of the West Bank would force the world to confront the one-state reality.

Annexation would formalize Israel’s system of apartheid, which is at its most intense in the West Bank. Palestinians living under Israeli domination are not going to be given a right to vote. Laws would be decided in a parliament they have no access to. One minister made clear this month that Palestinians would not be allowed voting rights. The privileged position and superior rights of Israeli Jews would be hard to ignore.

It would focus the Palestinian rights movement behind the anti-apartheid struggle. If Israel wants a single-state reality, then the campaign for full equal rights will gather strength. What has long been a hollow piece of public relations — that Israel is a democracy — would be shredded in front of the world. Perpetual occupation and the domination of another people is the antithesis of a democracy.

Even the most boneheaded of bigots might have to concede that controlling the lives of nearly 7 million Palestinians and denying them the vote would end this illusion. Such a system will inevitably fall. It is just a question of when.

Sadly, annexation may not be the most horrific aspect. It will be the mass ethnic cleansing that accompanies it that may go down in history, in Gaza as well as the West Bank. It is hard to see who or what will stop Israel’s criminal juggernaut.

Chris Doyle is director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding in London. X: @Doylech



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

Trump’s appointments offer clues on Middle East policy

President-elect Donald Trump has announced several planned appointments for senior positions in his administration that will shape US foreign policy. Some of the nominees do not have a lengthy record regarding their foreign policy views, but it is possible to examine their previous statements to get a sense of how they will approach some issues.

In terms of their views of the Middle East, they are united by absolute support for Israel.

Most of the positions will require confirmation by the Senate — at least eventually. A couple of the nominees might face a challenging confirmation process but, with Republicans holding a majority in the Senate, most of Trump’s picks are likely to receive the chamber’s approval.

Witkoff helped to raise funds from pro-Israel donors for Trump’s campaign and has praised Netanyahu. Gabbard has expressed support for Israel’s war against Hamas and Ratcliffe has criticized the outgoing administration for not doing more to oppose Hamas.

Though Trump has not yet named many ambassadors, he has said that Mike Huckabee will be ambassador to Israel. Huckabee is an evangelical Christian who shows religious devotion to Israel, including frequently visiting the country. He opposes a two-state solution and supports Israeli settlement in the West Bank; indeed, he has said that “there is no such thing as the West Bank — it’s Judea and Samaria,” that “there is no such thing as an (Israeli) occupation,” and that “there’s really no such thing as a Palestinian.”

Many of the appointees lack deep experience with policy toward the region, so the appointment of other senior officials in the State Department, Defense Department, National Security Council and intelligence agencies will be impor-

tant in shaping the Trump administration’s policies toward the region.

Nonetheless, there are some clues to how the Trump team will approach global issues that directly affect the Middle East. Foreign policy under Trump will likely include a mix of assertive unilateralism and isolationism and his advisers are likely to often disagree on the appropriate balance between the two approaches. The nominees tend to share a hawkish approach toward China. Some of them, particularly Waltz, would prefer to focus more resources on opposing China and less on the Middle East — although the last several presidential administrations experienced how difficult that can be to accomplish.

Middle Eastern leaders might find it increasingly difficult to balance relations between Washington and Beijing.

Some of the future officials have individual interests and experiences in the Middle East. Waltz called for naming the Houthis a Foreign Terrorist Organization, which the White House later did. Gabbard faced much criticism when she visited Syria and met with President Bashar Assad while she was a member of Congress. Hegseth, Waltz and Gabbard are military veterans who were deployed to the Middle East.

Assuming that the Senate confirms Trump’s nominees, they will play key roles in shaping and implementing the president’s policies in the Middle East. Much is uncertain about how the president’s team will approach foreign policy, but unconditional support for Israel will be an important characteristic.

Kerry Boyd Anderson is a writer and political risk consultant with more than 18 years of experience as a professional analyst of international security issues and Middle East political and business risk.



Chris Doyle



Kerry Boyd Anderson

Xi's insightful answer to 'the question of our times'

Xinhua

BEIJING: "What is wrong with this world, what we should do about it?" Chinese President Xi Jinping raised "the question of our times" at the Bali G20 summit, after he first asked the question at the World Economic Forum back in 2017 at Davos, Switzerland.

"The world economy is getting more fragile. The geopolitical environment remains tense. Global governance is seriously inadequate. Food and energy crises are compounded with one another. All this poses formidable challenges to our development," he observed.

The G20 accounts for two-thirds of the world's population and contributes nearly 90 percent of the world's gross domestic product and 80 percent of global trade. Thus, as Xi sees it, it is incumbent on the group to play a leading role in tiding the world over the current rough patch and creating a better future for humanity.

"Facing global challenges, all countries are in the same boat, and the only way out is to work together and strengthen cooperation," said Xu Feibiao, director of the Center for BRICS and G20 Studies at China



Institutes of Contemporary International Relations. "As long as the G20 members stand together, they will bring hope to the world as to fixing global problems."

As the leader of the world's second-largest economy, Xi walks his talk. Although protectionism has reared its head over recent years, Xi stands firm on defending globalization and building an open world economy.

At the Osaka summit in 2019, in defiance of strong unilateralist and protectionist headwinds, Xi

announced five major measures to further open up the Chinese market, including increasing imports and providing equal treatment to all types of businesses. China, under his leadership, has remained a major engine for global economic growth, contributing around 30 percent of world growth over the years.

To "the question of our times," Xi has his answer — building a community with a shared future for mankind. At the Bali summit, he called on all countries to embrace the vision, and

advocate peace, development, and win-win cooperation.

Over the past decade, China has contributed its strength to this overarching vision with firm conviction and solid actions. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a vivid example. So far, over 150 countries and over 30 international organizations have signed cooperation documents with Beijing under the BRI, a testimony to its growing global appeal.

As a crucial cornerstone of building a community with a shared future for mankind, Xi proposed in recent years the three global initiatives, namely the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, offering China's solutions to major global challenges pertaining to peace and development.

"In a time marked by fears, irrationalities and confusion, Xi Jinping is rightly calling for a rational approach to solve the issues we collectively face," said David Gosset, a French expert on international affairs and founder of the Europe-China Forum, adding that China's openness and predictability have become a key stabilizing factor in a world of risks and

Ethiopia, Pakistan Agree to Enhance Health Sector Cooperation



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Monday explored various avenues of enhancing the bilateral cooperation in the health sectors, mainly joint efforts in research and development areas.

The discussion to enhance the cooperation took place during a meeting between H. E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the FDR Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination H. E. Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath.

The meeting mainly focused on global health security, institutional linkages, exchange of researches on preventing and curing communicable diseases such as pandemics and outbreaks, medical and allied health professional education for Ethiopian students in Pakistan, and medical tourism.

H. E. Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker highlighted the commitment of the Government of Ethiopia for ensuring health, safety and security by creating awareness on diseases, hygiene and environment-friendly issues that reduced maternal and child mortality, increased longevity, and wellbeing of the society.

He said Ethiopia is a 3rd diplomatic hub in the world, and recently established a state-of-the-art disease control center where joint researches are being conducted on different diseases especially the communicable ones.

On the other hand, the Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination acknowledged Ethiopia's friendly bond with the people of Pakistan, expressing strong commitment to strengthen Pakistan's relations with Africa especially Ethiopia through Ethiopian Airlines.

President of Uzbekistan participates in the session of the Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: On November 18, the first session of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan after the elections was held in Tashkent.

It was attended by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

The session was opened by Chairman of the Central Election Commission Zayniddin Nizamkhodzhaev.

The National Anthem of the Republic of Uzbekistan was played.

Temporary Secretariat of the first session, Counting Commission and temporary group on control over the use of electronic vote counting system were elected. The agenda was approved. The CEC Chairman presented information on the results of the elections to the Legislative Chamber.

On the proposal of the Council of Representatives of Political Parties, deputies elected Nuriddin Ismoilov to the post of Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis by secret ballot.

Then the chairmanship of the session passed to the Speaker. Deputy Speakers were elected. The factions of five political parties were registered. Ten committees of the Legislative Chamber were established in accordance with their agreed proposals.

President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev addressed the session.

At the beginning of his speech, the Head of State congratulated the deputies on their election, emphasizing that this is the embodiment of high trust and respect of our people.

It was emphasized that the current parliamentary elections have entered the history as being the first ones held in accordance with the updated Constitution. This process was conducted for the first time under a mixed electoral system.

As a result of the elections, 150 deputies were elected to the Legislative Chamber. Among them were 37 women and 11 young people under 35 years of age. Overall, the composition of the lower house was renewed by almost 60 percent.



The activities of the Chamber over the past five years were discussed. During this period, the Constitution has been updated and more than 130 new laws have been adopted, which is 1.5 times more than in the previous period.

The President also drew attention to the issues that remained out of parliamentary attention. For example, the share of laws with direct action and clear enforcement mechanisms remains low. Parliamentary and deputy control is still not effective enough. The activity of deputies in constituencies is mostly limited to organizing meetings, answering complaints and questions.

The Head of State outlined his vision of the new tasks ahead of the Legislative Chamber.

In particular, it was proposed to create public councils under each committee with the participation

of representatives of civil society to strengthen the dialogue.

It is important to establish not only control and requirements in the work of parliamentary committees, but also close cooperation with ministries. It is also necessary to strengthen party and fractional discipline.

The President emphasized that lawmaking, primarily, should be aimed at solving urgent problems of society, and put forward a number of legislative initiatives. Among them are the construction of modern residential buildings replacing outdated ones, guaranteeing the protection of citizens' funds allocated for housing construction, support for private education and investors in the energy sector, introduction of compulsory health insurance, creation of a legal framework for franchising, capital market and startups, and relations arising in the field of arti-

ficial intelligence.

In order to boost the opposition, it was proposed to increase the number of guaranteed rights of the parliamentary opposition from 3 to 6, including giving it the positions of one committee chairman and two deputy committee chairmen, as well as additional rights to submit questions within the framework of the "government hour" and parliamentary inquiries.

Particular attention was paid to the need to transition to a system of broad, high-quality parliamentary control. In particular, in accordance with the updated Constitution, the control over the execution of the State Budget is the exclusive competence of the Legislative Chamber. In this regard, it is necessary to strengthen the work of the Chamber in this direction, including the introduction of the practice of submitting all reports of the Government on the State Budget to the Chamber only together with the audit report provided for by the Budget Code.

- A deputy is a servant of the people, a model for all, a person with a high level of political culture and knowledge, who sincerely loves his homeland. Our people, all of us, above all rely on you to strengthen peace, mutual understanding and harmony in the family, mahalla and society, to educate the youth in the spirit of patriotism, to defend the interests of Uzbekistan in the international arena, -said Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Heads of political party factions and deputies addressed the session. The President supported their views, urged the deputies to work harder and be closer to the people.

- The voice of a deputy is the voice of the people. If you consider every issue concerning the fate of the country and first of all see our hardworking, generous and noble people in front of you, if you act thinking not only about today, but also about peace and happiness of future generations, then our people will be satisfied with you, -emphasized the Head of State.

The Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis adopted resolutions on the agenda.

Speakers Call for Global Collaboration, Solutions for Climate Change Adaptation



Spokesman Report

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN: Leading experts, policymakers, and thought leaders gathered today at the Climate Finance for Vulnerable Countries Summit at ADA University in Baku, Azerbaijan, to discuss pressing issues related to climate change adaptation and the need for increased global cooperation.

The summit highlighted the critical role of climate finance in supporting vulnerable countries, particularly in the face of growing climate-related threats such as rising temperatures, floods, and sea level rise.

Keynote speakers included Zulfya Suleimenova, Advisor to the President of Kazakhstan and Special Representative for International Environmental Cooperation, who discussed Kazakhstan's commitment to addressing climate change. As a carbon-intensive country, Kazakhstan is actively working on solutions to reduce methane and carbon emissions.

Kazakhstan's participation in international frameworks like the Paris Agreement and its regulation of energy, gas, and hard-to-abate sectors—such as cement under the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)—was also discussed. Suleimenova noted that tracking carbon emissions and maintaining efficient regulatory systems are key to ensuring measurable progress.

In his remarks, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in Pakistan, discussed the disproportionate impacts of climate change on populations in developing countries. Dr. Suleri highlighted the devastating flooding in Pakistan in 2022, which displaced 30 million people. He underscored that the rise in emissions is largely driven by human population growth, and the climate crisis exacerbates national debt, limiting countries' ability to invest in resilience.

The summit also featured Abdul, Asian Development Bank (ADB), who shed light on the alarming economic impacts of climate change, with GDP losses in vulnerable regions projected to increase significantly.

Zulpat Azyieva, Advisor to the Chairman of the Kazakhstan Energy Association, echoed these concerns, pointing out the increasing risks to Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, which faced severe floods earlier this year.

Rafael Abbasov, Senior Official at the ADB, discussed the importance of "derisking investments" through blended finance and private sector involvement in climate adaptation.

Agus Pratama Sari, CEO of Landscape Indonesia and Deputy Minister of Indonesian REDD+, highlighted the role of the private sector in financing climate adaptation, especially in the water sector and marine ecosystems.

The summit also featured discussions from other leaders in the field, including "Asel Madybaeva" from Kyrgyzstan and other international experts, who reiterated the importance of collaboration and the urgent need to mobilize finance to support climate adaptation efforts.

The summit underscored that climate change is a complex, interconnected issue that requires a holistic, cooperative approach. It called for increased investment in adaptation, better access to finance, and the strengthening of governance frameworks to ensure that vulnerable communities are equipped to face the challenges ahead.



Free Medical Camp Organized at Pakistan Embassy in Riyadh by Pakistan Doctors Group

Abid Shamoon Chand

RIYADH: A free medical camp was organized at the Pakistan Embassy, under the auspices of Pakistan Doctors Group, in which more than 200 doctors and paramedical staff participated and provided free medical facilities to the needy and deserving compatriots.

In the free medical camp, more than 800 patients were provided with free medicines, ultrasound, ECG, X-ray, other medical tests and free medical advice was also provided. The focus of this year's medical camp was to raise awareness about the development of lungs and keeping them healthy on World Lung Day.



On this occasion, Ambassador of Pakistan Ahmed Farooq visited the medical camp and appreciated the selfless services of the Pakistan Doctors Group and said that organizing a free medical camp is the best public service, which provides better

medical facilities to our compatriots living abroad. President of the Pakistan Doctors Group, Dr. Asad Roomi, said that since 2010, a free medical camp is being organized every six months so that better medical facilities can be provided to our

compatriots living abroad. Serving our countrymen is our manifesto and mission. Dr. Asad Roomi further said that the clinic in the Embassy of Pakistan also provides free treatment facilities throughout the year. Other people who came to the

free medical camp also appreciated the free medical facilities and said that the Pakistan Doctors Group is doing a great service to humanity in Saudi Arabia, which is commendable, for which we pay tribute to the entire team.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
94,995.67	94,763.64
Day's High	Day's Low
95,307.91	94,620.44
Index Value	Change
14,529,268,844	+232.03
Percentage	Time
+0.24%	18 Nov, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,109.32	+45.71
Percentage	Time
+0.57%	18 Nov, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
43,440.80	-4.19
Percentage	Time
-0.0096%	18 Nov, 12:27 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,220.85	-422.06
Percentage	Time
-1.09%	18 Nov, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181.25	181.43
Bahrain Dinar	731.21	739.21
Canadian Dollar	198.16	200.56
China Yuan	38.58	38.98
Danish Krone	39.58	39.98
Euro	290.85	293.60
Hong Kong Dollar	35.37	35.72
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.92	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	894.99	904.49
Malaysian Ringgit	62.5	63.10
New Zealand \$	163.14	165.14
Norwegians Krone	24.78	25.08
Omani Riyal	715.66	724.16
Qatari Riyal	75.62	76.32
Saudi Riyal	73.65	74.20
Singapore Dollar	206.27	208.27
Swedish Korona	25.82	26.12
Swiss Franc	311.45	314.25
Thai Bhat	7.93	8.08
U.A.E Dirham	75.35	76.00
UK Pound Sterling	349.55	353.05
US Dollar	277.40	278.90

Finance Minister holds virtual meeting with SBP, PBA

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a virtual meeting with the Governor State Bank of Pakistan and Chairman Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) and their teams to discuss progress on financing for the priority sectors today.

Mr. Zafar Masud, Chairman of PBA, apprised the Minister on various initiatives planned by PBA for building an inclusive and sustainable financial ecosystem. He proposed that electronic warehouse receipt finance, SME index, corporate farming financing, venture capital fund for fintechs, revival of agri cooperatives and establishment of financial data exchange could be some of the potential initiatives to create a long-term impact towards a sustainable financial ecosystem. He also proposed initiatives such as fan financing, EV financing, solarization of tube-wells and markup subsidy and first loss coverage for SME financing for a short-term and more immediate impact on the system.

Mr. Jameel Ahmed, Governor State Bank of Pakistan, highlighted the progress achieved on various fronts in respect of various initiatives proposed by PBA for financing to priority sectors. He argued that some of the proposals suggested by PBA were concrete in scope and the central bank had already issued necessary notifications on regulatory side to facilitate their implementation.



Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb appreciated the work done by PBA and SBP for coming up with substantial initiatives and taking measures for implementing the more tangible initiatives.

He urged that initiatives with short term and immediate impact be given priority and their implementation timeframe be compressed for finalizing them by end December and hopefully rolling them out from early next year. The Minister also assured full support for

arranging necessary consultations between PBA/SBP and the stakeholder ministries, adding the Finance Division would also host a meeting of all relevant stakeholders to hear their viewpoints, and help forge a consensus on the proposed initiatives.

Poor performance

RAWLAKOT: In Poonch, Azad Kashmir, the towers of Telenor and other networks were demolished due to poor performance and lack of network maintenance despite warnings.



BYD Marks 30th Anniversary with Roll-off of 10 Millionth NEV



Commerce Desk

SHENZHEN - CHINA: BYD, the world's leading manufacturer of new energy vehicles (NEVs) and power batteries, today marked a historic moment in its 30th-anniversary celebration with the roll-off of its 10-millionth NEV at its Xiaomo Production Base in the Shenzhen-Shanwei Special Cooperation Zone. This significant achievement underscores BYD's unwavering commitment to sustainable transportation and reinforces its position as a global leader in the automotive industry.

At the event, BYD's Chairman and President, Mr. Wang Chuanfu, delivered a keynote address reflecting on the company's remarkable transformation from a small startup with just 20 employees to a multinational corporation with nearly one million staff worldwide. Mr. Wang highlighted BYD's dedication to technological innovation and its crucial role in shaping the future of mobility.

BYD has recently marked its official launch in Pakistan market with two of its signature vehicles, ATTO 3 and Seal. With a goal to electrify 50% of the local automobiles sold by 2030, the company not only aims to broaden the charging infrastructure but also establish local manufacturing down the line, all to facilitate a transition toward sustainable and green energy infrastructure in the country.

Achieving the milestone of 10 million NEVs is a testament to BYD's steadfast commitment to sustainable development. The company is now the first automaker in the world to reach this groundbreaking figure. Remarkably, BYD took 15 years to produce the first 5 million NEVs and achieved the next 5 million in just 15 months, demonstrating the company's strategic focus on new energy vehicles and its continuous technological advancement.

CCP approves 50% acquisition of Total Parco by Gunvor Group

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted approval for the acquisition of 50 percent shareholding in M/s. Total Parco Pakistan Limited (TPPL) by M/s. Aquashore SA, a company operating under Switzerland's Gunvor Group. Under the terms of the Sale and Purchase Agreement, these shares will be transferred from M/s. TotalEnergy Marketing Services to Aquashore SA.

In the petroleum sector, this acquisition marks the latest in a series of high-profile transactions recently approved by the CCP. Earlier this year, Saudi Aramco acquired 40 percent equity stake in GO Petroleum, while another Saudi group, Wafi Energy Holding Limited, acquired 77.42 percent shareholding and control of Shell Pakistan Limited. These transactions highlight the growing interest of global energy giants in Pakistan's dynamic energy sector.

Gunvor Group, one of the world's premier commodities trading companies, brings vast experience in trading and logistics. Through this transaction, Gunvor aims to enhance operational logistics, safety standards, and competitive solutions that bridge global energy supply and demand. Gunvor's vast experience in commodities trading and logistics provides Aquashore SA with a strategic advantage, aligning well with Pakistan's expanding demand for efficient and secure energy solutions.

SECP Holds Inaugural Meeting of ICMDC

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) held the inaugural meeting of its newly established Islamic Capital Market Development Committee (ICMDC), which convened to promote the growth, innovation, and resilience of Pakistan's Islamic capital markets. Chaired by Dr. Irum Saba, Associate Professor at IBA, the committee is composed of industry experts, market stakeholders, Shariah scholars, and representatives from financial institutions.

Welcoming the members of the Committee, the Commissioner (SECP), Mr.

Mujtaba Ahmed Lodhi reaffirmed SECP's commitment to creating a dynamic, inclusive, and resilient Islamic financial landscape in light of the recent constitutional amendments. He assured the participants of SECP's focus towards building a framework aligned with both international standards and national values, in partnership with the relevant players.

In addition to discussing the potential work streams, the committee also discussed avenues for collaboration with international regulatory bodies and financial institutions, underscoring SECP's commitment to adopting global best practices in Islamic finance.

FBR's IREN Squad Confiscates Non-duty paid/Counterfeit Cigarettes

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: On receipt of credible information regarding non-duty paid/counterfeit cigarettes during Road surveillance, Inland Revenue Enforcement Network (IREN) Squad of Rawalpindi Hub intercepted a vehicle in Raja Bazar Rawalpindi. Upon inspection, it was found that the vehicle was carrying 35 cartons of counterfeit/illegal trade cigarettes of foreign and local brands.

The stock has been seized and shifted to Rawalpindi office for further investigation.

LONGi Breaks 36-Year Overseas Record

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: LONGi Green Energy, a leader in solar technology, has achieved a world record in monocrystalline silicon module efficiency. The company's latest HPBC2.0 module has reached an efficiency rate of 25.4%, as confirmed by the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (Fraunhofer-ISE) in Germany, a globally recognized authority on solar energy.

This breakthrough marks a significant milestone in photovoltaic (PV) technology, ending a 36-year period during which brands from the US and the West have dominated efficiency records in monocrystalline silicon. LONGi Green Energy is now the first Chinese solar technology company to lead this field, with its achievement set to be documented on both 'Martin Green Module Efficiency World Record History List' and the US National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) records.

TMB/easypaisa Announces Impressive Financial Results for Q3 2024

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Microfinance Bank (TMB), operator of Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform, easypaisa, has received US\$10 million in equity investment from its shareholders, Telenor Group, and Ant Group, as easypaisa prepares to launch its digital retail banking operations in Pakistan, subject to regulatory approvals.

This capital injection represents a pivotal step in the easypaisa's ongoing digital transformation journey and reflects the strong confidence of both shareholders in the role the bank is playing in empowering a financially inclusive Pakistan.

Sharing his thoughts on the recent developments, Irfan Wahab Khan, Chairman, Board of Direc-

tors, TMB / easypaisa, said, "Our commitment to advancing a digital Pakistan is stronger than ever.

Commenting on the occasion, Douglas Feagin, President of Ant International and Senior Vice President of Ant Group, and Director on the Board of Telenor Microfinance Bank / easypaisa remarked, "The recent equity investment underscores our long-term commitment to Pakistan's financial ecosystem.

Mr. Feagin, who traveled to Pakistan to confirm this investment, also held series of meetings with local partners and government officials to reaffirm Ant International's strategic support for easypaisa to continue and expand digitalization and inclusive financial services in the country.

Furthermore, the Board of Direc-



tors of TMB, in its meeting held on October 25, 2024, approved the financial results for Q3 2024.

PCB chief Naqvi confirms Champions Trophy will be held in Pakistan

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi reaffirmed on Monday that the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 would take place in Pakistan, despite India's refusal to send its team for the tournament.

"We will achieve our target and God willing safely hold the Champions Trophy in Pakistan," he told reporters at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium regarding the situation.

Pakistan, the reigning champions after winning the last edition in England in 2017, is set to host the event from February 19 to March 9.

The longstanding political tensions between the two nations have prevented India from visiting Pakistan since 2008, with matches occurring only at multi-team events. Notably, during last year's Asia Cup, India played all their



games in Sri Lanka under a "hybrid model."

Last week, the ICC informed the PCB that the Board of Control for Cricket in India had officially communicated that India would not participate in the

eight-nation tournament.

With the ICC expected to announce the Champions Trophy schedule by November 20, time is running out, as the matches are planned to be held at three venues across Pakistan: Rawal-

pindi, Karachi, and Lahore.

When asked about any correspondence from the ICC regarding Pakistan's stance of refusing to adopt a hybrid model, he said: "We wrote a letter and await a response. We only have interaction with ICC and are awaiting its response."

"I think the ICC will need to think about its own credibility, that it is a body of all cricket bodies," Naqvi said and reiterated that all the other teams who qualified for the Champions Trophy have no issue regarding their visit to the country.

"I say right now as well, that if India has any concern, they should come and talk to us, and we will alleviate their concerns because I don't think there's any reason for them not to come to Pakistan," he said.

"Our stance is clear, we have said it before and we will stick to that stance."

Australia beat Pakistan by 7 wickets in Third T-20 International Cricket Match and win 3 match series 3.0



Asim Tanveer

HOBART, AUSTRALIA: The Australian cricket team whitewashed the 3-match series by defeating Pakistan in the third T20 match. Australia cricket team

In the third and last T20 International match of the series, Pakistan lost by 7 wickets. Australia achieved the target of 118 runs for 3 wickets only in the 12th over.

Pakistan's decision to bat first after winning the toss was also futile, the arrival of the new captain could not remove the defeat. The highlight of the innings was Babar Azam who got

out after scoring 41 runs off 29 balls. Apart from him, no batsman could be set. Bab Azam also became a victim of Adam Zampa by playing an irresponsible shot. He has been victimized several times in ODI and T20 series. Salman Ali Agha was captaining the Pakistan cricket team, so the captaincy was also changed. The wicketkeeper also changed. The opening pair also changed, but the approach of the Pakistan team did not change and batting first, they returned to the pavilion scoring only 117 runs. 11 balls were left to play, which means that the team had 18.1 overs. I got out.

Haseebullah Khan scored 24 runs,



Irfan Khan scored 10 runs and Shaheen Shah Afridi scored 16 runs to take Pakistan above 100. Otherwise, the Pakistan team might not have scored 100.

Australia's Spencer Johnson and Adam Zampa got two wickets each, while Aaron Hardy then attacked Pakistan's batsmen and dismissed three wickets for 21 runs.

Australia started the counter-innings with less pressure on them as the target was low. That is why when the Pakistani bowlers sent Mathew Short to the pavilion for two and Jack Fraser for 18, Australia's total score was just 30 with two out, but there was no pressure on the subsequent batsmen. The captains

appeared to be playing with confidence and the Stoins supported them with full support. Thus, Pakistan's cricket team got its third victory with a total score of 85 when the Australian captain Josh Inglis. Caught on a simple ball after scoring 27 runs. The catch was taken by Harris Rauf while the bowler was Abbas Afridi and he scored 27 runs. Marcus Stones played a fast innings of 61 runs off just 27 balls and hit 5 sixes and 5 fours and remained not out. Australia scored 3 in 11.2 overs. The score was completed on the wicket. Shaheen, Jehandad and Abbas took one wicket each.

Spencer Johnson and Marcus Stoins were adjudged Man of the Match.

SBP teams' trials begin for participation in Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The trials for the selection of different Sports Board Punjab (SBP) teams for the participation in Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games got underway at different venues of provincial capital on Monday.

Director Admin Dr M Kaleem, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Chief Sports Consultant SBP Hafeez Bhatti, Administrator Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall Mustafa Shah and other officials also witnessed the trials.

While talking to media, Director Admin M Kaleem said that hundreds of male and female U-22 athletes from all divisions of the province are participating in the trials and the best players will be selected purely on merit for the Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games scheduled to be organized at Islamabad in the last week of December

2024. The karate (Girls & Boys) trials were conducted at Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall while State of the Art Punjab International Swimming Complex hosted the boys' swimming trials.

Similarly, the weightlifting (Girls & Boys) trials were organized at Pakistan Sports Board Coaching Center while the boys' wrestling trials were arranged at Punjab College Muslim Town.

More than 100 participants took part in boxing male and female trials, 80 participated in judo male and female trials, 125 in male and female taekwondo trials, 30 females participated in swimming while 43 male and female appeared in squash trials. After first day trials, following players were selected for Inter-Provincial Quaid-e-Azam Games:

Boxing: 48kg weight category: Farhan Chaudhry

(Lahore), Allman (Rawalpindi) -51kg: Ahmed Iqbal (Lahore), Michael Harry (Faisalabad) -54kg: Shahzad Khan (Lahore), Taib Akram (Gujrat) -57kg: Rohail Khan (Lahore), M Salman Khan (Gujranwala) -60kg: M Ali (Lahore), Hamza Shakir (Rawalpindi) -63.5kg: Ibrahim Subhani (Sahiwal), Daim Parvez (Lahore). -67kg: M Bilal (Faisalabad) M Zulfqarnain (Gujrat). 71kg: M Hanan (Lahore), M Arman (Faisalabad). **Judo:** Women judo First team: 40kg: Nimra Shahzadi, 48kg: Eisha Siddique, 52kg: Hifa, 57kg: Urooj Fatima, 63kg: Aima Butt, 70kg: Saira Asif, Open weight: Madiha Women judo 2nd team:

40kg: Areeba Ibrahim, 48kg: Ehaaf Fatima, 52kg: Sehar Ijaz, 57kg: Sehar Shafiq, 63kg: Amna Shams, above 70kg: Areeba Inran Men judo First team: 50kg: Ahsan, 55kg: Faraz, 60kg: Zaid-ul-Hassan, 66kg: Shahid, 73kg: Murtaza, 81kg: Abad Ali, -90kg: Hasnain Ali, +90kg: Saifullah Men judo 2nd team: 50kg: M Zaki Goraya, 55kg: Junaid, 60kg: Atif, 66kg: Faraz Ameen, 73kg: M Daniyal, 81kg: Umer Haider, -90kg: M Shuaib Khalid, +90kg: Ismail Men's Karate: Individual kata: Zulfqarnain (Sahiwal) Team kata: Zulfqarnain, Salam Ali, Abdullah (Sahiwal), Below 50kg: Zunair Amjad (Lhr) Below 55kg: M Umer (Lhr) Below 60kg: Subhan Ali (Lhr) Below 67kg: Sujjal Zafar (Rawalpindi).

CAS Serena Hotels International Squash Championship Kicks Off Today



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: CAS Serena Hotels International Squash Championship-2024 which is being organized by Pakistan Air Force in collaboration with Pakistan Squash Federation and Serena Hotels, has kicked off today at Mushaf Squash Complex, Islamabad. The prestigious tournament features 24 players from 8 countries including Egypt, England, Hong Kong, Ireland, Kuwait, Malaysia, Netherlands and Pakistan, who will compete for the coveted title from 18-22 November, 2024.

As the patron of sports in the country, Pakistan Air Force has consistently promoted sporting activities at both national and international levels. Under the patronage and special guidance of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, the sport of squash has witnessed remarkable progress providing a platform for young talent to shine globally. The Air Chief's unwavering commitment to reviving Pakistan's legacy in squash continues to inspire the youth.

Chief of the Air Staff, Serena Hotels International Squash Championship 2024 is poised to be an exhilarating contest, uniting players and fans in their passion for squash. PAF's patronage of squash is aimed at reclaiming Pakistan's past glory in the sport and at encouraging the youth to pursue excellence.

T20 Cricket League resumes today with two matches in Rawalpindi



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Faisal Sports Super Eight T20 Cricket League Haideri Cricket Club and City Cricket Club won their matches. The opening match of the league was played between West Indies Cricket Club and Haideri Cricket Club, which Haideri Cricket Club won by 6 wickets. West Indies Cricket Club, playing first, scored 162 runs for the loss of 6 wickets in the stipulated 20 overs. In reply, Haideri Cricket Club achieved the set target for the loss of 4 wickets in 18 overs. Sime was declared the best player of the match for his all-round performance. Waqas scored 65 runs and Sime played a brilliant innings of 50 runs for Haideri Cricket Club. In the second match, City Cricket Club defeated XI Star Cricket Club by 8 wickets. XI Star Cricket Club, playing first, scored 194 runs for the loss of 8 wickets in the stipulated 20 overs. Zeeshan Malik scored a brilliant 95 runs for XI Star. In reply, City Cricket Club easily achieved the target for the loss of 2 wickets. Ehtesham scored a brilliant 109 runs for City Club while Muhammad Ibrahim scored 42 runs to win the match. Ehtesham was awarded the Man of the Match award for scoring a century. Two matches will be played today in the league. The first match will be played between New Pindi Gymkhana and Potohar Cricket Club at 9 am while the second match will be played between Victory Cricket Club and Al Noor Cricket Club at 1 pm.

Pakistan Modern Pentathlon Federation delegation participates in WMPF elections

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The delegation of Pakistan Modern Pentathlon Federation (PMPF) participated in the elections of the World Modern Pentathlon Federation (WMPF) held in Saudi Arabia.

The Pakistani delegation was headed by Vice President Malik Shahbaz Ahmed and Foreign Officer Tariq Rashid.

Robert Stull of America was elected president of World Modern Pentathlon Federation for 4-year term. The delegation of Pakistan Modern Pentathlon Federation also met with the newly elected president and congratulated him on his election as WMPF president.

Zimbabwe's ODI squad features three uncapped players for Pakistan series

HARARE: Zimbabwe Cricket on Monday named its one-day international (ODI) and Twenty20 International (T20I) squads for the upcoming series at home against Pakistan.

The white-ball series will commence with three ODIs on November 24, 26 and 28, followed by same number of T20Is scheduled for December 1, 3 and 5.

Craig Ervine will lead Zimbabwe's ODI squad, which includes seasoned players like Sikandar Raza, Sean Williams, Blessing Muzarabani and Richard Ngarava.

The squad also features three uncapped players — Trevor Gwandu, Tashinga Musekiwa and Tinotenda Maposa.

However, Zimbabwe have retained the T20I squad that delivered record-breaking performances in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 sub-regional qualifier in Kenya last month. All-rounder Raza will continue to lead the side in the shortest format.

Zimbabwe's Convener of Selectors, David Mutendera, expressed his confidence in both ODI and T20I squads before terming the white-ball home series against Pakistan a tremendous opportunity to bolster their progress in the sport.

"Facing a high-calibre side like Pakistan is a tremendous opportunity for us to gauge our progress and showcase Zimbabwe's potential on the international stage."

Inauguration

BEIJING: Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi inaugurating the exhibition depicting 70 years of the Great Wall Diplomacy on Monday.



Photo: PID

DPM / Foreign Minister chairs Fifth Session of the Exploration & Production Committee

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Prime Minister today chaired the 5th session of the Committee constituted by the Prime Minister to develop a comprehensive action plan for addressing the challenges faced by the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector in Pakistan.

Building on the discussions from previous sessions, several key decisions were made to improve the sector's outlook.

The Committee reached an in-principal agreement to submit a long-awaited framework to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for the sale of 35% of the unallocated gas volumes to third-



party buyers. The framework includes a 100 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscf) cap for the first year, with annual reviews thereafter.

In another significant move,

the Committee decided to initiate a bidding round for available onshore exploration blocks by December 2024. The deadline for bid submissions is set for March 15, 2025.

In parallel, a separate bidding process will be launched for offshore exploration blocks, with a six-month period allowed for potential bidders to evaluate the offered blocks and make their bids by 30th of June 2024.

The Committee was also updated on the ongoing digitization efforts of the Directorate General of Petroleum Concessions (DGPC). A competitive process has been initiated to advance this digital transformation, which will streamline operations and enhance efficiency in the sector.

Additionally, the Committee was informed about the launch of an Integrated Energy Modelling Study, being conducted by internationally

recognized consultants. This study will focus on the role of oil, gas, and LPG in Pakistan's energy mix, provide insights into supply-demand dynamics, and develop a comprehensive gas market model. The findings from this study, which are expected to inform policy decisions on gas supply management for priority sectors, will be presented in a draft report due in January 2025.

The committee also discussed the security challenges faced by exploration and production companies and emphasized that provision of fool proof security is of paramount importance for promoting investment in E&P sector for energy security of Pakistan.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue meets ADB delegation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) led by Senior Director Mr. Tariq H. Niazi called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at the Finance Division today.

During the meeting also attended by ADB's Country Director Ms. Emma Fan and her team in Pakistan, Mr. Tariq H. Niazi briefed the Minister on ADB's public sector management and governance initiatives aimed at ensuring stronger macro-fiscal management



and effective governance with improved policy framework and institutional capacities in the Bank's developing member

countries. Mr. Tariq Niazi said the ADB had quite a substantial pipeline for Pakistan with significant

projects planned for economic reforms and socio-economic development, particularly policy and administration reforms,

digitalization of FBR, private public partnerships, climate change, policy-based guarantees, financial and budgetary support, support in poverty reduction, and technical assistance in pension reforms.

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb lauded the ADB's financial and technical assistance provided to Pakistan over the years. He said the bank's priority areas of assistance were aligned with Pakistan's development needs. He welcomed the Bank's assistance in building climate resilience and taking forward the agenda of government and pension reforms.

Commander CTF-150 holds key leadership engagement

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Commodore Asim Sohail Malik of Pakistan Navy, Commander Combined Task Force 150, held a virtual Key Leadership Engagement with Rear Admiral Buddhika Liyanagamage, Director General Operations of Sri Lanka Navy. The meeting focused on reinforcing objectives of Combined Maritime Forces and exploring avenues of cooperation with Sri Lanka Navy in support of CTF-150 mission to counter illicit maritime activities at sea.

During the meeting, Commodore Asim Sohail Malik apprised the Admiral on the operational activities of 13th PN led CTF-150 mission and underscored importance of collaborative approach to combat threats posed by Non-State Actors.

Potential participation of Sri Lanka Navy assets in CTF-150 was also agreed by both sides as CMF



collaboration with littoral states is vital to disrupt narcotics trafficking and other illicit activities in North Arabian Sea.

Commander CTF 150 also highlighted Pakistan Navy's commitment to maritime peace and stability in the region and re-iterated support for upcoming command of CTF-154 by Sri Lanka Navy team.

During the meeting Senior National Representatives from Pakistan and Sri Lanka at CMF and key officials from Sri Lanka Navy were also in attendance, further underscoring the strong bilateral commitment to regional maritime security.

CII chairman defends fatwa declaring VPN 'un-Islamic'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr. Raghbir Hussain Naeemi, has issued a clarification regarding the council's recent fatwa that labeled the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) as un-Islamic.

During an interview on TV channel, he stated that regardless of whether a VPN is registered or unregistered, it is considered un-Islamic if used to access indecent content or



spread false propaganda.

The CII had previously emphasized the importance of blocking immoral or blasphemous content on the internet, which led to the fatwa issued on November 15.

PM's climate aide urges nations to prioritise investment in greening education to boost climate action



City Desk

ISLAMABAD / BAKU: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam has emphasised that transforming educational systems to empower students and inspire communities to take meaningful actions for a greener and more sustainable world is crucial for building climate-resilient societies.

"Education is the cornerstone of sustainable development and climate action for resilient and environmentally-sustainable society," said the

PM's climate aide while addressing as a keynote speaker here on Monday at a high-level event 'Acting on Commitments - Ministerial Discussion on Green Education and Planning for the Future', organised by Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in collaboration with Cambridge University on the sidelines of COP29 global Climate Summit. "By greening our education systems, we are equipping the next generation with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to address climate change and build a resilient future."

Ukraine. 1000 Days of Resistance

Today, 19 November 2024, is marked by a bitter occasion. It is 1000th day in a row as Ukraine has been resisting a full-scale military aggression of Russia, aimed to destroy the Ukrainian statehood, to exterminate the Ukrainian nation, to undermine rules based international order.

On 24 February, 2022 Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine. Invoking the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter, Ukraine responded by repelling the aggressor along the entire front line.

The fact that this aggression is illegal under international law is beyond any doubt. 141 states recognized it by adopting a UN General Assembly Resolution of 2 March 2022 "Aggression against Ukraine", which states that the Russian aggression against Ukraine is in violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and other rules of international law.

Active resistance from the Armed Forces and Ukrainian citizens caused significant losses to the Russian occu-

piers. The Kremlin's plans to carry out a "blitzkrieg", capture Kyiv and key cities "in a three days" failed.

Since the start of the war the Ukrainian Army has succeeded to protect the capital, liberate the north of the country, Kharkiv Oblast and Kherson. Ukrainians have proven that they can push the war into Russia. Kursk operation, which started on August 6, 2024 has shown that Putin does not have the strength to hold out when Ukrainian Armed Forces apply real pressure.

Faced with vigorous resistance, the Russian troops wage indiscriminate attacks on Ukrainian cities and villages, using terrorist tactics and violating international humanitarian law. Russia continues to intimidate and terrorize Ukrainian civilians by attacking the critical infrastructure and residential areas with missiles, guided aerial bombs and attack drones resulting in significant casualties and destruction.

Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine has had catastrophic consequences for children: numerous killings and injuries, sexual violence, mass

abductions and forced deportation of Ukrainian children by Russia are heinous crimes that cannot be justified and must be punished.

Ukraine's goals in its just fight remain definite and clear. Ukraine strives for the complete liberation of all occupied territories, the restoration of sovereignty and territorial integrity in the internationally recognized borders, including the parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, occupied in 2014. Russia must pay compensation for the mass destruction caused to Ukraine. War criminals must be held accountable. Ukraine will not make concessions to Russia to reach a ceasefire.

While at war, Ukrainians dream of peace. Ukrainians deserve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, not truce. It must be a long-lasting peace, not appeasement of the aggressor. The true peace will come when Ukraine's

territorial integrity is completely reinstated within its internationally recognized borders, all captured Ukrainian citizens are returned home, and justice is achieved.

Key elements for victory of Ukraine include non-recognition of forceful changes to the legal status of temporarily occupied territories, consolidation of international efforts, provision of assistance, and implementation of the Peace Formula of President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The First Peace Summit, held in Switzerland in June 2024 addressed three global challenges: nuclear safety, food security, and the release of prisoners and deportees, including children. The Joint Communiqué of the Summit currently has 95 supporters and remains open for accession by every country which respects the UN Charter. The work continues at the adviser and ministerial levels to prepare a joint peace framework for the Second Peace



H.E. Mr. Markiiian Chuchuk