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Gaza horror can't be justified – Putin

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russian President Vladimir Putin has condemned the ongoing bombing campaign waged by Israel against the Palestinian enclave of Gaza, stating it cannot be justified by anything. The president made the remarks on Monday as he delivered a speech ahead of a closed-doors meeting with members of the Russian Security Council and heads of law enforcement agencies. "The horrible events currently unfolding in the Gaza Strip, when hundreds of thousands of innocent people are getting indiscriminately annihilated, have nowhere to run, nowhere to hide from bombardment, cannot be justified by anything," Putin stated. Israel's actions in the Palestinian enclave only invoke rage, Putin argued, adding, however, that one should not be led by "emotions" in properly addressing the situation in the Middle East. "When you're watching bloodied children, dead children, suffering of the elderly, death of medics – fists are clenching and tears are welling up. Yet we should



not, we cannot allow ourselves to be led by emotions," the president said. The ongoing crisis in the Middle East started with a "terrorist attack" on Israeli civilians, Putin noted. However, instead of "punishing" those behind it, Israel "unfortunately" opted for "vengeance" and assigned "collective responsibility" for it, Putin added. The major escalation between Hamas and Israel began on October 7 with a surprise attack

launched by the Palestinian militant group. Israel responded with massive aerial and artillery bombardment of Gaza, which has already resulted in widespread destruction and heavy civilian casualties in the enclave. More than 8,000 Palestinians, including over 3,300 children, have been killed, according to local health authorities. In Israel, more than 1,400 have been killed during the conflict, according to the IDF.

Netanyahu rules out Gaza ceasefire

TEL AVIV (Agencies): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu categorically rejected the idea of a ceasefire in Gaza, equating any pause in hostilities to a victory by Hamas during a press conference on Monday. "Calls for a ceasefire are calls for Israel to surrender to Hamas, to surrender to terrorism, to surrender to barbarism," Netanyahu told reporters, vowing, "That will not happen." "Just as the United States would not agree to a ceasefire after the bombing of Pearl Harbor or after the terrorist attack of 9/11, Israel will not agree to a cessation of hostilities with Hamas after the horrific attacks of October 7," he continued. "Today, we draw a line between the forces of civilization and the forces of barbarism," Netanyahu declared, arguing that countries that failed to align themselves with Israel in "a war for our common future" were placing themselves in harm's way. "If Hamas and Iran's axis of evil wins, you will be their next target," he warned, vowing to fight until the Palestinian militant group was wiped out.

Ukraine targets Crimea with UK-made missiles



MOSCOW (Agencies): Ukraine used several British-made Storm Shadow missiles in an attempted attack on Crimea, with Russian air defenses intercepting all of them, the Defense Ministry has claimed. Russian officials previously said this type of long-range munition was employed in strikes on the peninsula last month as well. In a message posted on its Telegram channel on Monday, the Russian Defense Ministry reported that "on October 30 at around 13:00 Moscow time an attempted attack by the Kiev regime on targets in Crimea involving eight 'Storm Shadow' cruise missiles was thwarted." Sevastopol Governor Mikhail Razvozhayev confirmed on his Telegram channel that air defense systems had been activated in the port city, which is home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet. The official called on locals to take cover. Later he wrote that two projectiles had been downed over the city. In a subsequent post, Razvozhayev revealed that falling missile debris had left at least one man injured and resulted in minor material damage.

Germans must be ready for war – defense chief



BERLIN (Agencies): A new war in Europe is no longer unthinkable and German society must adapt to this reality, Defense Minister Boris Pistorius has claimed as he called for increased military spending. In an interview with Germany's ZDF broadcaster on Sunday, Pistorius insisted that Germans "must again get used to the thought

that the danger of a war in Europe could pose a threat." Discussing Berlin's defense capabilities, the minister called on his compatriots to "become war-capable." The official cited the Ukraine conflict as well as hostilities between Israel and Hamas as proof that fighting could also erupt elsewhere. Pistorius brushed off criticism that Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government has been too slow to build up the German armed forces, claiming that they are working as rapidly as possible to make up for 30 years of neglect and underfunding. The minister promised that the Bundeswehr would be unrecognizable in three or four years' time, and suggested that the German military is already among the strongest in NATO and Europe.

100 dead and missing in Mexico after hurricane

ACAPULCO (Agencies): The number of people dead and missing due to Hurricane Otis, a Category 5 storm that hammered the Mexican Pacific resort city of Acapulco last week, has risen to 100, the government of the southern state of Guerrero said yesterday. Otis battered Acapulco with winds of 266kph on Wednesday, flooding the city, tearing roofs from homes, hotels, and other businesses, submerging vehicles, and severing communications as well as road and air connections. Looting broke out as the city's population of nearly 900,000 became increasingly desperate for food and water. The government of Guerrero, Acapulco's home state, said in a statement that 46 people were dead and 54 others were



missing. On Sunday, Mexico's federal civil protection authorities said there were 48 dead, comprising 43 in Acapulco and five in nearby Coyuca de Benitez. Among the dead were a US citizen, a Briton, and a Canadian, according to Guerrero's government. Many residents of Acapulco were still struggling to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives yesterday afternoon.

Australian PM Says He Made No Requests to Biden Over Potential Assange Release



CANBERRA (Agencies): Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese did not ask US President Joe Biden to facilitate the release of Australian journalist and WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange during his visit to Washington, saying the issue does not necessarily require the president's intervention. "Joe Biden doesn't interfere with the Department of Justice — Joe Biden is a president who understands the separation of the judicial

system from the political system. That's an important principle," Albanese told Australian media. The prime minister said it was time to bring the matter to a conclusion, but "not necessarily" through a presidential intervention, according to the report. WikiLeaks was founded by Assange in 2006, but rose to prominence in 2010 when it began publishing large-scale leaks of classified government information, including from the US.

World Bank warns of huge oil price surge

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Continued escalation of Israel's war with Hamas could push oil prices into "uncharted waters," the World Bank warned in its Commodity Markets Outlook on Monday. The World Bank cautioned that while the war's effect on oil prices had been limited thus far, the future "would darken quickly if the conflict were to escalate." The organization's report outlined three potential futures

based on the level of disruption escalating hostilities might cause in global oil supply. A "small disruption," removing 500,000 to 2 million barrels of oil from circulation per day, would be mostly absorbed by the market, the bank predicted. Prices would inch up from the current \$90 per barrel to between \$93 and \$102, canceling out the \$9 drop it had previously predicted by next year in the face of slowed economic growth.

Argentina buys four P-3 Orions from Norway

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies): The Argentine Ministry of Defense and the Norwegian Defence Materiel Agency (NDMA) signed a contract for the purchase of three Lockheed P-3C Orions and one P-3N Orion for the Argentine Navy on 17 October. The contract is worth nearly USD60 million, to be paid over the next three years. The contract was signed by Argentine Minister of Defense Jorge Taiana, Chief of the General Staff of the Argentine Navy Admiral Julio Guardia, and NDMA Director Magnus Hansvold. The signing took place at the Presidente Sarmiento Frigate Museum Ship in Buenos Aires, attended by Norwegian Ambassador



to Argentina Halvor Sætre and Commander of Argentine Naval Aviation Commodore Juan Alberto Mercatelli. The purchase follows the 11 October US government authorisation to transfer the aircraft, as well as 24 Danish F-16 Fighting Falcons, which have not yet been signed for.

HK's main pro-democracy party shut out of local elections

HONG KONG (Agencies): Pro-democracy parties won the last district council elections in 2019 in a landslide during the peak of massive and at times violent protests calling for greater political freedoms. Since then, Beijing has moved to quell dissent in the city, imposing a national security law and overhauling the electoral process in a way that allows it to weed out those considered disloyal to the Chinese government. To stand for the 88 directly elected seats, candidates must undergo a strict two-week nomination process and receive the approval of at

least nine members of three government-appointed committees within their constituency. Critics, including the US and European Union, see the revamp as further consolidating Beijing's authoritarian grip on the city. By this evening, the Democratic Party – the oldest and largest group in the pro-democracy camp – said all six of its candidates had "failed to secure sufficient nominations". "Although some candidates received nominations from some of the three committees' members, they couldn't meet the requirement," said chairman Lo Kin Hei.

White House unveils wide-ranging action to mitigate AI risks

WASHINGTON (Agencies): US president Joe Biden will take wider-ranging action on artificial intelligence (AI) today by seeking to increase safety while protecting consumers, workers, and minority groups from the technology's related risks. An executive order requires that developers of AI systems that pose risks to US national security, the economy, public health or safety share the results of safety tests with the US government, in line with the Defense Production Act, before they are released to the public. It also directs agencies to set standards for that testing and address related chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and cyber security risks, according to the White House. The order



is the latest step by the administration to set parameters around AI as it makes rapid gains in capability and popularity in an environment of, so far, limited regulation. It prompted a mixed response from the private sector. IBM said in a statement that the order "sends a critical message: that AI used by the US government will be responsible AI".

German-Israeli woman captured by Hamas confirmed dead

JERUSALEM (Agencies): Shani Louk, a 23-year-old German-Israeli woman captured by Hamas fighters when they stormed a music festival in the Israeli desert, is dead, Israel's foreign ministry said today. "Our hearts are broken," the ministry wrote in a message on X, formerly Twitter, as it confirmed Louk's death. "Shani, who was kidnapped from a music festival and tortured and paraded around Gaza by Hamas, experienced unfathomable horrors," it said. "May her memory be a blessing." Louk had been missing since Hamas fighters stormed the Supernova rave near the Gaza border as they carried out the worst attack in Israel's history. Around 270 festivalgoers were killed. Shortly after the attack, images began circulating online of a young woman lying face down and nearly naked in the back of a

pick-up truck in Gaza filled with armed men. Louk's family said they recognised Shani in the footage because of her dreadlocks and distinctive tattoos. The family initially held out hope she had been badly injured and was receiving hospital treatment in Gaza. Louk's sister Adi spoke of her "great sorrow" as she shared the news of Shani's death on Instagram. Their mother, Ricarda Louk, told German media they had been informed of Shani's death by the Israeli military. German-born Ricarda Louk, who moved to Israel three decades ago, told the RTL/NTV broadcasters her daughter had been identified through DNA analysis of a skull bone. She said she now believed her daughter was killed on the day of the attack. No official information was given about the circumstances of Louk's death.

About Khyber Mail The Khyber mail was first published in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1932. A newspaper in English by the eminent journalist Sheikh Sana Ullah. From 1932 to 1989 it has survived as leading English newspaper in the region by the sons of Sana Ullah i.e. Sheikh Zaka Ullah, Sheikh Inayat Ullah and Sheikh Saleem Ullah. The publication was shut down in 1989 due to various reasons. The current owner Rizwan Inayat son of Sheikh Inayat Ullah and grandson of Sheikh Sana Ullah, has restarted the family heritage but meeting with the requirement of the century, by giving the readers current happenings around the world with one touch anywhere any time and updating the reader to pace up with the world.

DSP inspects security arrangements on Tank-Pezu road

TANK (Agencies): Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Headquarters Tank Abul Rasheed Khan Marwat has visited different places including a check post to review overall security arrangements keeping in view the prevailing threats. The DSP visited Sadgai check post where he inspected the security arrangements made to ensure law and order keeping in view the recent

threats and incidents, said a police spokesman. The DSP issued directions to further improve security arrangements at the check post. He met with the on-duty staff and personnel and advised them to adopt precautionary measures for their own safety along with ensuring the safety of the lives and property of the citizens. He asked them to keep a close watch on suspicious persons

and use all available resources in order to maintain the law and order situation. Moreover, he advised them to treat people politely. The DSP also checked the transport vehicles at Kot-Katt Adda, Pathankot Adda and Rodi Khel Adda and met with the passengers. He assured the passengers that police would continue patrolling on roads for their safety.

Wahad, Mahmood guide their teams to reach q-finals in RMI Media Cricket League

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Wahad Khan of PPC Shaheen and Mahmood of PPC Cobra guided their respective teams to reach to quarter-finals after responsible batting in the pre-quarter-finals of the ongoing RMI Media Cricket League being played here at Karnal Sher Khan Sports Complex ground on Monday. Wahid Khan was declared the best player of the match by scoring 37 runs including three towering sixes and two boundaries by grabbing two wickets as and played a key role in guiding his team to enter into quarter-finals while Mahmood Khan, who was declared outstanding batsman and man of the match with 38 runs including five boundaries. On the fourth day of the ongoing RMI Media Cricket League, PPC Cobra and PPC Shaheen qualified for the next round while PPC Star also won their match. In the first pre-quarter-final played between Cobra and PPC United, Cobra team won by nine wickets. PPC United scored

75 runs for the loss of 4 wickets in the allotted 8 overs, in which Wasal Yousafzai scored 24 runs with three dashing boundaries. Shakeel was the leading scorer with 21 runs while Ahsan dismissed two players from Cobra side. Mahmood Khan was declared the outstanding batsman and man of the match with 38 runs while Rafat Ehsan scored another cracking 33 runs including five boundaries and one six. In the second match, PPC Star defeated PPC Gladiator by 31 runs. Star's team scored 137 for the loss of two wickets in which Zeeshan Liaquat scored 57 with three towering sixes and five boundaries all around the ground while Adil made another vital 29 runs including five boundaries. Zafar Iqbal dismissed two players on behalf of Gladiator. In reply, the PPC Gladiator team scored 106 runs for the loss of 5 wickets in which Zafar Iqbal was the leading scorer who scored 23 runs with five boundaries. The third

match was played between PPC Shaheen and PPC Bulls in which Shaheen won by 14 runs. PPC Shaheen, batting first, scored 106 runs on the loss of four wickets in eight overs, in which Wahid Khan smashed 37 runs with elegant boundaries and three towering sixes and Asim Shiraz scored 21 runs. For PPC Bulls, Abbas and Qayyum Afridi got two wickets each. In reply, the PPC Bulls team scored 92 runs for the loss of 5 wickets. Wahid Khan was declared the best player of the match by scoring 37 runs besides claiming two wickets. Presidents of the Swat Press Club Shahzad Alam and Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik were the special guests. Secretary Sports Writers Association Shahid Afridi, Peshawar Press Club General Secretary Irfan Musazai, Khyber Union General Secretary Imran Yousafzai, Sports Committee Chairman Zafar Iqbal along with senior journalists were present.

WaterAid Pakistan and CWC-IM Sciences Peshawar Join Forces for Climate-Resilient & Inclusive Water Solutions



PESHAWAR (Khyber Mail): WaterAid Pakistan (WAP) and the Center for Water and Climate (CWC) at the Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences) have formalized a strategic partnership aimed at addressing pressing issues in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), with a particular focus on climate resilience. This collaborative effort will involve conducting extensive research on Pakistan's WASH infrastructure to pinpoint areas in need of enhancement and to offer evidence-based recommendations. A strong emphasis will be placed on the development of climate-resilient WASH solutions to tackle challenges linked to climate change. Key initiatives encompass the creation of comprehensive water security plans, the empowerment of recent graduates, with a focus on fostering female professionals, and the intro-

duction of a groundbreaking Zero Liquid Discharge initiative, which includes rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, and wastewater treatment facilities—the first of its kind in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Furthermore, this partnership will engage students in various environmental initiatives and actively pursue grants for WASH-related projects to ensure effective resource utilization. This collaboration marks a significant stride towards achieving sustainable water solutions in Pakistan.



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Israel's indiscriminate use of force, even on women and children, speaks volumes on the unjust side of history it befalls. On the other side, the truth of Palestinians' demand for a land of their own stands supreme despite the harrowing cruelties they are being subject to. On any day, one only hopes that the truth prevails.

about a "special relationship" with Washington, where's that post-Brexit US trade deal that was supposed to help offset the impact of splitting from the EU? Yet, Biden wonders why there seems to be a loss of interest in playing ball with the US on its own terms under the old world order that it dominated. Indeed, what a huge mystery! If this is how Washington has been treating its closest allies, then is it any wonder that the rest of the world isn't exactly enthusiastic about anything else that the US might want to arrange for everyone? "I think we have a real opportunity to unite the world in a way it hasn't been in a long time. And enhance the prospect of peace," Biden said. Get real, man. Any new world order proposed by establishment fixture Biden would exist for one purpose, as it always has: to serve US economic interests. As would any unity, Biden explained, as an example, that he was able to get both Japan and South Korea to unite despite "not talking" to one another. "I went to see them both," Biden said. "They agreed. And guess what they're doing?" Don't keep us in suspense, man! Are they signing a flurry of bilateral trade deals despite their historical grievances? Having pajama parties? Nope. They both signed on this past summer to help do Washington's bidding against China and get aboard with US-led military drills in Beijing's backyard. "They're both supporting the fight in Ukraine against Russian oppression" as well, Biden said. "Because they understand if they remain silent, they may be next." By "remaining silent," he apparently means ignoring Washington at their own peril. By "being next," he presumably means an attack by China and not Russia – although you never know. It seems that the talking point these days being used to drum up military-industrial business for Washington is that Russia is going to invade anyone and everyone. If it's a choice between just sitting out all the drama and joining up with Washington's attempts to antagonize China in its own backyard, apparently these Asian countries have decided that turning down US demands just isn't worth it. Kind of like the obnoxious pal who you know will make your life miserable if you forego his offer to hang out in favor of a quiet night at home – so you just pick the least bad option, sucking it up and indulging him. This new world order that Biden is peddling sounds like the kind of party whose host would constantly be clanging on his wine glass to make speeches about himself and "muh democracy" while everyone just wants to mingle, and then demand that everyone participate in annoying party games that no one else finds enjoyable or beneficial. But it looks like Biden is already concerned that this time around, a lot of invitations could remain without response – even if at the risk of having one's house firebombed as a result of the rejection. - Courtesy RT

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es. Additionally, it exacerbates climate change, intensifies food and water scarcity, and poses a significant threat to biodiversity. These challenges are interconnected and have far-reaching impacts on our quality of life. I urge our local and national authorities to prioritise sustainable urban planning, family planning education, and comprehensive policies aimed at addressing overpopulation. It is essential that we work together to find a balance between our growing population and the finite resources of our planet. Furthermore, as

- Kanza Kanwal
- Karachi

Ambassador Masood Khan receives Hubert Humphrey Fellows from Pakistan

Washington D.C. (Agencies): "It is a great opportunity for Pakistani students and professionals to visit the United States and benefit from globally recognized seats of learning and hone their skills for better service delivery," said Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States. "Pakistan and United States have long-standing educational ties and both the countries are partnering to further strengthen these bonds with increased number of exchanges," he continued. "Immersion would be a good approach to learn new technologies; and build networks to bring the professionals of the two countries closer," he said. The Ambassador made these remarks while interacting with a group of 15 mid-career Pakistani professionals, from public and private sector, who are currently visiting the United States under Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program and pursuing their studies in various disciplines in leading US universities. The Program brings mid-career professionals from developing countries, including Pakistan, to the United States for a year of study and professional experiences. It is part of the Fulbright exchange and fellows are selected based on their potential for



national leadership and commitment to public service. This year 17 Pakistani professionals have been selected for the program. On Pak-US relations, the Ambassador said that the two countries have recalibrated their relations after post-withdrawal period and have been making efforts to strengthen their partnership in critical areas including trade and investment, climate change, energy, agriculture, health and education. The Ambassador urged the public sector professional to keenly observe, study and learn best practices, being followed by the US public sector institutions for improved service delivery. Discussing

Pak-US cooperation in health sector, the Ambassador stated that Pakistan looked forward to benefitting from US expertise in robust disease surveillance and vaccine production to meet future pandemics. He urged the visiting fellows to develop networks with their counterparts for mutual learning and sharing of expertise. "You are the ambassadors of Pakistan. Help project true image of the country and play your role to develop new linkages between professionals of the two countries," said the Ambassador. The Ambassador wished the visiting professionals productive stay in the United States.

Embassy of the Republic of Korea organized 2023 Korea-Pakistan Friendship Concert in Islamabad



Islamabad (Adnan Hameed): The 2023 Korea-Pakistan Friendship Concert, organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea was held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts on the 27th of October, 2023. The 2023 Korea-Pakistan Friendship Concert was Non-Commercial/Non-Ticketed and open to public and was organized by the Embassy in the celebration and commemoration of the 40th year anniversary of the diplomatic ties between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. Mr. Muzaffar Ali Burki, the Joint Secretary from the National Heritage and Culture Division, government of Pakistan joined the concert as the chief guest. The event was attended by the ambassadors and the deputy heads of different embassies, students and faculty members from different universities and the general public. The artists that performed in the concert were two Korean groups that came to Pakistan all the way from Korea called

'LAON' and 'MOCCOJI' both groups well-versed in playing and singing Korean folk music and giving Korean folk music a modern touch. Khumaariyan, the very famous Pakistani band of musicians and the students from the National College of Arts, Lahore also performed at the concert. The ambassador of the Republic of Korea shared his optimism in regards to the relations between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. H.E. laid emphasis on how music and culture has the potential of uniting people across borders. The ambassador of the Republic of Korea mentioned that this concert was more than just a musical event. It was the celebration of the deep-rooted friendship and cultural bond between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. H.E. mentioned that this concert was a reminder that beyond borders and differences, the universal language of music and culture can transcend barriers and bring people together in harmony.

Fine for helmet violators increased from Rs200 to Rs2000

LAHORE (Agencies): The city traffic police have increased the fine from Rs200 to Rs2000 for motorcyclists not wearing a helmet. Interestingly, the fine has been increased from Rs200 to Rs2000, but still most of motorcyclists are not willing to wear helmets, CTO office sources told APP on Monday. The action was taken in accordance with the directives of City Traffic Officer (CTO) Mustansir Feroze, who urged citizens

to strictly abide by the traffic rules. "The CTP is launching a special campaign to raise awareness about the traffic rules, road safety, and the importance of wearing safety helmets," he added. Muhammad Khurram, a senior official at the CTO office, said that motorcyclists give different justifications to traffic wardens for not wearing a helmet. The traffic police have set up 190 checking points in the city to stop the violation.

16 suspects arrested in Dir Upper

PESHAWAR (Agencies): The Dir Upper Police have initiated indiscriminate actions against criminal elements, resulting in the arrest of 16 suspects, absconder criminals and drug dealers. In a statement issued on Monday, the District Police Officer said that the protection of the lives, property, dignity and peace and security of the public was our top priority. According to the details, over the past 24 hours, the Dir Upper Police arrested 16 suspects and conducted various search and strike operations at different locations against criminal elements. Furthermore, under



the National Action Plan, various locations were checked and suspected individuals were apprehended. The Warai Police Station filed a case under the Narcotics Act against a drug dealer, arresting them for possessing drugs, including chars and registering a case against the suspect.

Islamabad's Soan Zone police nabbed 2,505 accused during 2023

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Islamabad's Soan Zone Police made significant strides in curbing criminal activity during the current year, resulting in the apprehension of 2,505 individuals, including 267 members of 115 criminal gangs. This successful operation led to the recovery of various illicit items such as vehicles, motorcycles, drugs, liquor and weapons with ammunition. Police spokesperson said on Monday that increased vigilance and proactive measures were in direct response to the directives issued by the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, who emphasized the eradication of crime within the city. As a result, the Soan Zone Police executed a comprehensive crackdown, which resulted in the capture of 2,505 offenders, including 267 individuals associated with 115 criminal networks, as well as 370 absconders. During these operations, the authorities successfully retrieved 37 stolen vehicles, 164 stolen motorcycles, 85.90 kilograms of hashish, 102.4 kilograms of heroin, 201 bottles of wine, 503 cans of beer, 381 pistols, and 53 rifles with their accompanying ammunition. Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, ICCPO, underscored the necessity of a rigorous crackdown on drug trafficking and the possession of illegal weapons. He stressed the continual review of the police force's performance in this area, emphasizing the intolerance of any negligence in official duties.

Case response anti-polio drive inaugurated

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Deputy Commissioner Hassan Waqar Cheema Monday inaugurated the week-long case response Anti-Polio drive by administering drops to children under five years of age here at his office. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the drive had been launched in five high-risk towns of the district including Rawalpindi City, Rawalpindi Cantonment, Taxila, Gujjar Khan and Rawalpindi Rural after the presence of poliovirus in the environmental samples. Hassan said that around 860,885 children would be covered during the drive while 2,770 teams including 2,430 mobile teams, 568 area in-charges, 261 fixed points and 156 Union Council medical officers were participating in the drive. He added that children were also immunized at 109 transit points in the district. Meanwhile, District Superintendent Vaccination Muhammad Nadeem said that over 150,000 children had been protected against Polio on the first day of the campaign. He urged the citizens, particularly the parents, to come forward and play their role in eliminating the crippling disease from society.

Pakistan translated its climate commitment into national policies, Amb Henny



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): IWMI host a Pre-COP28 "Accelerating the Water-Food-Climate Nexus Transformation" dialogue, IWMI exploring the role of Water Security in food systems for a climate-resilient in Pakistan. IWMI's Director General Dr. Mark Smiffy address the inaugural session of Pre-COP 28. DG IWMI said as we all gear up for COP28, then our aim is that this meeting provides an opportunity to discuss new ways for us to collaborate and rally around the need to transform water, energy and food systems in Pakistan." Dr. Smith summed up that moving forward IWMI will be supporting Ministry of Climate Change in CoP 28 position paper. Advising Pakistan's climate negotiation team on water issues. Sharing outputs during Pakistan Water Week (Dec 4-6) & CoP 28 for broader impact. Dr. Smith mentioned that mentioned, "We hope that today's event will contribute to setting a pathway forward for Pakistan on the critical issues such as intensifying climate change, water scarcity, and food insecurity." H.E. Henny De Vries, Ambassador,



Kingdom of the Netherlands said, "I am very pleased that IWMI took the initiative to bring us together to prepare for the COP28 and to discuss the importance of accelerating Water Food Climate Nexus Transformation Pathways for Pakistan." She added "Pakistan translated its climate commitment into national policies and the Ministry of Climate Change established an institutional framework to implement initiatives. e can identify how the Intl. community in Pakistan can work towards a climate resilient Pakistan." H.E. Maciej Piasarski, Ambassador of Poland said "As we think about expanding Polish-Pakistan cooperation we should concentrate on issues which matter lot to our people. Therefore I believe jointly tackling climate change could provide a range of field for cooperation." Ambassador added, Polish water technologies in association with IWMI can provide a range of solution to Pakistan climate issues." Sharing rapid, affordable water purification tech, Constructing ecological wastewater treatment plants, Partnering for flood prevention.

Indonesia to start direct flights with Pakistan for trade promotion

ISLAMABAD (Staff Report): H.E. Adam M. Tugio, Ambassador of Indonesia said that his country is to start direct flights with Pakistan in near future that would help boost people to people contacts and bilateral trade ties between the two countries. He said that Indonesia is keen to further strengthen trade and economic ties with Pakistan and launch of direct lights would be helpful in achieving this goal. He said that an Indonesian Corner would be inaugurated soon in the National Book Foundation of Pakistan that would create better awareness about Indonesia in Pakistan and improve bilateral ties between the two countries. He said this while addressing the business community during his farewell visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. H.E. Adam M. Tugio said that Pakistan and Indonesia have good potential to explore untapped potential of cooperation in Halal herbal medicines. He said that Pakistani pharmaceutical products are quite affordable and can penetrate the Indonesian market. He said that Indonesia would organize a Pakistan-ASEAN specific expo in Jakarta next year and the Pakistani business community should participate in it. He lauded the ICCI for sending its delegation to attend a trade expo in Indonesia and stressed that ICCI should send its regular delegations to Indonesia to explore all untapped areas of business collaboration between the private sectors of two countries. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that

Indonesia and the ASEAN region offer a lot of potential to Pakistan and stressed that Pakistan should focus on these countries for trade and exports. He said that ICCI would encourage more trade delegations to Indonesia to explore new business opportunities with it. He said that Indonesian investors should also be encouraged to invest in Pakistan's tourism infrastructure and other sectors. He said that Pakistan, Indonesia and Nigeria are big markets of Muslim world and they should sign an FTA to strengthen their trade ties that would bring prosperity to their nations. He reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to strengthen liaison with the Indonesian Embassy to improve business linkages between the private sectors of both countries. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI lauded the efforts of H.E. Adam M. Tugio for improving trade ties between Indonesia and Pakistan and hoped that his successor would take forward these efforts to bring both countries even closer. He highlighted Pakistan's prospective industries for cooperation with Indonesia including IT, tourism, pharmaceuticals, textiles, cooking oil and others. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI briefed the Indonesian Ambassador about the successful recent visit of ICCI delegation to Indonesia and thanked them for the great hospitality extended by the Indonesian authorities. Hamayun Kabir, Faseeh ullah Khan, Malik Mohsin Khalid and others also spoke on the occasion and shared useful proposals to further improve bilateral cooperation between the two countries.



Embassy of Kazakhstan Hosts Republic Day Reception in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (Adnan Hameed): The Embassy of Kazakhstan in Pakistan hosted a grand reception on October 26, 2023, to celebrate the Republic Day of Kazakhstan. Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin, in his address, pledged to further enhance the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. During his speech, Ambassador Kistafin highlighted the historical significance of Kazakhstan's independence, which was achieved three decades ago. He emphasized Kazakhstan's commitment to strengthening its bilateral relations with Pakistan, recognizing the significant progress that Kazakhstan, as a key Central Asian nation, has made over the years. He attributed these achievements to the relentless efforts of the Kazakh people in safeguarding their independence and forging a unique national identity. Am-



bassador Kistafin reiterated the high value that the people and government of Kazakhstan place on their relations with Pakistan. Notably, the reception commemorated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, signifying a momentous occasion in their shared history. Caretaker Federal Minister of Railways, Shahid Ashraf Tarar, also delivered a congratulatory address during the event, extending warm wishes to Ambassador



Yerzhan Kistafin, the Kazakh government, and the citizens of Kazakhstan on their Republic Day. Minister Tarar emphasized the strong and friendly ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan and underscored the importance of close collaboration to promote peace and stability in the region. One of the highlights of the reception was a captivating Fashion Show and an Exhibition of Crafts, providing a platform for talented artists to showcase their work. Am-



bassador Kistafin commended these artists, highlighting the integral role of such activities in their social responsibility. To add a musical touch to the evening, a renowned Kazakh singer performed the national anthem of Kazakhstan and enthralled the audience with a repertoire of beautiful songs. This event served as a testament to the enduring bond between Kazakhstan and Pakistan, further fostering cultural exchange and diplomatic relations.

APUBTA Gears Up for Sit-In Outside HEC Office in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (Staff Report): The All Public Universities BPS Teachers Association (APUBTA), the officially recognized and democratically elected representative body for BPS teachers in all of Pakistan's public sector universities, is preparing for a protest followed by a sit-in outside the Higher Education Commission (HEC) headquarters in Sector H-9, Islamabad, on Tuesday, October 31, 2023. Thousands of BPS teachers from public sector universities across Pakistan, including Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan, will join the sit-in, which will persist until the Higher Education Commission accepts their primary demand. APUBTA's sole demand is the issuance of a notification approving a service structure and promotion policy for all BPS teachers in public sector universities, a commitment previously made in writing by the HEC. The protest and sit-in are in response to the HEC's discriminatory and exploitative policies and their delays in approving the promotion policy for BPS teachers in public universities. It is crucial to note that the lack of a service structure, due to the HEC's negligence since its establishment in 2002, has deprived BPS teachers in public universities of their fundamental right to promotion. As per Section 10(q) of the HEC Ordinance 2002, the HEC is responsible for establishing criteria and



guidelines for the promotion of university teachers, a duty they have failed to fulfill over the past two decades since its inception. This failure has created significant issues related to promotion and seniority for over 50,000 BPS faculty members in public sector universities. APUBTA has been actively working to address promotion-related challenges for university teachers since 2020 and has organized numerous successful nationwide protests during this time. It has also held multiple meetings with HEC officials, convincing them of the urgency of this matter. HEC officials signed written agreements with APUBTA on October 20, 2020, October 14, 2021, March 10, 2022, and July 24, 2023, with each agreement committing to approving and notifying the service structure and promotion policy for BPS university teachers within 2-3 months. HEC officials also assured the Senate Standing Committee on Education in its meeting

on August 22, 2022, and the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Education in its meeting on February 3, 2023, that the promotion policy for university teachers would be approved promptly. Despite clear directives from parliamentary committees and promises made to FAPUASA on this issue, HEC officials have failed to honor their commitments and written agreements. It has been approximately three months since HEC's last written commitment to APUBTA and FAPUASA, yet no meeting has been scheduled for the approval of the promotion policy for BPS university teachers by the commission. Given this situation, APUBTA has no choice but to launch a nationwide protest followed by a sit-in outside the HEC headquarters in Sector H-9, Islamabad, on October 31, 2023. APUBTA's leadership is determined to maintain the sit-in until their primary demand is met – the issuance of a notification approving the promotion policy for BPS faculty members by the Higher Education Commission. All necessary preparations for the protest and sit-in have been finalized, and convoys comprising thousands of public university BPS teachers from various regions of Pakistan, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan, will commence their journey to Islamabad on Monday to participate in the protest the following day.

SRSO Champions Child Protection in Flood-Affected Areas

SUKKUR (Agencies): In a concerted effort to safeguard vulnerable populations, particularly children, in flood-affected areas at the school and village level, the Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) on Monday has successfully conducted a comprehensive training program. The initiative, conducted over three days at Government High School Thari Mirwah, Khairpur, is designed to empower government teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to establish secure learning environments in the aftermath of disasters. Funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and ADH, and executed in collaboration with Malteser International, the project is part of the "Integrated Emergency, Health, Protection, and WASH Response for Vulnerable Flood-Affected Communities in Sindh." This joint endeavour addresses critical concerns such as child protection, health, and hygiene in the wake of natural disasters. A pivotal component of project protection focuses

on equipping teachers with the tools necessary to effectively safeguard children during and after floods. By providing specialized training to the government of Sindh Education Department nominated teachers (15 Males and 05 Females) by the master trainer in close coordination with the Child Protection Unit Khairpur, SRSO aims to foster a culture of safety and protection that extends far beyond the confines of the educational sphere, benefiting the entire community. The Training was also visited by education officials, notable attendees included the District Education Officer (DEO), Assistant Education Officer and a representative from the Taluka Education Office. Their presence underscored the importance and recognition of the training's content and objectives and also distributed the Certificates among teachers. The Project Focal Person, Naimatullah Sawand while speaking the occasion, said the initiative recognizes that post-flood communities require more than im-

mediate relief adding that they need emergency health services, protection for vulnerable populations, and access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. Through collaboration, the project combines resources and expertise to comprehensively address the complex challenges of floods. Integrating emergency, health, protection and WASH responses aims to support Sindh's communities in sustainable recovery, he added. Mr Sawand said the project embodies a proactive and forward-thinking approach to disaster management, putting the well-being and safety of affected communities at the forefront. He said that SRSO's dedication to safeguarding vulnerable populations, particularly children, in flood-affected areas is evident through this comprehensive training program. By empowering government teachers, SRSO creates a ripple effect of safety and protection that transcends education, positively impacting the entire community, he added.

SAUDI AMBASSADOR APPRECIATES IIUI SPORTS GALA

ISLAMABAD (Staff Report): The Sports Gala of International Islamic University (IIU) concluded with a colorful ceremony at male Campus on Thursday that was graced by honorable Saudi ambassador H.E. Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki. The Ambassador congratulated the president of IIU and the university administration for organizing a successful sports gala and the active participation of national and foreign students. He said that technology has caused decrease in sports activities and IIU's recent effort is laudable in this regard as it will help promoting healthy activities in youth. Referring to Pak-Saudi relations, he said that the whole world knows the brotherly and exemplary relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. He said Pakistan has a special place in our hearts. He furthered that the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Saudi government have always valued relations with Pakistan. Around 1000 students from Pakistan and more than 30 countries participated in this week-long sports gala of the International Islamic University. More than 50 departments of 11 faculties of the university participated in more than 30 sports categories in indoor, outdoor games and athletics competitions. The winner of the sports gala 2023 was the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, whose teams won most of the competitions. The Faculty of Social Sciences stood second, while the Faculty of Languages and Literature secured the third position. The Faculty of Computing won the tug-of-war at the closing ceremony. The Faculty of Social Sciences also won the best par-



ticipation award. The most appreciated performance in the ceremony was the performance of Indonesian students who demonstrated their traditional martial arts. Speaking on the occasion, International Islamic University President H.E. Dr. Hathal Homoud Al-Otaibi said that Sports Gala 2023 was a memorable event in the history of the university. He said that sports give us an opportunity to prepare for winning and losing in life and they play a key role in improving the health and education of the youth. He said that the enthusiasm and dedication of the students and the hard work for the success of this event is commendable. He specially thanked the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia for his visit. He said that today, the coordinators of students, coaches, their teams, administration

and students deserve appreciation and felicitations. H.E. Dr. Hathal announced that a similar sports gala will also be organized in the women's campus of the university which will be held from November 13 to 17th. On this occasion, the Saudi Ambassador distributed prizes and trophies to the winning faculties. Vice presidents, deans, DG, a large number of teachers and students attended the concluding ceremony. The host of the event was Dr. Ghufuran Ali Khan, the advisor of the students, who also presented the report of the event. Later, the honorable KSA ambassador along with the IIU President also visited the newly established food street and state of the art students' facilitation centre at the Directorate of Academics and Examinations of IIU.



Embassy of the Republic of Korea commemorated National Foundation Day in Islamabad



Islamabad (Staff Report): The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Islamabad commemorated the National Foundation Day and the Armed Forces Day of Korea, in addition to marking the 40th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Pakistan. The prestigious event took place at the residence of the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, with notable dignitaries in attendance, including the Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The ceremony also saw the presence of Murtaza Solangi, the Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting, and Kamran Tessori, the Governor of Sindh, Mr. Ahmed Hanif Orakzai. In his address to the distinguished audience, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea conveyed his enthusiasm for Pakistan's unwavering dedication to national progress. He highlighted that Korea, with its extensive experience and technological advancements, is committed to extending its support and collaboration with Pakistan's endeavors. The Ambassador emphasized the mutual benefits that can be achieved through a strong partnership, ensuring that the combined strengths of both nations yield even greater results. He also reiterated the Korean Embassy's dedication to this shared vision and expressed his gratitude for the support and goodwill extended as they embark on this new 40-year chapter of collaboration between Korea and Pakistan. The Ambassador further emphasized the deepening and diversification of the bond between both countries since 1983, spanning various fields, including politics, economy, culture, and collaborative development. He empha-



sized the need to not only cherish past accomplishments but also to envision a future filled with new promises, transcending the current status of 'friendship and see cooperation' and creating a resilient bond that endures the test of time and challenges.



China delivers first two converted ARJ21 air freighters

SHANGHAI (Agencies): The Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China, Ltd. (COMAC) delivered the first batch of two air freighters converted from ARJ21 passenger planes on Monday, a milestone in the conversion program for China's domestic regional jetliner. The converted aircraft has a designed maximum payload of 10 tonnes and a flight range of 2,778 kilometers. It is primarily intended for transporting cargo, mail and express shipments on domestic routes and short-haul inter-



national routes, according to COMAC. The ARJ21 freighter conversion program was officially initiated in May 2020. After going through phases of initial and detailed design, as well as

conversion, the aircraft received its airworthiness approval from the Civil Aviation Administration of China in January 2023. China is the largest air cargo market in Asia, with its booming e-commerce and express delivery industries imposing heightened demand on cargo transportation. Industry insiders believe the ARJ21 cargo aircraft could be a new option to explore low-capacity and specialized cargo markets, as well as high plateau regions.

Saudi investment ministry signs 8 MoUs to boost healthcare sector

RIYADH (Agencies): Almost 4,000 new healthcare jobs are set to be created in Saudi Arabia after the Ministry of Investment signed eight memorandums of understanding, valued at SR4 billion (\$1.07 billion), with seven international and local companies. These MoUs, inked during the Global Health Forum in Riyadh on Sunday, are expected to facilitate Saudi Arabia's pursuit of self-sufficiency in the sector. These agreements will lead to the localization of the supply chain for advanced medical devices,



encompassing sensors, stents and sutures. This supply will also include prosthetics, orthopedic devices, and wound care solutions, as reported by the Saudi Press Agency. The report further noted that these MoUs are

expected to generate 3,800 job opportunities within the Kingdom. At the forum, Saudi Arabia also unveiled its plan to introduce comprehensive state-funded insurance coverage for all citizens by 2026, aligning with the goals outlined in Vision 2030. The National Insurance Program, as revealed by Saudi Arabia's Health Minister Fahad Al-Jalajel during the Global Health Forum, won't necessitate annual renewal and will ensure lifelong coverage for all citizens, reported the SPA.

PIF's AIUla Development Co. and Six Senses to open luxury hotel in 2027

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's historic city of AlUla is set for a new luxury hotel following the signing of an agreement by a Public Investment Fund-owned firm tasked with developing the tourist destination. The deal, inked between AIUla Development Co. and resort and spa management operator Six Senses, will see a 1.2 million sq. meter hotel open in 2027, according to a statement. This move cements the company's commitment to boost luxury hospitality offerings in the ancient archaeological area, according to AIUla Development Co.



Managing Director Naif Al-Hamdan. "We are working to enrich the hospitality offerings and experiences in AlUla so that we can enable visitors to explore its rich history amidst its natural picturesque setting," Al-Hamdan said. The new hotel, named Six

Senses AIUla, will be built within an oasis and feature 100 guest villas and 25 residences. "We are excited to join hands with Six Senses to open a one-of-a-kind luxury hotel in AlUla," CEO of AIUla Development Co. Fabien Toscano noted. "The venture aligns with our commitment to elevating the hospitality offering in AlUla and marks another significant stride in our pursuit of sustainable development, contributing to the economic diversification and transformation of Saudi Arabia in line with Vision 2030," the CEO added.

Saudi Arabia adopts new aviation policy to improve sector's performance

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia on Monday launched a new aviation policy that seeks to boost the sector's performance and attract investments worth \$100 billion by 2030. According to the General Authority of Civil Aviation, the policy will adopt regulations for airports, ground services, air cargo and air transport services effective Oct. 30. The policy supports the privatization of airports, facilitates the procedures for new investors to join the aviation market, and enables airport operators to set wages according to their plans. The authority will also en-



able airport operators to flexibly diversify their revenues by increasing revenues from non-navigational services. This move will incentivize airports to diversify services and commercial activities, becoming stronger travel hubs with international standards.

Additionally, the authority's economic policy and regulations will help stimulate the Kingdom's investment environment, boost the transport and logistics sector's contribution to the local gross domestic product to 10 percent, and create direct and indirect job opportunities in the aviation sector. Furthermore, the measure will attract investments of up to \$100 billion from the public and private sectors by 2030 and aims to create a competitive climate that offers equal opportunities for the sector's current operators and future investors.

Alibaba upgrades Tongyi Qianwen with industry-specific AI models

HONG KONG (Agencies): Chinese technology giant Alibaba said on Tuesday it has updated its artificial intelligence (AI) model Tongyi Qianwen and released a suite of industry-specific AI models amid an intensifying AI race among tech companies. Alibaba's cloud computing arm at its annual conference in Hangzhou said Tongyi Qianwen 2.0 has "hundreds of billions of" parameters — a benchmark used to measure AI model power — making it one of the world's most powerful AI models by that



metric. It also said it has launched eight AI models for the entertainment, finance, healthcare and legal industries. The upgrade comes just six months after the model's initial release, reflecting the pace at which

tech companies are racing to control China's nascent and quickly expanding AI market. Rival Tencent last month said China was in the middle of a "war of a hundred models", with over 130 flooding the market. Tencent said its Hunyuan AI has more than 100 billion parameters and exceeds OpenAI's GPT-4 model in processing Chinese. The GPT-3 AI model from Microsoft-backed OpenAI contained 175 billion parameters in 2020 and Meta Platform's Llama 2 model had 70 billion parameters in 2023.

Thai central bank favours gold to shield US\$210bil reserve

BANGKOK (Agencies): The Bank of Thailand views gold as a relative safe haven in an era of high inflation and growing geopolitical risks, according to a central bank official, as the Southeast Asian nation seeks to safeguard its US\$210 billion of foreign reserves from market turbulence. The Thai central bank has increased its gold holdings over the past three years as it diversified its investments, deputy governor Alisara Mahasandana said in an interview last week. She declined to give details of official gold purchases,



but central bank data showed the value of bullion in its reserves has doubled since 2019. Thai central bank's affinity for gold is shared by monetary authorities in countries such as China, Poland and Turkey which have

also added the precious metal to their stockpiles even as dollar continued to rally and interest rates soared. Gold has stood out as one of the biggest winners since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct 7, surging about 9% as demand for haven assets increased. For Thailand, diversifying its reserves has become even more imperative after its stockpiles — mostly held in foreign currencies, US Treasury and valued in dollars — tumbled about US\$47 billion since reaching a record US\$258 billion in December 2020.

Yen weakens as Bank of Japan tweaks bond yield policy

TOKYO (Agencies): The Bank of Japan announced a minor tweak to its unconventional policy of controlling government bond yields on Tuesday, stopping short of expectations and sending the yen lower. While most other major central banks have hiked interest rates in a bid to tame prices, the BOJ has stuck with sub-zero borrowing costs to support the world's number three economy. Instead it has sought to keep interest rates at ultra-low levels by buy-



ing up huge quantities of government bonds in an attempt to keep a lid on yields. In July the BOJ raised to one percent the de-facto upper limit of a

tolerated band in which it allows yields to move. A media report on Tuesday said officials might widen this as they see inflation rising and the yen tumble against the dollar but the BOJ said only that it "will conduct yield curve control with the upper bounds of 1.0% for those yields as a reference". The BOJ also hiked its core inflation forecast — excluding food — to 2.8% from 2.5% for the current fiscal year, and for 2024-25 to 2.8% from 1.9%.

Business community's role, imperative for economic development : Solangi

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Monday said the business community was playing a pivotal role in the development of economy with the promotion of business and enterprises in the country. During a meeting with office bearers of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), he said the economy was invigorated only with business and investment activities. The meeting deliberated upon multiple issues and initiatives including the promotion of business activities in the coun-

try. The caretaker government, the minister assured would ensure full support to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in this regard. He said with the support of the Chamber, maximum cooperation would be provided by the government to resolve the major problems of the business community. He remarked that national development was linked with the prosperity of the business community. In order to enhance the exports, the opinion of businessmen must be given due importance in the policy-making process, Murtaza Solangi opined.

Canadian Solar to build \$800 million solar panel factory in southeastern Indiana, employ about 1,200

JEFFERSONVILLE, Ind. (Agencies): Ontario-based Canadian Solar Inc. will build an \$800 million solar panel factory in southeastern Indiana that will employ about 1,200 workers once production is fully ramped up, the company said Monday. Canadian Solar said it will build the new photovoltaic cell factory at the River Ridge Commerce Center in Jeffersonville, an Ohio River city located just north of Louisville, Kentucky. Production is expected to begin by the end of 2025,

with the plant producing the equivalent of about 20,000 high-power solar panels per day, said the company, which is headquartered in Guelph, Ontario. The finished solar cells will be shipped to Canadian Solar's module assembly facility in Mesquite, Texas. "Establishing this factory is a key milestone that will enable us to better serve our U.S. customers with the most advanced technology in the industry," said Dr. Shawan Qu, founder and CEO of Canadian Solar.

Australia LNG workers vote in support for Chevron deal

CANBERRA (Agencies): An Australian union alliance's members voted in support to endorse deals on pay and conditions at Chevron's (CVX.N) two liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities in Australia, the union said on Tuesday. Earlier this month, the union called off strikes originally planned at the U.S. energy major's Gorgon and Wheatstone projects in Western Australia, which supply around 6% of the world's LNG. The breakthrough followed days of talks mediated by Aus-



tralia's industrial arbitrator, the Fair Work Commission, to try and revive an in-principle deal reached in September that ended weeks of strikes.

ACWA Power expands Sudair Solar PV with 25% capacity boost



RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's utility company ACWA Power has received a commercial operation certificate for the second phase of the 1,500 megawatts Sudair solar power project, according to a bourse filing. The company told Tadawul on Sunday that it received the certification from Saudi Power Procurement Co.,

the principal energy buyer in the Kingdom. In September, the company received a commercial operation certification for the first phase of the project. The second phase includes a 25 percent as an addition to the first phase which represents 50 percent of the 1,500 MW plant capacity. This brings the overall production capacity under commercial operation to 1,125 MW. Once completed, the SR3.5 billion (\$932.9 million) project will power 185,000 homes and balance around 2.9 million tons of annual emissions. The Sudair solar power project is 50 percent backed by the Saudi Public Investment Fund and 35 percent by ACWA Power

GCC sustainable cultural assets could cut 1.3m tons of CO2: report

RIYADH (Agencies): Investments in sustainable cultural assets have the potential to reduce the Gulf Cooperation Council region's lifetime carbon emissions by at least 1.3 million tons, equivalent to removing 320,000 cars from the roads a year, according to a new report. This reduction can be achieved by implementing green methods and technologies in the development of planned cultural assets in the region, as outlined in the latest research by Strategy& Middle East, a part of the PwC network. The report titled "A Sustainable and Inclusive Cultural Renaissance for the Middle East" emphasized that Saudi Arabia could lead this transformative effort as it plans to invest \$100 billion



in cultural projects to boost domestic spending on entertainment and leisure. Yahya Anouti, a partner at Strategy& Middle East, said: "Within the context of the region's ambitious net-zero agendas, GCC cultural leaders have a unique opportunity to put the region in the global vanguard by bringing together culture and sustainability."

Vietnam eyes first chip plant, US officials warn of high costs

HANOI (Agencies): Vietnam is holding talks with chips companies with the aim of boosting investment in the country and possibly building its first chipmaking plant, or fab, two business executives said, despite warnings from US industry officials about high costs. The Southeast Asian electronics manufacturing hub already hosts US giant Intel's largest semiconductor packaging and testing plant worldwide and is home to several chip designing software firms. It is working on a strategy to attract more semiconductor investment, including from foundries, which focus on manufacturing chips. Meetings with

half a dozen US chip firms took place in recent weeks, including with fab operators, Vu Tu Thanh, head of the Vietnam office of the US-Asean Business Council, told Reuters. He declined to identify the firms because talks were still at a preliminary stage. A chip executive, who declined to be identified because he was not allowed to talk to media, said talks with potential investors have involved US contract manufacturer GlobalFoundries and Taiwan's PSMC. The aim was to build Vietnam's first fab, most likely for less advanced chips used in cars or for telecoms applications, the executive added.

Alison Lee makes more history with victory in Aramco Team Series - Riyadh

RIYADH (Agencies): Alison Lee capped off her record-breaking Aramco Team Series - Riyadh campaign in style on Sunday, sealing victory in the individual format with an astonishing 29-under-par through 54 holes — another record to accompany her many accomplishments this weekend. Having smashed the Ladies European Tour 36-hole scoring record yesterday with a historic 22-under, the American was perfectly positioned to seal a second LET title — presented by the Kingdom’s Public Investment Fund — at Riyadh Golf Club with a six-shot lead overnight. While Carlota Ciganda put



the pressure on and reduced the deficit to three strokes on the front nine, Lee produced a similar level of form that had seen her top the leaderboard since the tournament began. Her overall game was outstanding once again and her approach shots and putting

were especially impressive. With a final round seven-under-par, Lee finished eight strokes in front to win the 2023 series finale and first-ever professional golf tournament in the Saudi capital. “I’ve played some really good golf this week and putted even better,” she said. “I hit almost every green, gave myself plenty of birdie opportunities, and made a lot of them count with aggressive, confident play. I had a lot of fun out there and I’m delighted with the win because any tournament is difficult to win — there are so many great players out there and all of them can produce great golf.

Man City crush Man Utd as Liverpool show support for absent Diaz

LONDON (Agencies): Manchester City underlined the vast gulf in quality between themselves and Manchester United on Sunday as Liverpool showed their support for absent teammate Luis Diaz, whose parents were kidnapped in Colombia. Old Trafford paid tribute to late United great Bobby Charlton ahead of kick-off, with supporters unfurling a banner that read: “The finest English footballer the world has ever seen.” But memories of past glories



failed to translate onto the pitch, with the home team thoroughly outplayed by the champions, who did not have to get out of second gear in their 3-0

win. Champions City made most of the early running and were awarded a penalty after VAR spotted a foul on Rodri by Rasmus Hojlund as the ball was crossed into the area from a free-kick. It was the first spot-kick Manchester City have ever been awarded at Old Trafford in the Premier League in the 27th meeting between the teams. Erling Haaland stepped up to tuck home from the spot, his 12th goal of the season in all competitions.

Nicola Innocentin: Al-Fateh a great project for players to join

RIYADH (Agencies): Al-Fateh’s 2-1 win at Al-Raed on Friday saw them climb to fifth place in the Roshn Saudi League after 11 rounds of matches. Nicola Innocentin, the former sporting director at Al-Fateh, helped build the team that is now aspiring to break the dominance of the big boys. After a professional playing career that took him from his native Italy to Germany and the US,



Innocentin qualified as a football agent and club consultant, before taking the

sporting director’s role at Al-Fateh. During an exclusive interview with Arab News, Innocentin revealed what the unprecedented transfer window in the Saudi League looked like from a club insider’s perspective, why old habits caused his departure after less than three months in charge and how the league will continue setting records and standards for the years to come.

Ardie Savea named best rugby player of the year

PARIS (Agencies): New Zealand loose forward Ardie Savea was named World Rugby Men’s 15s Player of the Year on Sunday, despite ending up on the losing side in Saturday’s Rugby World Cup final. Savea was chosen ahead of Irish centre Bundee Aki, South Africa lock Eben Etzebeth and France captain Antoine Dupont, who won the award two years ago. Savea is the 11th All



Black to win the award, which was first introduced in 2001. He had been a fi-

nalist in 2019. His award comes after a stellar season in which he helped New Zealand to win the Rugby Championship and a place in the World Cup final, which they lost 12-11 to the Springboks on Saturday. Ireland’s Andy Farrell was chosen as World Rugby Coach of the Year while All Blacks winger Mark Tele’a won the award for Breakthrough Player of the Year.

Records tumble as Verstappen cruises to Mexico Grand Prix victory

MEXICO (Agencies): Max Verstappen kept his record-breaking season going with a stunning win for Oracle Red Bull Racing at the 2023 Formula 1 Mexico Grand Prix at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez on Sunday. It was Verstappen’s fifth victory in Mexico, stretching the gap over the all-time record of three wins previously held by Jim Clark. The Dutchman achieved this feat in front of a crowd of 152,668 ticket-paying fans. The attendance was a new milestone for the Mexico City Grand Prix, which drew a total of



400,639 spectators over the course of the weekend. The 26-year-old claimed his 51st career win, and 16th of the season, eclipsing his 15 wins in 2022. On a circuit with a corner named after 1992 World Champion Nigel Mansell,

Verstappen’s last two seasons have now seen him score 31 victories — the same number as the Englishman claimed in his entire 187-race F1 career. Verstappen got a part of the job done within seconds of the lights going out. With Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc starting from his second Mexico pole position and teammate Carlos Sainz alongside him, the world champion aimed his Red Bull between the two scarlet cars and passed both on the 811-meter run to the first corner — the longest of the F1 season.

Embiid scores 35 in dominant effort as NBA 76ers beat Portland

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Joel Embiid unleashed a dominant performance with 35 points, 15 rebounds, seven assists, six blocked shots and two steals on Sunday in Philadelphia’s 126-98 NBA rout of Portland. The reigning NBA Most Valuable Player delivered what 76ers coach Nick Nurse called a “super dominant” showing, lifting the Sixers to victory in their season home opener. “He’s always exceptional,” 76ers guard De’Anthony Melton said. “He’s always amazing for us. When he’s playing like that, he’s the best player in the league



every night.” The 29-year-old Cameroonian big man made 12-of-22 shots from the floor, including 2-of-4 from 3-point range, and sank 9-of-11 from the free throw line in 29 minutes. “That’s my job, try to get better every single day,” Embi-

id said. “It starts on defense, having that mentality to play it, lock down everything and block everything and offensively just trying to make the right plays. “It’s all about taking care of business. We got the win. I’m excited about that. We’ve still got a long way to go.” The haunting thing for 76ers’ rivals is Embiid insists he must improve. “I’ve still got to get better,” he said. “I had a bad turnover toward the end. I had three of them. That I can correct. I missed some passes and defensively I could have done a better job. But I’m happy.”

Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Saudi lead gold medal count at Riyadh 2023 World Combat Games

RIYADH (Agencies): The penultimate day of the Riyadh 2023 World Combat Games was a spectacle to behold as fans were treated to thrilling performances in Kendo, Muay Thai, Taekwondo and Savate. The Saudi Muay Thai team left an indelible mark with nine contenders stepping into the ring, three of which will continue in their respective weight divisions tomorrow. In the Savate arena, three champions were crowned with gold medals today. Meanwhile, the quarterfinal rounds for the remaining men’s and women’s Savate Combat and Assaut categories concluded, setting the stage for tomorrow’s much-anticipated finals. On a neighboring field of play, Taekwondo captivated spectators with the Mixed Pair Poomsae finals, while Kendo enthralled with its Mixed Individual Wheelchair finals. The day culminated



in the distribution of six gold medals, with Taekwondo adding one, Kendo two and Savate three. As we approach the Games’ grand finale, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia have emerged as front-runners in the gold medal count, boasting 21, 12, and nine medals, respectively. Notably, Ukraine has the highest number of podium finishes, boasting 49. Savate The French martial art of Savate merges European boxing techniques with fluid

kicks. Savate’s Assaut discipline emphasizes controlled, technical strikes, while the Combat division allows full-contact, power-driven blows. Savate’s third discipline, Canne de Combat, incorporates a wooden cane in a strategic, dance-like combat sequence. Medhi Louis Laurent of France triumphed in the Men’s -60 kg Assaut championship, securing a 5-0 win over Khalid Bouguame from Morocco. In the women’s division, France’s Nina Bergandi dominated the -52 kg Assaut category, securing a 5-0 win against Japan’s Mariko Hara. The mixed individual Wheelchair Canne de Combat came to a conclusive end with Independent Neutral Athlete Sebastien Pilot beating Korea’s Eunsuk Lee with a final score of 3-0. Bronze was awarded to Lindy Ursula Bhanthooa of Mauritius.

Morata scores again as Atletico top Alaves to tie record of 14 straight home wins in Spanish league

MADRID (Agencies): Red-hot Alvaro Morata scored yet another goal and Atletico Madrid beat Alaves 2-1 for their 14th straight Spanish league victory at home on Sunday, tying their longest winning home streak. Morata scored his seventh goal in his last seven games with Atletico, which matched its winning run from a decade ago. Diego Simeone’s team had also won 14 in a row at home between May 2012 and February 2013, while still playing at the Vicente Calderon Stadium. “It’s no coincidence that we’ve achieved this streak at home, where our fans make us feel stronger and more comfortable,” said Rodrigo Riquelme, who



also scored for Atletico on Sunday. The victory at the Metropolitano Stadium moved Atletico to third place with 25 points, three behind both Girona and Real Madrid. Madrid came from behind to win 2-1 at Barcelona in the first league “clasico” of the season on Saturday, while Girona defeated Celta Vigo 1-0 on Friday.

Fishel, Shaw score first US goals and the American women defeat Colombia 3-0



SAN DIEGO (Agencies): Mia Fishel and Jaedyn Shaw both scored their first international goals and the US defeated Colombia 3-0 on Sunday. Lindsey Horan added a goal for the US in the second of two exhibition matches against Colombia. The teams played to a scoreless draw on Thursday in Utah. The US will play just two more games this year, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Frisco, Texas, in early December.

Both matches are against China. The US were expected to name a new coach before those matches as the team prepare for the Paris Olympics next summer. The Americans have been led for four games by Twila Kilgore, who was named interim coach following Vlatko Andonovski’s resignation after the Women’s World Cup this past summer. The US were eliminated in the Round of 16 on penalties after a scoreless draw with Sweden, the earliest World Cup exit ever for the Americans. Andonovski, who led the team for four years, was recently named coach of the Kansas City Current. Kilgore, who was one of Andonovski’s assistants on the national team, was 3-0-1 as interim coach of the No. 3 ranked Americans.

Diaz left out of Liverpool squad after ‘tough night’

LIVERPOOL (Agencies): Liverpool forward Luis Diaz was left out of the squad for Sunday’s Premier League home game against Nottingham Forest after his parents were kidnapped in Colombia, with manager Jurgen Klopp saying everyone at the club was worried. Colombia president Gustavo Petro said late on Saturday that Diaz’s mother had been rescued after they were kidnapped in northern Colombia, but officials were still searching for his missing father. “We had to obviously make a late change because of the private situation involving Luis Diaz,” Klopp said ahead of Sunday’s game at Anfield. “It’s a worrying situation for all of us and it was a pretty tough night. I have never had that before, it’s a new experience I never needed.” Earlier, Liverpool issued a statement saying they were aware of the situation



involving Diaz’s family and were focusing on the player’s welfare. Diaz, who has played 43 times for Colombia, was signed by Liverpool in January last year in a deal reported to be worth €45 million (US\$47.5 million). He has scored three times for Liverpool in all competitions this season. Colombia’s Attorney General Francisco Barbosa on Sunday said it was possible that Diaz’s father was being taken to Venezuela, and ordered an investigation to look into the motives of the kidnapping and find those responsible.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: OCTOBER 31, 2023



– It’s a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.
– **ARIES:** A message arrives today bringing some odd news, but it should be mostly positive! It’s a good time to stay engaged electronically using as many different means as possible.
– **TAURUS:** Nothing you do today seems to help your productivity, but that doesn’t mean you should just give up and head back to bed. You might be able to have all sorts of fun with your time wasters.
– **GEMINI:** Your brainy side is showing off a bit today, and you love what you see, think, and do! Others are impressed too, and you might be able to sell an old idea that you’ve been wanting to work on.
– **CANCER:** Some tiny addition to your routine becomes the straw that breaks the camel’s back and you’re suddenly overwhelmed. It’s not a good time to take on more stuff, so be ready to say no a lot.
– **LEO:** You’re at the center of the action today and should be able to get people moving in the right

direction no matter what they say they want to do. Your personal energy is just right for the day.
– **VIRGO:** Try to ease up and get your people to really listen closely. You’ve got more to say than they get yet, and you should really try to make sure that you’re being as clear as possible.
– **LIBRA:** Stay busy today. You’ve got lots of ideas and should be able to at least get started on some of them before you start to get tired. Relax a bit and let others help out when they wander by.
– **SCORPIO:** An opportunity appears that seems too great to pass up, but you should still walk away from it. There are hidden risks that are almost sure to trip you up. For now, you need to stay on track.
– **SAGITTARIUS:** You’re more and more excited about something new in your life, and you feel an urgent need to tell the world or at least your favorite people. It’s a fun day and well worth remembering.
– **CAPRICORN:** It’s far too easy to get caught up in chatter about the latest celebrity news or local gossip, but if you keep things sharp, direct, and to the point, you can steer the conversation your way.
– **ACQUARIUS:** Your love life is on fire, in a good way! If you’re single and don’t see any prospects ahead, you just need to turn around to see the right person. While it might be a challenge, it’s worth it!
– **PISCES:** You could be having a tough time communicating with a loved one, but you can probably get them to see things your way if you loosen up and share your feeling more poetically.

Turkiye Embassy celebrates 100th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Türkiye in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Staff Report): Ambassador of Türkiye His Excellency, Dr Mehmet Pacaci & Mrs Meryem Pacaci hosted reception to mark the 100th Anniversary of Proclamation of Türkiye at the local hotel in Islamabad. The event was graced by Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Sarfraz Bugti, Former Joint Chief of the Staff Committee of Pakistan Army, Former Pakistani Ambassadors and Head of Diplomatic Corps and missions along with thousands other Pakistani guests. Dr Mehmet Pacaci in his short speech welcomed all the distinguished Guest and praised the great leader Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Ata Turk (late) and expressed his gratitude to Turkish holy martyrs and veterans who fought for the same blessed cause and entrusted our beautiful homeland to us at the cost of their lives. Mehmet said that, the Republic of Türkiye signifies the reborn of a noble nation from its ashes that prefer to die instead of making compromises from its liberty, independence and honor. We are proud of being a member of such a heroic nation who has the "character of independence". Turkish War of Independence was not only the success of the Turkish nation but also well documented part of our shared history with Pakistan. He further said, the sacrifices and selfless support by the South Asian Muslims during the Khilafat Movement, and their political and financial contributions to the Turkish sacred cause have and will never be forgotten. Turkish Independence War has also become a profound inspiration for sub-continent Muslims in their struggle for freedom. Founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah expressed his appreciation for the Turkish struggle and its exceptional leader, Atatürk, as builder of Modern Türkiye and an example to the rest of the world, especially to the Muslim states in the Far East. Ladies and Gentlemen, More over, the video message by Turkish President



H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan was also shown during National Day and Centenary of the Republic of Türkiye in Islamabad. Erdogan stated during his recorded message: On behalf of my country and my nation, I would like to thank all our friends and guests who share our joy of celebration by being with us. Today, we are elated and proud to have reached the Centenary of the Republic. At this turning point in our glorious history, I commemorate all our heroes who pioneered the establishment of our new state, first and foremost the founder of the Republic, Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and wish Allah's mercy upon them. President of Türkiye said, I wish Allah's mercy upon all our glorious martyrs and veterans, who shed their blood for the homeland for a thousand years. We have implemented historical reforms in every field, from democracy to economy, from security to justice, from education to health, from agriculture to foreign policy. With the Presidential Government system, we have turned into a reality the ideal voiced by Gazi Mustafa Kemal that "THE PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE IS TO ENSURE AND SUSTAIN THE FULL INDEPENDENCE AND UNCONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF THE NATION",

almost after a century. By removing the walls between the state and the nation, we ensured that the people and the Republic were united. In short, despite all the enemies of our nation and country, with Allah's will, we shall bring to life the Century of Türkiye, as we have fulfilled all our other objectives. May Allah be on our side and help us. With these sentiments and thoughts in mind, I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate all our citizens living in Türkiye and abroad, on the Republic Day. May the soul of all our martyrs rest in peace! The reception was followed by ceremonial cake cutting performed by Dr Mehmet Pacaci, Governor Sindh, Chief Minister Sindh and other military personnel present there. To express gratitude and extend a piece of Türkiye to the attendees, guest received a farewell gift bag containing pens, diaries etc thoughtfully sourced from Turkish companies.



Messi wins record-extending 8th Ballon d'Or, Bonmati takes women's award

PARIS (Agencies): The list reads 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2021, and now 2023. Lionel Messi won the men's Ballon d'Or for a record-extending eighth time on Monday after fulfilling his life's ambition by leading Argentina to the World Cup title in Qatar last year. Adding to his silverware the one major trophy that eluded him in his storied career was the decisive factor in an otherwise quite mundane season — for his standards — at Paris Saint-Germain. The 36-year-old Messi won ahead of Manchester City forward Erling Haaland and his former PSG teammate Kylian Mbappe. Messi thanked his Argentina coach, teammates and staff for making his



victory possible. "Tonight I'm enjoying myself. It's a pleasure that will never leave me, and I hope to be able to enjoy it for many years to come," Messi said through a translator. "Becoming world champion was the title we were missing. I'd like to thank everyone who helped make Argentina the world champion team."

Israel faces major economic crisis – JPMorgan



PARIS (Agencies): JPMorgan has sharply lowered its fourth quarter economic forecast for Israel. According to a research note made public on Friday, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) may shrink 11% from the previous three months amid the escalation of hostilities with the Palestinian armed group Hamas. Earlier this month, the bank forecast a 1.5% downturn, but the initial projections were deemed "too optimistic," analysts suggested. "Gauging the impact of the war on Israel's economy remains difficult, both due to still-very high uncertainty about

the scale and duration of the conflict and the lack of high-frequency data at hand," JPMorgan stated. The bank also cut its initial projections for the country's yearly GDP growth to 2.5% instead of the previous 3.2%. Analysts, however, slightly raised the outlook for 2024, to 2% from the previous 1.9%. JPMorgan noted that Israel's previous conflicts, like the 2014 escalation of hostilities with Hamas or the 2006 conflict with the Lebanon-based armed group Hezbollah, "barely affected activity." However, "the current war has had a much larger impact on domestic security and confidence," analysts warned. For instance, the death toll estimated at around 1,400 Israelis as of Friday was already much higher than during the previous conflicts, while the number of mobilized reservists has already topped 350,000, the most in Israel's history and more than 5% of the country's labor force.

Beijing says Philippine boat 'illegally entered' Chinese waters

BELJING (Agencies): China's military said today that a Philippine vessel "illegally entered" waters near Scarborough Shoal without authorisation and it urged the Philippines to immediately stop its provocations. China and the Philippines have had several confrontations in disputed waters in the South China Sea, recently trading accusations about a collision between a Chinese coast guard vessel and a boat from the Philippines. "We are urging the Philippine side to immediately stop its infringement and provocations,

and earnestly avoid further escalation," said senior colonel Tian Junli, a spokesman for the People's Liberation Army southern theatre command. The Scarborough Shoal is claimed by China, the Philippines and Taiwan. "The Philippine side's actions have seriously violated China's sovereignty and international law and basic norms governing international relations, and are prone to misunderstanding and miscalculation," Tian said. He said China followed, monitored, warned and blocked the ship in accordance with the law.

Germany asks Israel to 'protect' Palestinians from settler attacks

Berlin (AFP/APP): Germany on Monday called on Israel to "protect" Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, amid a surge in violence in the territory since the start of the war in Gaza. More than 100 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, mostly during raids by Israeli forces or attacks by settlers, according to the Ramallah-based Palestinian health ministry. Hamas gunmen stormed across the border from Gaza into Israel on October 7 and carried out the deadliest attack since the country was created in 1948. In retaliation, Israel announced it would destroy Hamas and began a relentless bombardment of the Gaza Strip. Germany condemned "attacks and violence from settlers against Palestinian communities in the area, which have led to the death of many civilians", German foreign ministry spokesman Sebastian

Fischer said. "We call on Israel to protect Palestinians from the activities of extremist settlers and to hold those responsible accountable," Fischer said. "Israel, as the occupying power in the West Bank, is responsible for ensuring the safety and integrity of the Palestinian population in the West Bank." The situation in the West Bank, occupied by Israel since 1967, was already tense before the war, with regular raids by Israeli forces and an upsurge in attacks by Israeli settlers against the Palestinian population. Israeli forces have stepped up their ground offensive in Gaza as part of the military response to the October 7 Hamas attacks that officials say killed 1,400 people, mostly civilians, with another 239 people taken hostage. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says at least 8,306 people, mainly civilians, have since been killed in Israeli air and ground strikes.

ECC approves gas price revision

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet here on Tuesday approved revision of the natural gas sale pricing for different categories of consumers for the fiscal year 2023-24, with effective from November 1st, 2023. The Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamsad Akhtar presided over the ECC meeting, which among others was attended by the Minister for Privatization, Fawad Hassan Fawad; Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Sami Saeed; Minister for Power & Petroleum, Muhammad Ali; federal secretaries, and other senior government officials of the relevant ministries. According to press statement issued by the finance ministry, the cabinet committee during its meeting considered the single item agenda regarding the revision of the natural gas sale pricing for different categories of the consumers for the FY 2023-24. The ECC earlier on October 23, 2023, had considered the summary submitted by the Petroleum Division and approved the increase in the natural gas prices, however the Federal Cabinet in its meeting held on October 30, 2023 had referred back the summary for reconsideration of the ECC.

Xiangshan Forum's opening ceremony held in Beijing

BELJING (Agencies): The opening ceremony for the 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum was held here on Monday in the Chinese capital. Zhang Youxia, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, delivered a keynote speech on the occasion. Following the ceremony, first plenary session of the forum was convened under the theme "Major Countries' Responsibility and Global Security Cooperation." The delegations from 90 countries including Pakistan and international organizations attended the opening ceremony. Initiated in 2006, the Beijing Xiangshan Forum adheres to the ideas of "Equality, Openness, Inclusiveness, Mutual Learning", and has developed into one of the important security dialogues in the world.

Poland accepts first two AW149 helicopters

WARSAW (Agencies): Poland has formally accepted the first two of 32 Leonardo AW149 armed battlefield utility helicopters. The acceptance ceremony was held on 30 October at the type's future operating station at Nowy Glinnik Airport, some 70 km southwest of Warsaw, and was attended by the Minister of National Defence, Mariusz Blaszczak. News of the handover came around 17 months after Blaszczak announced the AW149 procurement in June 2022. The acquisition saw the AW149 succeed in Poland, having initially failed to secure a sale in the country. Having been considered by the Ministry of National Defence (MND) as a potential replacement for its Warsaw Pact-era Mil Mi-14 'Haze' anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and Mil Mi-8 'Hip' troop transport helicopters, the AW149PL, as it was known during its initial Polish bid, lost out to the Leonardo AW101 Merlin in the ASW role and to the Eurocopter EC725 (later rebadged as the Airbus Helicopters H225M) in the special operations forces (SOF) role (this selection was later overturned in favour of the Polish-built Lockheed Martin S-70i Black Hawk).

Cabinet decides to keep sponsorship Hajj Policy intact

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Federal Cabinet has refuted the impression that only Afghans residing illegally are being repatriated from the country. Briefing media about the decisions taken by the Federal Cabinet, which met in Islamabad today with Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in the chair, Caretaker Interior Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that about two hundred thousand Afghans have been repatriated till now. He said the repatriated people can reenter in Pakistan after the proper documentation. Speaking on the occasion, Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said data is being prepared for the repatriation of illegal residents in the country. He said under our repatriation policy, illegal Afghan residents will be kept in holding centers, nearest to their home stations, for two to three days from where they will leave to their own country. He said all kind of facilities, including medical, are being ensured to these holding centers. He said to monitor the whole process, a special system is being introduced. He said in this regard, Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has already accorded approval to a work plan. Murtaza Solangi said the interim government has no political agenda and it is doing the work under constitutional domain. He categorically rejected the news regarding a political meeting with Shafqat Mehmood. Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan said Primary Health Care Revamp Project has been started with the major focus of revamping Basic Health Units deteriorated due to militancy and floods. Responding to a question, he said all recruitments in hospitals will be made on merit. Highlighting the steps taken to upgrade the Health sector of country, he said insulators have been installed in the hospitals coupled with the MRI machines. To a question, Additional Secretary Religious Affairs Ministry Syed Ataur-Rehman informed that the pending amount of 5.5 billion rupees will be disbursed to PIA today. He said under the proposed Hajj policy, the sponsorship hajj will remain intact. He said under this scheme around 25000 people will perform hajj through government scheme while 44000 people will be accommodated from the private hajj scheme.

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