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Editor: Omer Rizwan

Female IDF Soldiers Blame 'Sexism' For Early Warning of Hamas Activity Being 'Ignored'

TEL AVIV (Agencies): Ever since Hamas triggered an escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine by breaching the Israeli border and abducting approximately 200 people on 7 October, the surprise attack has been blamed on everything from intelligence lapses to operational and logistical weaknesses of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Israel's female surveillance soldiers at the border had warned of heightened Hamas activity before the 7 October attack, Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported. However, their alert was allegedly ignored by the upper chain of command. In what has been described as a blatant display of sexism, senior commanders refused to heed the warnings because they had come from women operating the surveillance cameras, sources were cited as saying. The unit operates along Israel's borders, as well as throughout the West Bank. Also dubbed 'the eyes of the State of Israel', these soldiers gather information using cameras, sensors and maps, and are responsible for monitoring around 15-30 kilometers of land. As a result, they provide real-time intelligence information to their military colleagues out in the field all day, every day. Hamas had been training for an attack for weeks, the tatzpitaniy-



ot had purportedly warned. The aforementioned female surveillance soldiers reported "signs of activity" along the Gaza border. Accordingly, a plethora of warnings based upon their surveillance had been sent up the chain of command by the unit, only to be ignored, according to the report. When the October attack by Hamas began, the militant group resorted to unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to hit Israeli positions, just as the tatzpitaniyot had observed in their surveillance. According to another female soldier, the unit had seen a replica of a Merkava 4 tank being built and then used for training in Gaza. One of the surveillance soldiers was described as having apologized for waking

up a superior early on 7 October to report having observed "something strange". However, none of the reports of a potential infiltration of Israel's border communities put together by the female surveillance soldiers and sent to senior security officials had purportedly been taken notice of. "If we had known about this warning, this whole disaster would have looked different... No one told us that there was such a high level of vigilance," one soldier was cited as saying, adding: There had previously also been reports that accounts and opinions of surveillance soldiers failed to be taken seriously, with female staff ostensibly treated with contempt.

Ukraine's artillery supply declines as shells go to Israel



President Zelenskyy confirms that 155mm deliveries are drying up, even as Russia presses an assault in the east. Ukraine has seen a decline of deliveries of vital 155mm shells since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, even as Ukrainian parliamentarians warn of a dangerous shortage of ammunition across the front lines. "Our supplies have decreased. It is life—and it is normal, as everyone is fighting for survival," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told reporters in Kyiv on Thursday. U.S. stocks of 155mm rounds that were originally meant for Ukraine are now being shipped to Israel, Axios has reported. The number of rounds were in the "tens of thousands," according to the report, or close to U.S. monthly production rates. The U.S. has delivered over two million 155mm rounds to Ukraine in the year and eight months since Russia's February 2022 invasion. It has more than doubled production of the shells, going from 12,000 a month before Russia's invasion to 28,000 now. EU members likewise emptied their stocks, and the EU as a whole launched a plan to supply one million 155mm rounds between March 2023 and March 2024. Despite the effort, though, ammunition has frequently been tight. Ukraine uses 240,000 shells a month, a figure far higher than U.S. monthly production rates. Ukrainian troops regularly report ammo shortages across the front lines, even in hotspots like the country's east. The EU is also set to miss its March 2024 goal to supply one million rounds, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said this week. Zelensky's news of a reduction in U.S. deliveries, meanwhile, comes at a particularly challenging moment for Ukraine as Russia steps up its assaults near Avdiivka, a eastern-Ukrainian city where intense fighting resembles that seen in Bakhmut last winter.

China and Saudi Arabia Sign 50 Billion Yuan Local Currency Swap Agreement

BELJING (Reuters): The People's Bank of China and the Saudi Central Bank recently signed a local currency swap agreement worth 50 billion yuan (\$6.93 billion) or 26 billion Saudi riyals, both banks said on Monday, as bilateral relations continued to gather momentum. Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, and China, the world's biggest energy consumer, have worked to take relations beyond hydrocarbon ties in recent years, expanding collaboration into areas such as security and technology. The swap agreement, which will be valid for three years and can be extended by mutual agreement, "will help strengthen financial cooperation... expand the use of local currencies... and promote trade and investment," between Riyadh and Beijing, the statement from China's central bank said. China imported \$65 billion worth of Saudi crude in 2022, according to Chinese customs data, ac-

counting for about 83% of the kingdom's total exports to the Asian giant. Russia remained China's top oil supplier in October despite higher prices for Russian crude, with Saudi imports down 2.5% from the previous month as it continued to restrict supply. Chinese President Xi Jinping told Gulf Arab leaders last December that China would work to buy oil and gas in yuan, but it has not yet used the currency for Saudi oil purchases, traders have said. Beijing is thought to have the world's largest network of currency swap arrangements in place, with at least 40 countries, but seldom reveals the broader terms of its arrangements. "China seems to be using swap lines in a very different way to the U.S.," said Weitseng Chen, associate professor at the National University of Singapore. "(China) uses it as a credit line, so it's on a constant basis, instead of a one-time, one-off thing during a financial crisis."

Hezbollah attacks Israeli troops with drones, artillery, missiles



Beirut (AFP): Lebanon's Hezbollah movement said it targeted troops in northern Israel with drones, artillery and missiles on Monday, claiming a string of new attacks. The Israel-Lebanon border has seen daily exchanges of fire since the Israel-Hamas war began on October 7. Hezbollah fighters targeted soldiers west of Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel "with three attack drones", the Iran-backed group said in a statement, adding shortly after that it had also targeted troops in the area with artillery fire. Both statements claimed the attacks were "direct hits". Earlier Monday, Hez-

bollah said it had fired "Burkan missiles" at an Israeli barracks, and also claimed a number of other attacks on Israeli positions. Israel's army said "three UAVs (drones) were identified striking adjacent" to an army post, without specifying where. It added that "no injuries were reported". In a statement, it said "25 launches were identified from Lebanon toward several locations adjacent to the border", and added that aerial defences "intercepted a number of the launches and the rest fell in open areas". "Tanks, a fighter jet, and a helicopter struck Hezbollah terror infrastructure in Lebanon" in response to "launches toward Israeli territory", it said, while the army struck fighters attempting to fire "anti-tank missiles" in south Lebanon. Deadly skirmishes on Israel's northern border began on October 7 when Gaza-based Palestinian militant group Hamas attacked southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people and taking about 240 hostage, according to Israeli officials.

UK Defense Ministry Reports Significant Russian Losses in Ukraine War

LONDON (Agencies): The UK Defense Ministry has released figures indicating substantial losses for Russia in the ongoing Ukraine war. Since the commencement of the military invasion, Russia has reportedly lost 400,000 personnel, 2,400 main battle tanks (MBTs), and over 7,117 armored vehicles, according to the Ministry's estimates. The breakdown of losses includes 15 percent of Russia's pre-war

MBT inventory, totaling 2,475 tanks. In addition to tanks, the UK estimates Russia's losses to encompass 93 fixed-wing aircraft, 132 helicopters, 320 uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs), and 16 naval vessels. The Ministry attributes the losses to advanced anti-tank weapons provided to Ukraine by Western nations, along with what it describes as Russia's strategically flawed deployment of tanks.

US Coast Guard Says Up to 26,000 Barrels May Have Leaked Into Gulf of Mexico



WASHINGTON (Agencies): The U.S. Coast Guard says as much as 1.1 million gallons of oil, approximately 26,000 barrels, may have spilled into the Gulf of Mexico following a pipeline leak on Thursday off the coast of Louisiana. The source of the spill from the 67-mile-long underwater pipeline owned by Main Pass Oil Gathering and operated by Third Coast Infrastructure LLC remained unknown at the time of writing on Monday, with the Coast Guard continuing to investigate. The pipeline spill was confirmed by Main Pass Oil on Thursday, prompting immediate Coast Guard action. As of midday Monday, the spill was said to be moving away from the Louisiana shore, while skimming ships continued to recover surface oil.

The Deepwater Horizon spill of 2010 released some 3.19 million barrels, or 134 million gallons, of oil into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The cause of the spill also remains unknown and under investigation. A 26,000-barrel spill would be equivalent to the volume of two Olympic-sized swimming pools. Prices for Heavy Louisiana Sweet crude oil spiked on Friday as a result of the spill, hitting their highest premium to West Texas Intermediate (WTI) since August 2023, according to Bloomberg. The spill comes amid upward pressure on Brent crude and WTI that started on Friday and continues on Monday, with Brent crude up 2.69% as of 12:57 ET and WTI up 2.85%. Between 1969 and 2017, there were 44 oil spills in U.S. waters, with one-third of those in the Gulf of Mexico, according to data from the Oceanography Society, with the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill the largest. "Large" oil spills are typically defined as those of more than 100,000 barrels.

China-Uruguay Deepen Ties as President Lacalle Embarks on State Visit



BELJING (Reuters): President Luis Alberto Lacalle Pou of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay arrived in Beijing Capital International Airport on Monday morning, kick-starting his state visit to China from Monday to Friday. Taking place in a year that marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of relations between the Latin American country and China, Lacalle Pou's trip is significant in further bolstering ties with its paramount trading partner, with discussions likely covering negotiation of a free trade agreement, consolidating trade of goods such as milk

and dairy products, and expanding cooperation in the domains including green and digital development high on agenda, Chinese observers said. This will be President Lacalle Pou's first visit to China. During the visit, President Xi Jinping will host a welcome ceremony and a welcome banquet for President Lacalle. The two heads of state will hold talks to jointly blueprint the future growth of bilateral relations and have in-depth exchange of views on issues of mutual interest. They will also jointly attend a signing ceremony of cooperation documents, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a routine press conference on Monday. Uruguay is an important country in South America, and China and Uruguay enjoy a profound traditional friendship. This year marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Uruguay.

OpenAI appoints new boss as Sam Altman joins Microsoft in Silicon Valley twist

OpenAI named ex-Twitch boss Emmett Shear as interim CEO, while outgoing chief Sam Altman moved to backer Microsoft, in a surprise turn of events that clouded the future of the startup at the heart of the artificial intelligence boom. The appointments, settled late on Sunday, followed Altman's abrupt ousting just days earlier as CEO of the ChatGPT maker and ended speculation that he could return. By Monday, close to all of OpenAI's more than 700 employees threatened to quit in a letter demanding the resignation of the board and reinstatement of Altman and former President Greg Brockman, according to a copy viewed by Reuters and a person familiar with the matter. The document was signed by employees including OpenAI chief scientist Ilya Sutskever, the board member who fired Altman. "I deeply regret my par-



ticipation in the board's actions. I never intended to harm OpenAI. I love everything we've built together and I will do everything I can to reunite the company," Sutskever said in a post on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, on Monday. Hours later, Altman and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella sought to quell fears of a collapse at OpenAI. Altman wrote on X that his top priority "remains to ensure OpenAI continues to thrive" and said he was "committed to fully providing continuity of operations."

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.

Call for creating awareness on climate change for sustainable agriculture

PESHAWAR (APP): The speakers of a dialogue on "Climate dialogue and Sustainable Agriculture" said that increasing awareness among farmers and stakeholders on climate change was vital for promoting sustainable agriculture. Addressing the participants of the dialogue, the speakers and experts said that educating farmers about the impacts of climate change on their crops, water resources, and livelihoods can encourage the adoption of climate-smart practices. This includes using drought-resistant crops, optimizing water management, and implementing agroforestry tech-

niques, they said and noted that the governments, NGOs, and agricultural extension services could play a key role in disseminating information and providing support for sustainable farming practices to ensure resilience in the face of a changing climate. Vice-Chancellor Agriculture University, Peshawar Professor Dr Jahan Bakht said that Pakistan being an agriculture country was badly affected by climate change, adding that the phenomenon was happening rapidly and increasing the financial and food related problems day by day. He stressed on the students that to the farming commu-

nity around them about these issues and also highlight the importance of water. The event was organized by the Department of Agricultural Extension, education and Communication of the University in collaboration with the Pak-US Alumni Network. In the closing ceremony, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht, Dean Faculty of Rural Social Sciences Prof Dr Maqidullah Khan, Chairman Department of Agricultural Extension, Education and Communication Prof Dr Muhammad Idris and Abdul Rahman of Pak US Alumni, faculty members and students of the University were present.

Dry & cold weather predicted in upper parts of KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted mainly dry weather over most districts of the province, while cold and partly cloudy in the upper parts. It said that foggy conditions are expected over Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Peshawar, Swabi and D.I. Khan districts, as well as, over Motorway (M1) / Highways in late night & morning hours. The centre advised the travellers on motorways and highways to take precautionary measures. During the last 24 hours, cold and dry weather occurred in most districts of the province.

Rainfall recorded (in mm) during the last 24 hours at different stations of KPK was nil. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar 23/10, Chitral 20/02, Timergara 23/06, Dir 22/01, Mirkhani 26/04, Kalam 17/-01, Drosh 18/07, Saidu Sharif 23/06, Pattan 23/09, Malam Jabba 15/05, Takht Bhai 23/07, Kakul 19/05, Balakot 21/07, Parachinar 23/05, Bannu 26/09, Cherat 21/08, DI Khan City 26/12. The lowest temperature recorded in the province was -01°C in Kalam

Caretaker CM order installation of live cameras in government offices

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (Retired) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah has taken a significant step by initiating the installation of live cameras in various government offices. These include DC offices, AC offices, Police Stations, revenue offices, and tehsildar offices throughout the province. While chairing a meeting of the Board of Revenue, the Chief Minister directed the issuance of written directives today to ensure

the prompt installation of cameras by the end of this month. The Chief Minister and Chief Secretary KP will have direct access to these cameras through the IP system. The meeting also addressed the progress of the land records digitization project. Expressing dissatisfaction with project delays, the CM instructed authorities to complete the project by the year's end. Stringent action will be taken against those accountable for any further delays. To oversee the

project's completion, a task force, jointly led by the Caretaker Minister for Information Technology and the Caretaker Minister for Revenue, has been established. Weekly review meetings under the Chief Minister's supervision will ensure diligent monitoring of the project's progress. The Chief Minister emphasized that the traditional land system causes inconvenience for the public, and he expressed a zero-tolerance policy for any additional hardships imposed on them.

Fruitful effects of return of peace continues in merged areas

PESHAWAR (APP): The fruitful effects of the return of peace in merged tribal districts continued as evidenced by the successful conclusion of the colourful event of Bajaur-Mohmand's Peace Cycle Gala. The event was jointly organized by the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Cycling Federation and Frontier Corps North. Inspector General, Frontier Corps North was the chief guest at the conclusion ceremony attended by a large number of students, youth of the area, and other guests. The bands of Frontier

Corps North presented special music while the students of Cadet College Mohamnd presented an impressive athletics show. The peace cycle gala started from November 17-19, 2023 in which 134 cyclists from four provinces and Islamabad participated, said an official statement here. The 10 kilometers long cycle race in Mohmand and Bajaur districts included professional and amateur categories. The chief guest distributed medals, prices, and trophies among winners of different categories.

TikToker held for uploading videos in police uniform

PESHAWAR (APP): In the provincial capital Peshawar, police have arrested a TikToker for uploading videos on social media in police uniform. Police informed on Monday that the arrested accused used to pretend as a policeman and up-

load videos in police uniform on the social media platform, TikTok. Police said the accused in police custody, has expressed regret for his actions and pledged to refrain from making such videos in the future. The accused has also sent

a message to other TikTokers not to make and upload videos in police uniform. Police have registered a case against the accused after recovering a police uniform and a mobile phone from his possession.

227,239 people repatriated to Afghanistan: Home Dept

PESHAWAR (APP): A total of 227,239 people were repatriated through three different border points of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Afghanistan till November 19, 2023. According to the Home and Tribal Affairs

Department KP, 223,503 people were repatriated through the Torkham border, 3,317 through Angor Adda Lower Waziristan and 419 through Karlachi Kurram district from September 17 to November 19, 2023.

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ICT admin’s crackdown on professional beggars intensifies, 19 held

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a concerted effort to curb the menace of professional begging, Islamabad’s Civil Defence teams, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, have launched a series of operations across the city. These operations, conducted under the watchful eyes of Assistant Commissioner Secretariat Aneel Saeed and Assistant Director Civil Defence, have resulted in the apprehension of 19 beggars from various locations, ICT spokesman Dr

Abdullah Tabasum talking to APP said on Monday. In a parallel move, the Assistant Commissioner City also took action, arresting 11 professional beggars within his jurisdiction. These apprehended individuals were subsequently transferred to the police station for further processing. While professional beggars were taken into custody, minor children encountered during the operations were compassionately directed to the Edhi Center, a renowned social welfare organization.

This gesture reflects the authorities’ commitment to ensuring the well-being of all individuals, regardless of age or circumstance, he added. He further said that the ongoing crackdown on professional beggars is a clear message from the Islamabad administration that such activities will not be tolerated. These operations, conducted on a daily basis under the supervision of Assistant Commissioners, aim to restore order and create a more conducive environment for all citizens.

PPP confident for ECP to hold upcoming transparent polls: Nayyar Bukhari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party Secretary General Nayyar Hussain Bukhari Monday expressed confidence that PPP would establish itself as a formidable parliamentary force in the upcoming elections of 2024 and said that the Election Commission of Pakistan will utilize its all available resources to conduct a transparent election in the country. Talking to a Private news channel, he said that the Election Commission of Pakistan will hold general elections honestly as it is a constitutional obligation and linked to the country’s political stability. He affirmed that his

party’s candidates would wholeheartedly contest the upcoming elections and pledged their commitment to follow Bhutto’s policies. Furthermore, he assured that PPP was fully prepared for the forthcoming electoral contest. He also demanded a ‘level playing field’ for his party to contest the next general elections, adding, PPP has its ideology and believes in the power of people, and democracy. Replying to a question, he said that constructive criticism is the right of every political party which should be promoted instead of hurling abusive remarks ahead of the general polls.

Pak signs historic agreement with NESMA& Partners for manpower export to KSA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has signed a historic agreement with NESMA & Partners for manpower export from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia. In a significant development for the Pakistani workforce, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Jawad Sohrah Malik held a productive meeting with the President and CEO of NESMA & Partners, Samer Essam AbdulSamad, at the Embassy of Pakistan in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, said a press release here on Monday. The meeting culminated in the signing of a landmark agreement between the Pakistan Overseas Employment Corporation (POEC) and NESMA & Partners for the export of skilled

Pakistani labor to Saudi Arabia, specifically for NESMA’s ongoing and upcoming projects. The agreement marks a pivotal collaboration between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, paving the way for the export of a substantial Pakistani workforce to contribute to Saudi Arabia’s ambitious infrastructure and development goals. NESMA & Partners, as the leading construction company in Saudi Arabia, holds responsibility for numerous mega-projects within the kingdom. This agreement will provide Pakistani workers with the opportunity to showcase their expertise and contribute to the success of these critical infrastructure projects.

Life in Kashmir has further degraded due to exceeding power cuts: Traders

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Kashmir Traders Alliance (KTA) has raised serious concerns about the prevalent unscheduled power cuts in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), citing detrimental impacts on residents and businesses alike. According to Kashmir Media Service, Aijaz Shahdhar, the President of KTA, expressed dismay over the situation, emphasizing that despite assurances of uninterrupted power supply, the ground reality in Kashmir tells a different story. As winter sets in, the Valley is grappling with prolonged and unscheduled power disruptions. “Life in

the Kashmir valley has further degraded due to the exceedingly bad power supply,” remarked Shahdhar in a statement. He highlighted the erratic nature of power availability, with low voltage fluctuations and prolonged outages dominating daily life. Shahdhar underscored the adverse effects on the business community, particularly merchants, who face operational challenges amid the unreliable power supply. He criticized the explanation that higher demand surpasses the available supply, urging the administration to take immediate steps to address the issue.

Railways to restore Awam Express in December 20

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has finally decided to restore Awam Express next month which was closed by the department after the deteriorating flood situation of 2022 in Sindh and other parts of the country. “The decision to reinstate this crucial train service has been made after the suspension due to the severe flood situation in 2022, promising a renewed connection between major cities,” an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said the Awam Express, operating on the route from Karachi to Lahore and Lahore to Peshawar, is set to resume operations following directives is-

sued to the carriage factory officials at the Railway Headquarters. The official said that the department would prepare 18 bogies, accommodating economy class, lower AC, and AC business class coaches for the relaunch scheduled in December. He said the Awam Express is one of the longest continuous running services, covering a published distance of 1,721 kilometres along the Karachi-Peshawar Railway line. The train journey typically spanned approximately 33 hours and 30 minutes, serving as a crucial link between these prominent cities, the official added.

Steps sought for animals’ protection, improving zoos

MULTAN (APP): The President of Animals Save Movement Pakistan (ASMP) Khalid Mahmood Qureshi, a global network of activist groups said the plight of animals in Pakistan’s zoos indicated a serious humanitarian crisis which required urgent attention and decisive action. Talking to APP, he said the ‘corrupt management’ of the zoos had caused serious concerns about the welfare and survival of these sensitive creatures. He said the death toll of zoo residents was increasing due to inadequate

treatment followed by poor nutrition for the animals. It could be proved with the example that Madhubala, the famous female elephant at the Karachi Zoo was on the verge of dying due to starvation and neglect. He said the ASMP had high concerns and called for the government of Sindh to intervene immediately to hold reforms in zoos for the welfare of these creatures. There is an immediate need for better treatment and nutrition for animals & birds in all zoos of Pakistan, he added.

IRSA releases 89,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 89,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 45,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1506.92 feet and was 106.92 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 24,100 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1185.20 feet, which was 135.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,400 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 49,800, 44,800, 41,900 and 14,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Seven held for filling gas in polythene bags

KOHAT (APP): A team of SNGPL in a joint operation with the district police on Monday arrested seven people for illegally filling gas in polythene bags. During a crackdown in Lachi area here, the accused were caught red-handed while filling gas in the plastic bag despite a ban on the illegal and hazardous practice. A case was registered against the arrested accused with Lachi police station.

A terrorist killed as police,FC repulse attack

TANK (APP): A terrorist was killed as police and Frontier Crops(FC) repulsed a terrorist attack on a check post within the limits of Gomal Police Station here Sunday night. According to a police spokesman, militants stormed the Kot Azam post within the limits of the Gomal police station with heavy weapons late Sunday night, but the attack was foiled as valiant police and FC jawans promptly responded, forcing the militants to flee. After the attack, a search was conducted during which the body of a terrorist was found with a M4 rifle, eight magazines and one walkie-talkie set. He said that all the police and FC personnel stationed at the post remained safe.

Iconic poet ‘Faiz Ahmad Faiz’ remembered



ISLAMABAD (APP): Iconic poet and writer Faiz Ahmad Faiz was remembered on his 39th death anniversary today (Monday) where fans from all walks of life through media platforms paid him rich tributes for his unforgettable services. Faiz Ahmad Faiz was born on February 13, 1911, at Kala Qader in the Narowal district of Punjab. He was a notable member of the Progressive Writers’ Movement and an avowed Marxist. He received the Lenin Peace prize from the Soviet Union in 1962, a private news channel reported. Faiz’s literary work was posthumously publicly honoured when the Pakistani Government conferred upon him the nation’s highest civil award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz, in 1990.

Punjab utilizing weather generators, artificial rain modern techniques to bring down’ intensity of smog’: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Caretaker Environment Minister Bilal Afzal said on Monday that the department is considering testing twelve imported weather generators and advanced artificial rain technology across the province to tackle the emerging menace of smog intensity. Talking to a private news channel, the Federal minister said that a weather generator that will arrive in Pakistan next month will be capable of dissolving smog in an area of 225 square kilometres. He said that reducing the emission of harmful gases and using modern technology to control air pollution is the need of the hour. To address this, the Punjab government is also looking into providing modern machinery to farmers to reduce reliance on open-

air crop burning, adding, consultation on artificial rainfall to eliminate smog is also part of this campaign and it was decided that preparations should be made regarding artificial rain on November 28 or 29, when there is possibility of a cloudy weather. He further explained that we need long-term continuous policies, and awareness drives in Punjab to control Air quality as the smog crisis in Lahore is a complex issue, stemming from various sources of pollution, including vehicle emissions, industrial activities, construction projects, and the burning of crop stubble. These factors collectively contribute to the city’s deteriorating air quality, posing serious health risks to its residents, he added.

India martyred 919 children in last thirty-five years in IIOJK: report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indian forces in their unabated acts of state terrorism and gross human rights violations martyred 919 children during the last thirty-five years in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. A report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service on the occasion of World Children’s Day, today, said the children are the worst victims of India’s illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. It revealed that 919 children are among the 96,274 people martyred by the troops and paramilitary and police personnel since January 01, 1989, till date. The report said that the killing of civilians by the forces rendered 107,934 children or-

phaned in the occupied territory. It said that thousands of people, including school boys and girls, were also injured by pellets fired by Indian troops on peaceful protesters. It added that hundreds of persons including 19-month-old Hiba Jan, 4-year-old Zuhra Majeed, 8-year-old Asif Rashid, 8-year-old Owais Ahmad, 10-year-old Asif Ahmad Sheikh and 13-year-old Mir Arafat lost their eyesight to totally and partially due to pellets fired by Indian forces in the territory. The report said a large number of school boys are among thousands of Kashmiris arrested since the military and police siege when India scrapped the special status of IIOJK in August 2019.

NCRC urges society’ collective efforts, more public awareness on ‘child protection rights’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member of the National Commission on the Rights of Children, Khalid Naeem on World Child Rights Day has stressed the need to adopt an integrated approach and more public awareness drives at the grassroots level to ensure joint efforts of all institutions for the protecting child rights. Talking to the ptv news channel, he said ensuring Children’s Rights Day was particularly important day as Pakistan had a unique window of opportunity where the youth could truly determine the country’s future, adding, that all social organizations should jointly work towards developing synergies to create a Pakistan where all children grow up in an environ-

ment free from violence and abuse. He emphasised the society for ensuring education, healthcare, equal rights, safety and security for every child. The World Child Day focused attention on the need to address the challenges children face and to promote child empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights, he mentioned. Replying to a question, he said the NCRC was committed to leveraging collective expertise to address the multifaceted challenges posed by child labour and child trafficking, adding, that NCRC firmly believed that safeguarding children’s rights was a collective responsibility to create a safer and more just society for children.

Rescue 1122 Tank handles 24 emergencies last week

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district’s emergency service- rescue 1122, Tank tackled a total of 24 emergencies during the last week under the supervision of District Emergency Officer Engr Waqas Alam. The service’s spokesman said on Monday that response time was recorded at an average of seven minutes while tackling the different kinds of emergencies over the week which include 19 medical, three road traffic accidents and two bullet in-

juries. He said the control room received a total of 432 calls including 24 for emergency and 155 for information. He said that Rescue 1122 service also provided services in 15 referral-related emergencies including four within the district and 11 emergencies patients were shifted to other districts He said the rescue 1122 teams were fully equipped with all necessary equipment and they had been efficiently rendering their services during emergencies.

13,006 power pilferers arrested,26,690 FIRs registered

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) has got arrested 13,006 power pilferers by respective police which also registered a total of 26,690 FIRs in the entire five region’s districts- Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Nankana Sahib and Okara- during 73 days of a grand anti-power theft campaign. According to the Lesco spokesman here Monday that during the 73 day of operation against electricity thieves, the company has detected a total of 28,107 power pilferers and submitted 27,755 FIR applications in the respective police stations. All the power thieves have also been charged an accumulative 50,459,768 units in the form of detection bills amounting to Rs 2,063,249,447. The grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and Lesco Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations. The Lesco chief vowed that the operations would

continue without discrimination until complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice. On the 73rd consecutive day (Nov 20) of anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, the Lesco found 286 connections involved in electricity theft in all its circles and also submitted FIR application against 283 electricity thieves in the respective police stations, out of which 167 FIRs have been registered while 28 accused have been arrested. During the operation, he said, large agricultural and commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units. Among the seized connections, eight were commercial, four agricultural, one industrial and 273 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 390,007 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 12,627,684.

PM designates parliamentary affairs minister to look after non-assigned ministry portfolios

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister has designated the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs to look after parliamentary business pertaining to Senate, in respect of ministries, divisions and offices whose portfolio rest with the prime minister, the PM Office said Monday. The parliamentary affairs minister has been designated as the Minister-Incharge. An office order of the Prime Minister's Office with subject. 'Conduct of parliamentary business in the Senate' also mentioned the list of ministries and divisions which have not been assigned ministers and thus their portfolios rest with the prime



minister. These offices include the President's Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet Secretariat, National Security Division, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, Housing & Works Division, Inter Provincial Coordination Division, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Division, and the States and Frontier Regions Division.

ML-I project consistently remains on top of govt's priorities: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Communications, Maritime Affairs and Railways Shahid Ashraf Tarar on Monday reiterated that the Main Line-I (ML-I) project has consistently been on top of the government's priorities. In a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, the minister reiterated the current political will to translate these priorities into tangible on-ground developments. "We are determined to expedite the implementation of ML-I and with the political will in place, we are poised to transform plans into action." The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in the realms of transport and communication, with a particular emphasis on ad-

vancing the crucial ML-I project. During the meeting, both parties engaged in constructive dialogue on various topics of mutual interest, affirming the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China. Expressing admiration for the Chinese expertise and participation in the ML-I project, the minister commended the collaborative efforts between the two countries. Jiang Zaidong highlighted the project's foundation on mutual understanding and underscored its integral role in fostering cooperation and development. "We are fully committed to working with the Pakistani side, and our joint efforts aim to accelerate the realization of the ML-I project," he added.

Govt determined to provide best facilities to Hajj pilgrims: Aneeq Ahmed

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed, Monday said that government was determined to provide the best facilities to Hajj pilgrims as facilitating citizens in performing religious rituals and worship was among the responsibilities of the state. He was addressing to inaugural ceremony of Bankers Training regarding Hajj portal for Hajj 2024 here, said that for the first time in the country not only a significant decrease had been witnessed in Hajj expenses but the ministry was striving to ensure maximum facilities to pilgrims throughout their entire pilgrimage. He said that Hajj expenses had declined to Rs10,75000 this year from Rs 1175000 of the previous year while negotiations were

underway with airlines for reduction in airfare. In case of cut down in air ticket the corresponding amount would be transferred into accounts of Hujaj-e-Karam, he added. Another innovative facilities being introduced this year was launch of an App for Hujaj that would provide updates to pilgrims from filing of the Hajj application to their return from the Hijaz-e-Muqadas, the minister informed. The 'Road to Makkah' program, a facility being offered by Saudi government to Hujaj, was earlier limited to Islamabad only but this year it will be extended to Karachi airport as well, Aneeq Ahmed said adding that MORA was striving to expand the facility to other major airports of the country for better facilitation of pilgrims.

Islamabad's 35% residents, only 10.3% of Lahore's segregate waste at source for livelihood: Research

ISLAMABAD (APP): A recent study titled "Waste as Resource: Case Study of Lahore and Islamabad" has revealed that 35% of residents of Islamabad and only 10.3% of Lahore segregate waste at the source for economic reasons. The segregated waste included the selling of plastic bottles, paper, and other materials to a local scrapyard by the household or their domestic help. Other non-sellable materials are disposed of at the community collection point. The Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and Heinrich Böll Stiftung (hbs) jointly organized a consultative meeting on a research report titled "Waste as Resource: Case Study of Lahore and Islamabad". The meeting aimed to explore current practices, policies, and gaps in waste management, focusing on the potential of waste as a valuable resource, a news release said. The findings of the research report re-

vealed that approximately 50 million metric tons of waste are produced annually in Pakistan, highlighting the urgency to adopt sustainable practices. The survey was meant to find out about the behaviour of communities in Islamabad and Lahore towards waste management. Ms. Ayesha Majid, Senior Program Coordinator IoU, presented research findings and shed light on the gravity of waste-related illnesses. It was alarming to note that 24% of the respondents in Islamabad and 12.3% in Lahore reported burning waste around their locality. It was evident that residents wanted the municipality to initiate waste segregation by providing multiple bin systems in residential areas. Residents of Islamabad (69%) and Lahore (68%) showed their support for adopting waste segregation in households given the infrastructure provision by the municipality.

Children have first right on country's resources: Bilawal Bhutto

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Monday said that the children had the first right on country's resources and reiterated that investing in children's education, health and safety would be among the top priorities of his party's government after winning the upcoming general elections due on February 8 next year. "Our children are the most valuable treasure and bright future of the country," he said in a statement issued by the party secretariat on the occasion of World Children's Day. He expressed his best wishes that the

future of children all over the world, including Pakistan, be filled with peace, love and prosperity. Bilawal Bhutto said that PPP had always taken revolutionary steps for the protection and welfare of children. "The 1973 constitution guarantees all the rights of children. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto introduced vaccination program to protect Pakistani children from infectious diseases like polio," he pointed out, adding that the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), which was President Asif Ali Zardari's gift to the country's poor citizens.

President for constructive role to improve children lives in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday called upon the relevant Government organizations, civil society, human rights groups, media, UN agencies, community, parents, teachers, Ulema and children themselves to come together and play their constructive role in the national effort to improve the lives of children in Pakistan. "Children in Pakistan are vulnerable to several challenges like stunting, malnutrition and lack of access to quality education and health facilities," the president said in a message on the occasion of Universal Children's Day. Besides, he said children were facing various protection challenges like child trafficking, child marriage, child labour, corporal punishment, child abuse, children in conflict with the law, and harmful traditional practices. Today, Univer-



sal Children's Day is being celebrated under the theme "For every child, every right" to reaffirm our commitment to safeguard the rights and well-being of children. Pakistan is a signatory to seven core international Human Rights Conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Besides, Pakistan also ratified Optional Protocols to the UNCRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography and the involvement of children in armed conflict. As a signa-

tory to the UNCRC, Pakistan remains at the forefront to advocate, protect and promote child rights. President Alvi said children were the most precious resource of any nation and the sole guarantee for its future. Pakistan is fully alive to its responsibilities towards its children and is making all efforts to ensure children's inclusive development, birth registration, education, health care, participation, dignity and security as envisaged in our Constitution and UNCRC. He said Pakistan had promulgated a number of legislations including the ICT Child Protection Act, 2018, the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018, the Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act, 2020 and the insertion of "Child Domestic Labour" in the list of occupations of the Employment of Children's Act, 1991.

Italian Cuisine Week concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Italian Cuisine Week' and Olive Gala Festival hosted by the embassy of Italian in Pakistan has concluded. The global event, observed simultaneously by Italian embassies worldwide, aimed to promote awareness and appreciation of Italy's culinary excellence. Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese, the Italian envoy to Pakistan inaugurated the 'Italian Cuisine Week' last week. The event featured a showcase of unique recipes, highlighting the diverse and flavorful dishes from Italy. The festival attracted a diverse audience, including diplomats, government officials, families, and the general public, who savored the delectable offerings throughout the week. The ambassador warmly welcomed the visitors and guests. Italy is actively seeking UNESCO recognition for its cuisine as an Intangible Cultural Heritage element.

Man shot dead

FAISALABAD (APP): A youth was shot dead in Chak Jhumra police limits on Monday. A police spokesman said 35-year-old Tasleem Sultan of Chak No 188-RB Kukarwala was standing outside his house at night when four car-riders opened indiscriminate firing. As a result, he received serious bullet injuries and died on the spot.

CS inaugurates e-Procurement System

LAHORE (APP): 'The e-Procurement System' developed by the Punjab Information Technology board (PITB) in collaboration with the Federal and Provincial Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Boards, was inaugurated by Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman at Arfa Software Technology Park (ASTP) on Monday. The system has been introduced by the Punjab government in departments to streamline the public procurement process. The ceremony presided over by Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman was attended by key officials and stakeholders, including SMBR Nabeel Javaid, Additional Chief Secretary Ahmed Raza Sarwar, Planning & Development Secretary Mazhar Sial, PPRA Punjab MD Waqar Azim, PITB Chairman Faisal Yousaf and DG e-Governance Sajid Latif.

Four drug dealers held, over 2 kg hashish recovered

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police have apprehended four drug dealers recovering over two kilograms of hashish from their possession during an ongoing crackdown against the menace of drugs. Following the directions of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, the district police were making all-out efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from society, said a police spokesman. As part of such efforts, the Kirri Khaisour Police Station team led by SDPO Paharpur Circle Kashif Sattar along with SHO Malik Imran arrested two alleged drug dealers named Imran Shafeeq son of Muhammad Shafeeq and Abdul Waheed son of Akhtar Muhammad recovering 1023 gram hashish from them.

Renowned poet, literary critic, short story writer Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned Urdu poet, journalist, literary critic, dramatist and short story writer Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi was remembered on the occasion of his birth anniversary on Monday. Born on November 20, 1916 in the village Anga of Khushab, his birth name was Ahmed Shah Awan. He got his early education from a high school in Campbellpur in 1931, (now Attock), around the time when he wrote his first poem. He studied at Gov-

ernment College Attock. Later, he studied at Sadiq Egerton College in Bahawalpur. He graduated from the University of the Punjab, Lahore in 1935. He wrote 50 books on poetry, fiction, criticism, journalism and art. He was a major figure in contemporary Urdu literature. His poetry was distinguished by its humanism, and his Urdu afsana (short story) work is considered by some second only to Munshi Prem Chand in its depiction of rural culture.

Two bike lifters arrested with 11 stolen motorcycles

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police in their ongoing operation against bike lifter gangs managed to arrest two accused and recovered 11 stolen motorcycles from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad police conducted a raid and rounded up two members of a gang namely Ali Ahmed and Muhammad Imti-

az and recovered 11 stolen motorcycles and other items. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under process. Superintendent of Police, Rawal, Faisal Saleem appreciated the performance of the police team and directed to accelerate operations against the car, bike lifters and other lawbreakers.

Sindh Prisons embrace telemedicine for inmate healthcare; focus on reintegration, rehabilitation

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Minister for Home and Prisons, Brig. (Retd.) Haris Nawaz, Monday highlighted the significant strides towards implementing telemedicine within correctional facilities to enhance inmate healthcare while reducing costs and minimizing risks associated with external hospital visits. Chairing a meeting of the Sindh Prisons Policy Board at the IG Prison office here, Brig. Nawaz emphasized the pivotal need for this initiative. Under the directive of the Sindh Prisons Policy Board (SPPB), a proposal was greenlit for the introduction of telemedicine systems across all prisons. The initial phase is slated to begin with the Central Prison Suk-

kur, serving as a pilot project. Plans are underway to set up telemedicine desks at various hospitals, including NICVD and SIUT. The recommendations of the SPPB will be forwarded to the government for final approval and execution. The minister underscored the importance of establishing District Oversight Committees and Welfare Committees to address several critical aspects, such as improving the lives of vulnerable prisoners, enhancing health and hygiene conditions, establishing dedicated spaces like Sweet Homes for children residing with their mothers in jails, setting up well-equipped libraries, and initiating vocational training programs.

PHA takes solid step to improve city's beauty

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi is taking solid steps to improve beauty of the city. According to a PHA spokesperson, the authority was making efforts to renovate city parks. Under a project, the renovation work of 'Al-Aqsa' Park was being completed, she said. PHA was planting saplings to improve the beauty of the city, she added. On the directives of the Di-

rector General, the PHA Rawalpindi had also accelerated the process of producing plants and seedlings in the PHA nursery. Special measures were also being taken to ensure the provision of best recreational and tourism facilities to the citizens, she informed. In this regard, ornamental plants and saplings were being planted in various city parks to provide the best recreational facilities to the people.

Taxila Chaupal holds special talk on Journey of Human Cultures

TAXILA (APP): The Gandhara Resource Center Pakistan-GRCP under its flagship program Taxila Chaupal in collaboration of Taxila Baithak organized a special talk titled "Journey of Human Cultures" here on Monday. The event was hosted by Taxila Baithak Talib Ansari, who is not only an anchorperson but also a poet conducted the event, a news release said. The keynote speaker for the event was Farrukh Sohail Goindi, a distinguished figure known for his roles as a columnist, author, political advocate, avid traveller, media personality, and journalist. He engaged in an extensive and captivating discussion that delved deeply into the intricacies of human civilizations worldwide. The discourse was so compelling and absorbing that it held the undivided

attention of the audience throughout the entire event. The event saw a significant number of participants, including prominent figures such as Malik Fatah Khan (Advisor National Rural Support Program-NRSP), Waheed Ahmed (former IG KPK), Abid Hussain Abid, Captain (Retired) Omar Farooq, Sheikh Salahuddin, Hafeezullah Badal, Parvez Khan, Shaukat Awan, Allama Adeen, , Malik Asif, Malik Najib-ur-Rahman, Syed Iftikhar Shah, Elyas Khat-tak, and Adv Shazia Kiani. The core committee of Gandhara Resource Center Pakistan-GRCP consisted of Sarah Mahmood, Riaz Ahmed, and Iftikhar-ud-Din Sadiqi. Among the representatives of Taxila Baithak were Chacha Abdul Rashid, Tahir Salman, and Asif Fareed.

Saudi Ambassador's Courtesy Call on Prime Minister Kakar

ISLAMABAD (APP): His Excellency Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al Maliki, the esteemed Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, conducted a diplomatic meeting with Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar today at the dignified setting of the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad. In the course of their discussions, Prime Minister Kakar expressed heartfelt appreciation for Saudi Arabia's leadership in convening the OIC Extraordinary Summit earlier this month. Acknowledging the profound role played by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, the Prime Minister applauded the achieve-



ment of a historic consensus among Arab and Islamic nations. Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar also took the opportunity to reaffirm Pakistan's unwavering support for diplomatic endeavors dedicated to quelling the violence in Gaza. He strongly condemned the egregious acts of brutality perpetrated by Israel against innocent Palestinians.

Flood affected areas in Pakistan affecting more than 33 million population, Dr. Jan

London: Dr. Nadeem Jan, Federal Minister for Ministry of Health (MoNHSR&C), Government of Pakistan had a meeting with the Director General World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Tedros during the Global Food Security Summit being held at London, UK. He expressed his grief on the grave situation of health and nutrition in the flood affected areas in Pakistan affecting more than 33 million population. He appreciated the efforts of Government of Pakistan in addressing this challenge faced by the country especially the vulnerable groups including adolescent girls, mothers and children. Dr Nadeem Jan also shared the vision of the current government with regards to reach to the communities through UHC and focused on "Health for all" approaches and he thanked the WHO for extending their support for provision of equipment s and supplies.



Dr. Tedros assured complete support of WHO to alleviate the suffering of those in need in the flood affected areas and discussed the role of WHO Pakistan in the overall efforts of UN organizations and partners. He also discussed the bilateral support provided by WHO Pakistan to address the Nutrition Issues in Pakistan especially those affecting women and children. He updated that WHO Pakistan is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health in areas nutrition in emergencies and this collaboration will be further strengthened as required.

UNICEF appoints first-ever Youth Advocate in Pakistan on World Children's Day

ISLAMABAD (Adnan Hameed): Activist, author and motivational speaker Taqwa Ahmad, 16, has been appointed as UNICEF's first-ever Youth Advocate in Pakistan. Hailing from Gujranwala, Punjab, Taqwa is a champion for peace, inclusivity, disability rights and education. The appointment – announced on World Children's Day – encourages children to raise their voices and become changemakers for child rights. "I am humbled and excited to become a UNICEF Youth Advocate. My goal is to amplify the voices of young people, champion their rights and empower others. I envisage a future where every child in Pakistan can access high-quality education and healthcare, so they can flourish in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment," says Taqwa Ahmad. In her role as UNICEF Youth Advocate, Taqwa will use her platform to shine a spotlight on child rights and issues affecting youth. Recently, Taqwa and five other child representatives met with the President



of Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Arif Alvi to discuss their key concerns for children as part of a UNICEF World Children's Day initiative. The delegation represented children from different age groups and backgrounds from all provinces and regions of Pakistan. Together, they highlighted climate change, inclusive education, and gender equality as critical issues requiring urgent action from leaders, decision makers and the whole of society to safeguard their futures. Children in Pakistan face a multitude of challenges. They are on the frontlines of climate change, threatened by increasingly destructive extreme weather events including floods, droughts and heat-waves.

Fog/smog to engulf Punjab, KP plain areas: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Fog/smog is likely to engulf plain areas of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the morning hours during the next 24 hours, as per Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD)'s forecast. Mainly dry weather is expected in most parts of the coun-

try while cold weather conditions will prevail in the upper parts. According to the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country. During the last 24 hours, dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country and cold in northern parts.

QNET's Parwaz renews commitment to health as Platinum Sponsor of Indus Hospital

ISLAMABAD (APP): QNET, a global lifestyle and wellness-focused direct-selling company, in collaboration with its esteemed Pakistani agency, Parwaz, proudly reaffirms its commitment to supporting crucial healthcare initiatives and community welfare in Pakistan through its contributions to the Indus Hospital and Health Network. As a Platinum Sponsor, QNET's support for the Indus Hospital underscores its belief in the transformative power of healthcare to uplift lives. This collaboration aims to fortify the healthcare infrastructure and accessibility, aligning with QNET's broader vision of empowering communities. Parwaz, QNET's trusted local partner, takes centre stage in this sponsorship, exemplifying the synergy between global



brands and local impact. In a statement, Tareq Abdul Hafeedh Yawar Al Yousefi, Chairman of QNET Middle East, highlighted the significance of this partnership, stating, "Our collaboration with the Indus Hospital through Parwaz is a testament to our commitment to making a positive impact where it matters the most. We believe in the importance of accessible and quality healthcare for all, and this partnership reflects our dedication to realizing this vision." QNET

stands firm in its commitment to social responsibility and community welfare and this sponsorship builds on QNET's broader corporate social responsibility efforts in Pakistan. Beyond its platinum sponsorship of the Indus Hospital, the company consistently demonstrates its dedication to making a positive impact globally. Initiatives include organizing educational workshops for underprivileged children in over 30 countries and providing opportunities for growth and development. During Ramadan, QNET actively distributes meals to those in need, addressing immediate societal challenges. In Pakistan, the company has distributed thousands of meals during Iftar, reflecting its belief in fostering meaningful change and improving lives.

PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Accepts COP-28 Invitation from U.A.E. Ambassador, Emphasizes Bilateral Cooperation and Unity on Gaza Crisis

Islamabad (Adnan Hameed): The Ambassador of U.A.E. to Pakistan, H. E. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar at the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad today. The Emirati Ambassador presented a formal invitation to the Prime Minister for attending the forthcoming COP-28 meeting in Abu Dhabi. He said that Pakistan was one of the leading countries in climate change negotiations and the U.A.E. was hopeful that Pakistan would play its part in ensur-



ing the success of COP-28. The Prime Minister congratulated the U.A.E. for hosting this important global climate change conference and assured of Pakistan's active participation in the event. Progress on bilateral cooper-

ation was also discussed. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the robust and wide-ranging engagement between the two countries and stressed the need to focus on strengthening cooperation in energy, trade and investment. During discussion on the situation in Gaza, the Prime Minister urged Muslim countries to speak with a united voice to urge the international community to end the violence and brutal murder of innocent civilians in Gaza at the hands of Israeli Occupation forces.

UNDP with the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination kicked off the In-Country Process for the Global Shield to Reduce Climate Risks with a Multi-Stakeholder Consultation

Islamabad: The United Nations Development Programme and the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination (MoC-C&EC) kicked off the In-Country Process for the Global Shield, with a two-day multi-stakeholder consultation on climate-risk insurance and financing to reduce climate risks, and strengthen climate-adaptation mechanisms. The Global Shield is an initiative launched at COP27 in response to the increasing threat of climate change by the Vulnerable Twenty (V20) Group and the G7; ensuring that the various programmes and stakeholders pursue a coordinated approach and mobilize additional funds to meet the growing need for financial resources. Talking



at the consultation, the Honorable Federal Minister, Mr. Ahmed Irfan Aslam, reiterated the commitment of the MoCC&EC in enhancing safeguards for the vulnerable communities who are adversely impacted by climate change. Ambassador of Germany, H.E. Mr. Alfred Grannas commended Pakistan as the first country in Asia to initiate the In-Country Process; modelling itself as an excellent example for other countries

seeking to strengthen their pre-arranged financing strategies to foster the implementation of climate adaptation mechanisms and plans. Referring to the devastation ensued by the catastrophic floods of 2022, UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Samuel Rizk, unpacked how climate change further exacerbates inequalities; accelerates threats and risks to communities, and societies at large. Mr. Rizk emphasized UNDP's coordinator role in supporting the In-Country Process through intensive coordination and informed dialogues, by tapping into global and local expertise, and creating national and local partnerships which offer the opportunity to envision a resilient Pakistan.

Bilawal Warns Against 'Poll Fixing,' Expresses Confidence in ECP and CJP's Role

- Fahim Khan along with others joins PPP and gets ticket for Provincial swat from Bannu

Nowshera (Staff Report): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari issued a warning to rivals against any attempts at "poll fixing" and urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) to ensure the upcoming general elections are free of controversy. Bilawal expressed confidence in the role of the ECP and the CJP, emphasizing the need to prevent controversy and ensure the credibility of the upcoming elections. He highlighted that the use of public funds in billions of rupees would serve no purpose if the legitimacy of the election results was called into question. The PPP chairman cautioned that holding polls with



"questionable results" would result in wasting significant financial resources. He warned against any attempts to manipulate the election outcome, stating that a predetermined result on Feb 8 would not address the nation's numerous challenges. While criticizing opponents, Bilawal reiterated his commitment to serving the people of Pakistan day and night if given the opportunity. He also expressed readiness to accept the people's choice, even if it meant choosing someone else. The gathering was attended by



a large no of people from accross the province. Meanwhile former member district member Bannu, Fahim Khan along his supporter announced joining PPP and also gets ticket for Provincial seat from his native Bannu area. A party statement outlined upcoming plans, indicating that Dir and Chitral would be the next destinations for workers' conventions. Following that, the party's foundation day would be held in Balochistan, and the electoral campaign would commence.

UK climate study to accelerate green finance in Pakistan

British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, has launched a landmark study to identify and prioritise critical initiatives to mobilise private sector climate financing in Pakistan. The studys climate finance analysis includes several 'roadmaps to action' to support the Government of Pakistan's ambitions for climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience. The study will help to inform the next generation of UK support to deliver Pakistan's climate investment ambition. Today's event (20 November 2023) on 'Accelerating Green and Climate Resilient Financing in Pakistan', was co-chaired with Minister of Climate Change, Mr Ahmed Irfan Aslam. The study, implemented through the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), is part of the UK Government's 'Centres

of Expertise' initiative by the Growth Gateway Programme. At the event, the High Commissioner announced three new UK-supported initiatives: A new partnership with Government of Pakistan to quantify the cost of inaction under the Growth Gateway programme – an important step for Pakistan to develop a robust adaptation and resilience financing strategy. FCDO's REMIT programme will support the Government of Pakistan with streamlining institutional governance for climate finance. REMIT will also support the development of a national green taxonomy to classify climate investments, through a partnership between the World Bank Group and the State Bank of Pakistan. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: "There is no bigger

global challenge than tackling climate change, which Pakistan is suffering the impacts of more than most countries. "This new UK-supported analysis is part of our wider climate finance and governance support in Pakistan. By identifying and prioritising the most critical climate finance initiatives, we are laying the foundations for climate finance mobilisation at scale into some of the most important low-carbon and adaptation projects in Pakistan. "Today's discussion amongst government, private sector and development finance leaders is an important step for harnessing the potential of the private sector to help Pakistan mitigate, and respond to, future climate shocks.." Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Mr. Ahmad Irfan

Aslam, said: "The UK Government study which has been launched today fills a critical knowledge gap. It identifies which initiatives are required for Pakistan to mobilise more and better climate finance, especially by the private sector. The Government of Pakistan looks forward to collaborating on new areas of support announced by the UK today to take forward several of the key initiatives identified – putting this report into immediate action." Ms Charmian Caines, Senior Partner at Boston Consulting Group (BCG), said: "We at the Growth Gateway Programme have been delighted to support UK and Pakistan in their partnership to bridge Pakistan's climate financing gaps as it addresses its pressing vulnerability to extreme climate shocks. Our collabo-

ration has identified key enablers to unlock bankable opportunities, priority adaptation and resilience (A&R) projects as well as initiatives to share the pressure of disaster risk financing on government budgets with the private sector." Ms Jalpa Patel, CEO of Adam Smith International (ASI) said: "Climate finance and green investments are critical for Pakistan's future. Adam Smith International is excited to help deliver on the UK's climate commitments by providing vital technical support on climate financing to the Government of Pakistan through the FCDO-funded REMIT programme to help the government design policy, regulation, and financial instruments for capital markets to catalyse international climate finance."

Citigroup employees brace for layoffs, management overhaul

NEW YORK (Agencies): Citigroup employees expect the bank to announce layoffs and senior management changes on Monday as part of its biggest reorganisation in decades, according to five sources with knowledge of the matter. The job cuts could affect thousands of staff, according to a source familiar with the situation who was not authorised to speak publicly. Executives are also likely to announce senior management changes by email, the source said. Preparations for Mon-



day's announcements were communicated verbally in meetings, according to a source familiar with the situation who was not authorised to speak publicly. Some staff may be able to apply for other roles at the

bank, the source said. Citigroup declined to comment. Last month, Citi announced plans to cut management layers from 13 to eight as part of its biggest overhaul in decades. In the two top layers of leadership, Citi reduced 15% of functional roles and eliminated 60 committees, it said in its third-quarter earnings presentation. Support staff in compliance and risk management, and technology staff working on overlapping functions are at risk of being laid off, Reuters reported in September.

Li Ka-shing-backed WeLab launches digital bank in Indonesia

JAKARTA (Agencies): WeLab Ltd, backed by investors including billionaire Li Ka-shing and Astra International, a unit of Jardine Matheson, is launching a digital bank in Indonesia to tap the young and fast-growing economy. Bank Jasa Jakarta, which WeLab and Astra jointly bought last year, launched the digital bank called Bank Saqu on Monday. The bank is targeting the younger generation, including so-called "solopreneurs," such as small business owners, freelancers, and full-time employees juggling



side hustles. The expansion is part of WeLab's ambitions to grow in the Asia region, after starting a digital bank in Hong Kong in 2020. The fintech also runs several businesses in mainland China. "The aspiration of the compa-

ny is to build this from where we are today, around 60 million users to half a billion users by 2032," said Simon Loong, group chief executive officer of WeLab. The solopreneur segment is fast-growing, and a study commissioned by Bank Saqu estimates that one in three Indonesians, or some 117 million people, will have multiple side gigs by 2030. Bank Saqu allows customers to open up to 20 accounts to cater to different income streams, and plans to roll out lending and fee-income products in 2024, said Loong.

Thailand's Q3 GDP growth slows, boosts US\$14bil stimulus case

BANGKOK (Agencies): Thailand's economic growth unexpectedly slowed in the third quarter, supporting the case for the new government to proceed with its planned US\$14 billion cash handout programme. Gross domestic product in the three months through September rose 1.5% from a year earlier, the National Economic and Social Development Council said Monday. That's well below the 2.2% median estimate in a Bloomberg survey and 1.8% growth in the second



quarter. The economy expanded 0.8% quarter-on-quarter, against a median estimate of a 1.3% growth. For the first nine months, the economy improved just 1.9%. The disappointing

print prompted the NESDC to narrow its 2023 GDP growth forecast to 2.5% from a prior estimate of 2.5%-3%. The Council's chief Danucha Pichayanan said during the briefing that the government should try to create sufficient fiscal space to prepare for future risks. Even as tourism — which is a key plank of Southeast Asia's second-largest economy — recovered and buoyed domestic activity, growth still lagged many of its neighbours amid a slump in exports and government spending.

President-elect Milei vows 'end of Argentina's decline'

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies): Libertarian outsider Javier Milei swept to victory in Argentina's presidential election Sunday, vowing to halt decades of economic decline in a country reeling from triple-digit inflation. The self-described "anarcho-capitalist" pulled off a massive upset by ousting the populist Peronist coalition which has long dominated Argentine politics. With 55.7% of the vote, Milei thumped his rival, economy minister Sergio Massa, who scored 44% of the



vote and rapidly conceded defeat. "Today begins the reconstruction of Argentina. Today begins the end of Argentina's decline," Milei said in his victory speech. "The model of dec-

adence has come to an end. There is no way back." Latin America's third-biggest economy has suffered decades of crises under interventionist governments big on welfare that resort to money printing to finance spending, fuelling inflation, while borrowing heavily only to default on their debt. Access to dollars is strictly controlled, leading to a thriving black market for greenbacks, and analysts warn the peso is ripe for a sharp devaluation.

Australian telco Optus' CEO quits after network outage

SYDNEY (Agencies): The head of Australia's second-largest telco Optus resigned on Monday, cutting short a more than three-year tenure marred by a massive network-wide outage and one of Australia's largest data breaches. Parent Singapore Telecommunications announced the resignation of Optus CEO Kelly Bayer Rosmarin days after a network-wide outage left nearly half of Australia's 26 million people without phone or internet for 12 hours. Chief financial officer Michael Venter will take over as interim CEO, Singtel



said in a statement. Rosmarin said she decided to resign after time for personal reflection following an appearance before a parliamentary committee on Friday where Optus executives said the company had no contingency plan

in place for an outage of that scale. "Having now had time for some personal reflection, I have come to the decision that my resignation is in the best interest of Optus moving forward," she said in the statement. Appointed in April 2020, Rosmarin headed Optus through two national scandals that have tarnished the reputation of the telco giant. A massive data hack last year exposed the personal data of 10 million Australians and triggered a class action lawsuit and multiple investigations from regulators.

BYD unveils Sea Lion 07, Tesla's top-selling Model Y rival

SHANGHAI (Agencies): China's top-selling automaker BYD Co's unveiling of its long-awaited rival to Tesla Inc's Model Y — the Sea Lion 07 — led a slew of new vehicle launches at this year's Auto Guangzhou, one of the country's biggest annual car shows. Crowds flocked to the Guangzhou International Automobile Exhibition — which started Nov 17 and runs until Nov 26 — to see new offerings from electric vehicle pacesetters like Li Auto Inc and Volkswagen AG's new China



partner Xpeng Inc. Sport utility and multi-purpose vehicles dominated the display booths as automakers seek to appeal to a new generation of tech-savvy, environmentally conscious drivers. While the world's big-

gest auto and EV market may not be as hot as it was 12 months ago, the year-end push to grab headlines and boost sales to hit annual delivery targets is in full flow. Here's some of the highlights of the vehicles on display: BYD Sea Lion 07 The Sea Lion 07 is BYD's answer to Tesla's top-selling Model Y. It's the first mid-sized pure-electric SUV from China's top car brand, and comes as BYD jostles to dethrone Tesla as the world's biggest maker of pure-EVs.

EU state threatens to block new sanctions on Russia

The government of Slovakia will not support restrictions on imports of nuclear fuel from Russia as part of a 12th package of EU sanctions that is currently being discussed by member states, the country's Foreign Minister Juraj Blunar said on Saturday. According to the Blunar, Bratislava will not block the much-debated batch of penalties on Moscow, on the condition that the ban on nuclear fuel is removed. "It is the red line for us... Our nuclear power plants cannot yet switch to alternative fuel. This [nuclear-related



clause] definitely cannot be there," Blunar said, referring to the new package. At the same time, Blunar cast doubt on the efficiency of the entire sanctions policy being pursued by the EU since the start of the conflict between Moscow and Kiev.

"The 11 packages of sanctions failed to stop Russia, while the EU economy is moving towards recession," the diplomat claimed, adding that prices of food and fuel in Slovakia have soared as a result of sanctions that were supposed to target Moscow. Slovakia — along with Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary — continues to buy critical nuclear fuel for its four Soviet-designed reactors from Russia, which owns about 50% of the world's uranium enrichment infrastructure, critical to the production of nuclear fuel.

Australia targets tech giants with 'harmful content' standards

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia's internet watchdog wants to force technology giants to crack down on deep fake child abuse material and "pro-terror content" under new, industry-wide protocols being developed in the country. Australia's eSafety Commissioner said Monday its standards would require tech companies to do more to tackle seriously harmful content, including "synthetic child sexual abuse" material created with artificial intelligence. The regulator said it had been forced to step in after giving the technology industry two years to develop its own codes. These codes "failed to provide sufficient safeguards", the eSafety Commissioner said, and lacked "a strong commitment to identify and remove



known child sexual abuse material". The new standards, which have been released for consultation and still need parliamentary approval, would impact companies such as Meta, Apple and Google. "These world-leading codes and standards cover the worst-of-the-worst online content including child sexual abuse material and pro-terror content," said eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant, a former Twitter employee.

Altman won't return as OpenAI CEO, ex-Twitch boss takes over

NEW YORK (Agencies): Sam Altman will not return as the CEO of OpenAI and ex-Twitch boss Emmett Shear will become the new interim CEO, The Information reported on Sunday, citing board director Ilya Sutskever's statement to the company's staff. Shear co-founded Twitch and had stepped down from the Amazon.com Inc-owned live video streaming platform earlier this year. OpenAI did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Altman will not return to the company as CEO despite efforts from the company's executives to bring him back, the report said, citing Sutskever. The report did not give any other details. Reuters could not immediately verify the statement cited by The Information. Altman and former OpenAI



President Greg Brockman joined executives at the company's San Francisco headquarters on Sunday after interim CEO Mira Murati told staff she invited Altman, The Information earlier reported on Sunday. Altman is discussing a possible return to the company behind the ChatGPT bot and improving the company's governance structure, even as he considers launching a new artificial intelligence (AI) venture, Reuters reported on Sunday.

Chinese banks keep lending rates after PBOC policy rate hold

BEIJING (Agencies): China's commercial lenders held their benchmark lending rates steady on Monday, in line with the central bank's decision earlier this month to maintain policy rates in favour of other means to support stimulus spending. The one-year loan prime rate was held at 3.45%, in line with the forecasts from almost every economist surveyed by Bloomberg. The five-year rate, a reference for mortgages, was kept at 4.2%, according to the People's Bank of China. That also broadly matched expectations. The offshore yuan mildly extended its morning gains to 0.2% after

the announcement, hitting a three-month high at about 7.2 against a soft US dollar. Ten-year government bond yields were little changed at 2.66%. The loan rates are based on the interest rates that 18 banks offer their best customers, and are published by the PBOC monthly. They are quoted as a spread over the central bank's one-year policy rate, or the medium-term lending facility rate. The central bank kept that rate unchanged last week following cuts in June and August. Instead, policymakers chose to pump the most cash into the financial system since late 2016 through its one-year loans.

Oil Updates — Crude extends gains as OPEC+ to mull deeper cuts

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Oil futures nudged higher on Monday, extending gains on expectations of deepening supply cuts from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, known as OPEC+, expected to shore up prices, which have fallen for four weeks on easing concerns of Middle East supply disruption amid the Israel-Hamas conflict. Brent crude futures climbed 61 cents, or 0.76 percent, to \$81.22 a barrel by 10:20 a.m. Saudi time, while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$76.49 a barrel, up 60 cents or 0.79 percent. Both contracts settled 4 percent higher on Friday after three sources of the OPEC+ told Reuters that it is set to consider whether to make additional oil supply cuts when it meets on Nov. 26. Oil prices



have dropped by almost 20 percent since late September, while prompt inter-month spreads for Brent and WTI slipped into contango last week. Prompt prices are lower than those in future months in a contango market, signaling sufficient supply. "Our statistical model of OPEC decisions suggests that deeper cuts should not be ruled out given the fall in speculative positioning and in time spreads, and higher-than-expected inventories," Goldman Sachs analysts said in a note.

Russian electric SUV launches on domestic market

Russian electric vehicle maker MotorInvest has launched production of its latest SUV model, the Evolute i-SKY, RIA Novosti reported on Thursday. The vehicle, a mid-size crossover SUV with a range of over 500km on a single charge, will be assembled by MotorInvest at a factory in Lipetsk Region. The car is already available to order, with prices starting from nearly 4 million rubles (\$45,000), according to the manufacturer's website. MotorInvest started production of electric vehicles in Russia in September 2022. Its Evolute brand also includes vehicles such as the i-Pro sedan, i-JOY compact crossover, and i-VAN minivan. All the cars are based on Chinese



models made by Dongfeng and Sokon. The Russian company has said it expects to sell a total of 7,500 cars this year and 12,000 vehicles in 2024. Up until 2019, the factory in Lipetsk Region had assembled cars for Chinese brands Great Wall and Changan. It has the capacity to produce more than 100,000 electric cars annually.

Saudi Tour cycling event rebranded as AlUla Tour for 2024 return

LONDON: The Saudi Tour cycling event has been rebranded as the AlUla Tour for its return in early 2024, it was announced on Monday. It will be organized by the Ministry of Sport and the Royal Commission for AlUla, in cooperation with the Saudi Cycling Federation and the International Cycling Union. The biggest cycling competition in Saudi Arabia is now in its fourth year and will be run from Jan. 30 to Feb. 3, welcoming 119 cyclists from 17 teams, including from the UCI World Tour and Continental Tour. The confirmed lineup of teams, riders and stages will be announced at the end of this year. The five-stage



event is part of the UCI Asia Tour and a category 2.1 event. Abdullah bin Ali Al-Wathlan, chairman of the Saudi Cycling Federation and vice chairman of the Arab Cycling Federation, said: "The AlUla Tour has emerged as a major local, regional and international event in recent years. We look forward to welcom-

ing the sport's best cyclists in one of the sport's most unique locations, showcased to the world. "The AlUla Tour, alongside our global cycling partners, is creating a legacy in this country with more and more people getting access to a sustainable sport that is inspiring people to move, be active and healthy." The Royal Commission for AlUla has announced two mass participation rides alongside the AlUla Tour for juniors and the wider public. The RCU has also created environmentally friendly initiatives through local bike tracks, hubs, desert biking tours, mountain biking options and electric bikes at Hegra.

Messi World Cup shirts will be auctioned; Sotheby's thinks they could fetch record over \$10 million

LONDON: Sotheby's is to auction six shirts worn by Lionel Messi during Argentina's winning run at last year's soccer World Cup in Qatar and thinks they could become the most valuable collection of sports memorabilia ever sold at potentially more than \$10 million. The auction house said Monday that it will put up for sale in New York six of the seven first-half shirts the Argentina captain wore in Qatar, including the one he donned in the dramatic win in the final against France. Argentina won the final, and their third World Cup, in a penalty shootout after a 3-3 draw at the Lusail Stadium, in which Mes-



si had scored two goals. Sotheby's, which was founded in London in 1744, will offer Messi's shirts in New York between Nov. 30 and Dec. 14. The shirts will be on view at its New York headquarters in a free, public exhibition during the bidding dates. It is working with US-based tech

startup AC Memento, which partners with high-profile athletes to help manage their match-worn memorabilia. The current record for a game-worn item of sports memorabilia is Michael Jordan's 1998 NBA Finals jersey, which sold for \$10.1 million at Sotheby's in New York in Sept. 2022. The current record for a game-worn item of soccer memorabilia is a shirt Diego Maradona wore in Argentina's infamous 1986 quarterfinal 2-1 victory over England, where he infamously scored one goal with his hand, a goal he said owed much to the "Hand of God." That sold for \$9.3 million at Sotheby's in London in May 2022.

Green Falcons train in Al-Ahsa ahead of Jordan World Cup qualifier

RIYADH: Saudi footballers trained in Al-Ahsa ahead of their match against Jordan in the second round of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2027 AFC Asian Cup. The team held two training sessions at Al-Fateh Club facilities on Sunday led by head coach Roberto Mancini. Walid Al-Ahmad did not take part in training due to a health



problem. The evening training session was attended by the Chairman of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation, Yasser Al-Misehal, and the Secretary-General, Ibrahim Al-Qasim. The team will fly to Jordan on Monday and will hold a training session in the evening at Amman International Stadium, ahead of the game on Tuesday.

Baseball United to introduce 8 prospects at All-Star Showcase Series in Dubai

DUBAI: Dubai-based Baseball United, the first-ever professional baseball league focused on the Middle East and Indian Subcontinent, have announced the eight baseball prospects who will compete alongside the league's top players at the Baseball United All-Star Showcase in Dubai this week. The inaugural event will feature the Baseball United West All-Stars versus the East All-Stars in a two-game series at Dubai International Stadium on Friday, Nov. 24 and Saturday, Nov. 25. These eight prospects include players from the Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Ugandan, and Palestinian baseball national teams. They are



the first set of prospects announced by Baseball United and will be part of the league's planned "Super 16" prospect group that will compete in league events next year. The West All-Stars will include Saurabh Gaikwad (21 years old), right-handed pitcher out of Satara, India; Akshay

More (19), right-handed pitcher out of Pune, India; and Akshay Mogal (22), infielder out of Nashik, India. Gaikwad and More are considered the nation's best pitchers, with fastballs topping 90 MPH and several years of experience on the Indian national team, as well as at their university, Lovely Professional University in Punjab. The West All-Star team will also include Palestinian national baseball team captain, Yunis Halim (26). Halim was the team's Most Valuable Player at their recent second-place finish at the West Asia Cup in Islamabad, Pakistan, and also played two years of American college baseball at Chicago State University.

Nicolai Hojgaard wins DP World Tour Championship in Dubai

DUBAI: The only thing missing from what has been a stellar season for Nicolai Hojgaard was a win, and the young Dane rectified that on Sunday with a remarkable two-shot victory in the \$10.5 million DP World Tour Championship. At the Earth course of Jumeirah Golf Estates, the 22-year-old seemed out of the reckoning at one stage when he made a bogey from the fairway bunker on the 12th hole. It felt like a costly



mistake as he fell to 16-under total, three behind leader Tommy Fleetwood, who was being his usual solid

self. But there is something cathartic about the back nine of the Greg Norman-designed course, at least for Hojgaard. After the first two rounds, he was leading the championship at 11-under par, having done all his scoring on the back nine. The Ryder Cup rookie pulled himself together and reeled off five straight birdies in an amazing stretch of golf, racing ahead of world No. 15 Fleetwood and No. 4 Viktor Hovland.

Red Bull's Verstappen wins entertaining Las Vegas Grand Prix

LAS VEGAS: World champion Max Verstappen claimed the 18th win of his record-breaking season in a thrilling Las Vegas Grand Prix on Saturday. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc overtook Red Bull Racing's Sergio Perez on the last lap to grab second place ahead of the Mexican with French driver Esteban Ocon of Alpine Racing finishing fourth. Verstappen had been highly critical of the return of Formula 1 to Vegas after a 41-year absence, but as



he drove past the finish line, he celebrated with a chorus of "Viva Las Vegas" on the team radio. The grid was

packed with a host of celebrities from the world of music, sports, and entertainment as memories of the embarrassment of the opening practice session on Thursday being stopped early due to a loose drain cover on the track faded. With a low grip on the track there was no shortage of incidents, overtaking, and lead changes as the night race delivered the entertainment the American promoters had craved from the new event.

Martin wins Qatar MotoGP sprint to trim Bagnaia's lead

LUSAIL: Jorge Martin barged past title rival Francesco Bagnaia early on in the MotoGP sprint at Lusail today, before he swept on to win the race. Bagnaia finished fifth, allowing the Spaniard to cut the gap in the standings to seven points with tomorrow's race and the season-ending sprint



and race in Valencia to come. "I

was thinking I had the potential to win but in a race you never know," said Martin. "Tomorrow is the big day. Hopefully we can record more points." Spaniard Martin of Ducati satellite team VR46 was followed home by Italians Fabio Di Giannantonio and Luca Marini.

Mancini expecting 'tough match' against Jordan

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi coach Roberto Mancini said that he is expecting a 'tough match' against Jordan in Amman. "We are looking forward to playing a good game, and we know that the Jordanian team is a strong team, so I expect it to be a tough match," said Mancini ahead of the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup qualifier. When asked about the reason for the national team's delayed arrival in Amman, he replied, "It's not too much confidence. It is normal for us to arrive the night before the match. We trained well in Al-Ahsa, and we respect the Jordanian team and all the other teams." Regarding the future of the Green Falcons in the



Asian Cup, he said, "Our focus now is to think about tomorrow's match, and we have a long time to think about the Asian Cup after the game." When asked about guaranteeing qualification, he said, "In the world of football, there is no such thing as a guarantee. We will only guarantee qualification when we play well and earn the points in the match."

Novak Djokovic has 'highest ambitions' after record ATP Finals triumph

TURIN, Italy: Novak Djokovic has no intention of slowing down after capping another incredible year with Sunday's record-breaking seventh ATP Finals victory. At 36 years old Djokovic is still tennis' number one player by some distance and he has racked up a host of new records this season, taking his Grand Slam tally to 24 and finishing top of the year-end world rankings for the eighth time. He swept past young pretenders Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner on his way to triumph in Turin and is gunning for more glory in 2024, when Paris hosts the one major event where he has not won — the Olympics. Asked what else he can accomplish in tennis, Djokovic joked: "Well,



you can win four Slams and Olympic gold." "I have always the highest ambitions and goals. That's not going to be different for the next year, that's for sure. The drive that I have is still there," he added. "Motivation, especially for the biggest tournaments in sport, is still present... For me, obviously those are Grand Slams and Finals, and next year hopefully also Olympic Games."

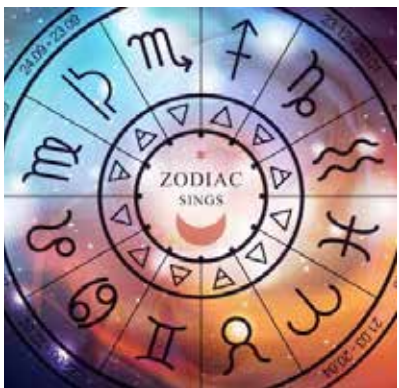
Ittihad welcome new Argentine coach Gallardo

RIYADH: Al-Ittihad's new head coach Marcelo Gallardo arrived in Jeddah late Sunday to lead the reigning Roshn Saudi League champions for the next year and a half. Gallardo takes over the Tigers following a highly decorated 8 years with Argentine club River Plate, where he led the team to win the Copa Libertadores, South America's prime club competition, in 2015 and 2018. The club posted photos on social media early on Monday of Gallardo being welcomed with roses and Arabic coffee after landing at Jeddah's King Abdulaziz International airport. The 47-year-old Argentine will lead the club in his first match this Friday against Steven Gerrard's Al-Ettifaq in Dammam. Ittihad are currently fifth in the Saudi Pro League. They are set to



represent Saudi Arabia at the FIFA Club World Cup 2023 in Jeddah next month. In his first visit to Saudi Arabia, Gallardo led a Saudi Riyadh Season select team in an exhibition match against French champions Paris Saint-Germain earlier this year. Ittihad parted ways with former coach Nuno Espírito Santo early this month following five consecutive winless matches. The club thanked the outgoing manager, who joined the side on July 4, 2022, for his time with the team.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: NOVEMBER 21, 2023



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.
– **ARIES:** You're not very productive right now. You need to relax a little in preparation for the burst of great energy that is coming up soon. Take the day off if you can.
– **TAURUS:** You're not in the best mental place for solo activities, so spend more time with friends and family. A date would be just about right, but even a quiet evening at home watching TV would suit you.
– **GEMINI:** You usually embrace multiple activities, so keeping busy is good medicine for you. Today, though, you just want peace and quiet, but you have to keep dealing with multiple irritations.
– **CANCER:** See if you can sit still long enough to plow through that thorny problem that has been deviling you lately. You've got more energy than you realize and should find a satisfying solution.
– **LEO:** You're feeling a little tense today, but there's no good reason for it. See if you can just chill out and spend some time on your own. You need to rest for a bit before get-

ting back in the game.
– **VIRGO:** If you can stand an unproductive day, you should be fine now. It's a great time to deal with people as they are and not as you want them to be. That could mean slowing down somewhat.
– **LIBRA:** If you're expecting progress today, you need to prepare for a bit of disappointment. See if you can get yourself to accept that a bit of a slowdown is vital before real progress can be made.
– **SCORPIO:** You've got raw power running through you now and should be able to get people to see that more is possible than they understand quite yet. It's not magic, but it's close, so make a big deal out of it!
– **SAGITTARIUS:** Your thoughtful side is fully engaged today, and you ought to be able to get yourself wrapped up in something really interesting. You're feeling a bit slow physically, so that's all good.
– **CAPRICORN:** You are more naturally in tune with the world's music today, though it may carry you far afield from your usual tastes. Explore and enjoy what you find. You could hit on your next big session!
– **ACQUARIUS:** Why are you doing whatever you're doing today? That might seem like a simple question, but you've actually got more to think about than usual when you're doing so. Things are different now.
– **PISCES:** Let yourself feel the full force of your spiritual energy even if you're supposed to be working or paying bills. Sometimes more important things have to elbow the mundane out of the way.

Investors Mull Legal Action Against OpenAI Board Following CEO's Abrupt Firing

San Francisco (Reuters): In a surprising turn of events, certain investors linked to OpenAI, the developers of ChatGPT, are reportedly exploring potential legal action against the company's board. This comes after the abrupt removal of CEO Sam Altman by the directors, triggering concerns about a potential mass departure of employees. Sources familiar with the matter informed Reuters on Monday that investors are collaborating with legal advisers to assess their options, although it remains unclear whether they will proceed with a lawsuit against OpenAI. The investors' anxiety stems from the possibility of substantial financial losses, as OpenAI represents a crown jewel in several



portfolios, with hundreds of millions of dollars at stake. The uncertain future of the hottest startup in the rapidly growing generative AI sector has intensified these concerns. OpenAI, however, has not responded to requests for comments on the situation. Microsoft (MSFT.O) reportedly holds a 49% stake in the for-profit operating company, with other investors and employees collectively controlling

another 49%. The remaining 2% is owned by OpenAI's nonprofit parent, according to Semafor. The board's decision to oust Altman last Friday, citing a "breakdown of communications" in an internal memo seen by Reuters, has raised significant uncertainties. By Monday, over 700 employees at OpenAI were reportedly considering resigning unless the company replaced the board. While venture capital investors typically wield board seats or voting power in their portfolio companies, OpenAI's unique structure, controlled by its nonprofit parent OpenAI Nonprofit, presents challenges. The nonprofit was established, as per OpenAI's website, to benefit "humanity, not OpenAI investors."

Sri Lanka and Thailand Set to Conclude Free Trade Agreement in February

Colombo (Agencies): Sri Lanka aims to finalize its free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with Thailand by December and is scheduled to sign the agreement on February 3, as announced by Sri Lanka's cabinet spokesperson on Tuesday. The island nation, grappling with its worst financial crisis in decades, has been prioritizing trade deals as part of its strategy to stimulate growth and facilitate economic recovery. Cabinet spokesman and Transport Minister Bandula Gunawardane informed reporters during a weekly briefing, "The agreement on the proposed Sri Lanka-Thailand Free Trade Agreement (SLTFTA) will be signed... subsequent to the completion of the rounds of discussions." According to data from the Sri Lankan central bank, the bilateral trade between the two countries amounted to approximately \$460 million in 2021. Sri Lanka primarily exports tea and precious stones to Thailand, while importing electronic equipment, food, rubber, plastics, and pharmaceuticals. In addition to the negotiations with Thailand, Sri Lanka has resumed talks on an expanded trade agreement with India this month. The country has expressed its interest in establishing an FTA with Bangladesh and aims to become a member of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which includes China, Japan, and South Korea.

Protestant Church in Germany Grapples With Sexual Abuse Scandal

Berlin (Agencies): Following the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church in Germany is now embroiled in a sexual abuse scandal, resulting in the resignation of the head of their church, Annette Kurschus, on Monday, accused of covering up a case. According to German newspaper Siegener Zeitung, Kurschus is suspected of having been informed in the 1990s about accusations of assaults against a former colleague but allegedly took no action. The accused individual is currently under police investigation, and the precise nature of the assaults has not been disclosed. Denying knowledge of the attacks, Kurschus decided to resign "to prevent her church from being tarnished." In a news conference in the northern city of Bielefeld, she stated, "The suspicions are about a man with whom I have had a friendship for a long time." Kurschus acknowledged being aware of her colleague's homosexuality, who was married to a woman, and "his infidelities." While asserting that she sought to protect the suspect's family, Kurschus faced criticism for "lack of transparency." She clarified, "It is all the more bitter that I have never – and I emphasize this point – sought to evade responsibility, to hide important facts, to conceal facts, or even to cover up an accused." Reflecting on the past, Kurschus, who was a pastor in Siegen at the time, expressed regret, saying, "I wish 25 years ago I had been so attentive, trained, and sensitive to behavioral problems that would alert me today." Siegener Zeitung reported that one victim and three others reported sexual assaults by the colleague in question, who worked at the same location.

Relatives of Gaza hostages say stop talk of execution for Hamas detainees

JERUSALEM (Reuters): Relatives of some of the 240 people held by Hamas in Gaza urged far-right Israeli lawmakers on Monday not to pursue proposed capital punishment for captured Palestinian militants, saying that even talk of doing so might endanger the hostages. A number of suspected gunmen were detained after members of the armed Islamist faction breached the Gaza Strip border on Oct. 7 and went on a rampage, killing over 1,200 people and kidnapping others, Israel said. Israel's Justice Ministry said on Nov. 7 that a task force was discussing how to try the Palestinians who had been detained and secure "punishments befitting the severity of the horrors committed" for those convicted. Far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has called for the death penalty, which is dormant on Israel's law books. Some of the relatives of the people held captive by Hamas in Gaza worry the publicity around the capital punishment debate could invite reprisals



even as hopes of a deal to free some of them is growing. The hostages have already been threatened with execution by Hamas and are at risk of being hurt or killed in the military offensive launched by Israel in response to the Oct. 7 attack. "It would mean playing along with their mind games. And in return we would get pictures of our loved ones murdered, ended, with the State of Israel and not them (Hamas) being blamed for it," Yarden Gonen, whose sister Romi is among the hostages, told Ben-Gvir and his party colleagues during a parliamentary panel. "Don't pursue this until after they are back here," she said. "Don't put my sister's blood on your hands."

North Korea tells Japan it plans to launch satellite in the coming days

TOKYO/SEOUL (Reuters): North Korea has notified Japan it plans to launch a satellite between Wednesday and Dec. 1, in what Tokyo and Seoul said could be a third attempt to put a spy satellite into orbit in violation of a U.N. ban. Japan's Coast Guard said on Tuesday the North gave notice of the launch in the direction of the Yellow Sea and East China Sea. South Korea's state maritime safety agency issued a warning to vessels of the planned launch for the same areas as previous launches. North Korea had attempted to launch what it called spy satellites twice earlier this year but failed, and South Korean officials have said in recent days that it appeared set to try again soon. The notice prompted immediate condemnation from Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who said his country's defence systems, including the Aegis destroyers and PAC-3 air defence missiles, stood



ready for any "unexpected situation" that arose. "Even if the purpose is to launch a satellite, using ballistic missile technology is a violation of a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions," Kishida told reporters. "It is also a matter that greatly affects national security." Japan will work with the United States, South Korea and others to "strongly urge" North Korea not to go ahead with the launch, Kishida said. South Korea's defence ministry said it was watching the North's planned launch.

Myanmar Hands Over Thousands of Telecom Fraud Suspects to China Amid Crackdown

Beijing (Agencies): MYANMAR authorities have handed over 31,000 telecom fraud suspects to China since law enforcement officers from both countries launched a crackdown on online scams in September, Chinese authorities said on Tuesday (Nov 21). The suspects included 63 "financiers" and ring-leaders of crime syndicates that have cheated Chinese citizens of large sums of money, the Ministry of Public Security said in a statement. "The crackdown has achieved significant battle results," the ministry said. More than 100,000

people engage in telecom fraud each day in at least 1,000 scam centres in Myanmar, which shares a border with southwest China, Chinese state media has reported. Chinese police started to crack down on the fraud in September and this month, police launched what they said were "swift attacks" on crime gangs in Myanmar. The Myanmar ringleader of a gang committed suicide last week while on the run from Myanmar authorities, Chinese police said. Three members of his gang were later handed over to Chinese police.

Shooter Wounds Four in Ohio Walmart Before Taking Own Life: Police

Beavercreek (Agencies): A shooting incident unfolded Monday night at a Walmart in Beavercreek, Ohio, leaving four people injured before the assailant turned the gun on himself, as reported by police. The incident occurred at approximately 8:30 p.m. in the Dayton metropolitan area. Police Captain Scott Molnar, in a news conference, stated that the current con-

ditions of the victims were unknown, but all had been transported to hospitals for treatment. The gunman, who apparently died by a self-inflicted gunshot, has not been identified, and details such as a motive remain undisclosed. Authorities earlier confirmed on social media that the Walmart store had been cleared and secured, with no ongoing threat.

What exactly are US special forces doing in Israel?



- Secrecy is the name of the game when it comes to the Biden administration's support for the offensive in Gaza.

As the Israeli military enters the second month of its operation in Gaza, questions continue to swirl around the exact nature of U.S. support for the war, with major potential implications for American interests in the Middle East. The Pentagon has been fairly transparent about its actions outside of Israel, including the decision to move two aircraft carrier strike groups into the Middle East, among other naval assets and missile defense systems. But two more sensitive issues remain shrouded in mystery: What exactly are American special forces doing in Israel? And what weapons is the U.S. now giving to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)? What are American soldiers doing in Israel?

U.S. special operations forces are stationed in Israel and "actively helping the Israelis" in a number of areas, among them efforts to "identify hostages, including American hostages," a Department of Defense official revealed last week. The official did not share further details, but others told the New York Times that DoD "has dispatched several dozen commandos in recent weeks, in addition to a small team that was in Israel on Oct. 7 conducting previously scheduled training." Other Western countries have also sent special operations forces "closer to Israel" in order to help with hostage recovery and potential civilian evacuations, according to the Times. The Pentagon also dispatched a Marine Corps general with substantial special operations experience to advise Israel's ground operations, but the general left the country prior to Tel Aviv's ground incursion. One official told journalist Spencer Ackerman that the U.S. is considering emergency "contingencies" in which U.S. special forces would directly assist with hostage recovery, but those plans remain hypothetical, according to the official. The only solid evidence of "direct" U.S. involvement has been a series of unarmed drone flights over southern Gaza that are helping to locate hostages. Some eyewitnesses claim to have seen soldiers with American flag patches on the ground in Gaza, but no news outlets have substantiated this allegation. It's also plausible that an Israeli-American soldier could have been wearing such a patch without permission from the U.S. or Israeli militaries. As for the identity of U.S. soldiers in Israel, a White House photo from President Joe Biden's October 18 visit appeared to show the president meeting with several members of Delta Force, the Pentagon's premier counterterrorism and hostage recovery unit. It is unclear if any non-special operations U.S. military units are currently operating in Israel. The Pentagon did not respond to a request for comment from RS about its operations in Israel.

Increased secrecy around weapons transfers

The Biden administration has taken flak in Congress for his attempts to conceal details about American arms transfers to Israel amid the war, including a proposed measure to skip congressional notification requirements that would provide lawmakers with an opportunity to object to specific weapons sales. "There is no reason we cannot both ensure needed U.S. assistance is provided to Israel in an expeditious manner and ensure Congress is able to fulfill its constitu-

tional oversight duty," Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.) — the ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee — told the Washington Post last week. Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), for his part, said Congress "should not make exceptions to this practice" and argued that it is the legislature's responsibility to "review these funds and ensure their use is in the best interests of the American people." While lawmakers have reportedly received full briefings about what weapons are being sent to Israel, the White House has avoided publicly sharing information about its support, a sharp contrast with the detailed accounting of the Biden administration's aid to Ukraine. The administration has not explained this discrepancy, but it most likely stems from simple political logic. While Biden has been proud to boast his team's support for Ukraine, he stands to face far more blowback for supporting Israel, whose actions in Gaza have drawn significant criticism both within the U.S. and abroad. This logic played out recently when it came to light that the U.S. is planning to supply rifles to the Israeli national police, which is controlled by far-right Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who has promised to give guns to settlers in the West Bank. Former State Department official Josh Paul also told RS last week that multiple units of the Israeli police had previously been flagged for alleged "gross violations of human rights," which should legally preclude them from receiving American weapons. The only other planned weapons transfer to Israel that has been publicly disclosed is a previously approved shipment of \$320 million in precision bomb kits known as Spice Family Gliding Bomb Assemblies. Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) will reportedly fight this sale by filing a "resolution of disapproval" that would block the transfer if it received a veto-proof majority in both houses of Congress. The kits are "the sort of capability Israel has been using for the last month to devastate Gaza," according to Paul. High stakes for U.S. interests in the region Another likely reason for the secrecy around U.S. involvement is the fear that American support for Israel will hurt Washington's standing in the Middle East, especially given the region's widespread opposition to Israel's offensive, which numerous Arab commentators have called a "genocide." If people in the Middle East come to believe that U.S. troops are directly involved in hostilities, it could have dire consequences for perceptions of American actions in the region. As a recently leaked cable from the U.S. embassy in Oman noted, Israel's campaign is already "losing us Arab publics for a generation." That impact could be felt far beyond the region, according to Stephen Wertheim, a historian and senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "The costs, in American prestige and power, have already proved substantial," Wertheim wrote in the New York Times. "And they could get much worse." And the potential consequences of direct U.S. involvement would not be limited to public opprobrium, argued Ackerman, the journalist. "If SOF should enter Gaza as combatants, how might Iran, whose regional strategy is predicated on leading an 'axis of resistance' to the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia, feel compelled to respond?" he asked. "What would it choose to do? What would the impact be on Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc.?"

PFOWA Annual Charity Bazaar 2023 Small Steps.... Big Difference Organized In Collaboration With Diplomatic Corps

Islamabad (Adnan Hameed): The Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association organised the vibrant PFOWA Annual Charity Bazaar 2023, today. The Bazaar was widely participated by members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished members of the civil society, and officials of the Ministry. The Honorable First Lady of Pakistan, Samina Alvi, graced the event with her presence as the chief guest. The bazaar was a delightful mix of Diplomatic Missions' stalls, commercial brands, and a treasure trove of goodies – from tasty dishes to colourful handicrafts and traditional artefacts. Artists from several countries organized by their respective missions enthralled the audience with their colourful perfor-



mances, expressing their rich cultures. First Lady, Ms Samina Alvi, was the chief guest on the occasion. She inau-

gured the bazaar and highlighted the importance of raising awareness about breast cancer.

World children's day

World Children's Day this day at a time when the lives, rights, homes, schools, and dreams of Palestinian children are being deliberately and systematically decimated by the illegal Israeli occupation regime. Palestinian children face ongoing arbitrary, indiscriminate, and excessive use of force, resulting in a tragic situation of widespread suffering and long-lasting trauma. Over the past six weeks, Israel's murderous assault on Gaza has killed more than 5500 children while thousands of others remain under the rubble and presumed dead. Thousands more are injured. Palestinian children who survive this slaughter are made to endure inhumane conditions of displacement, starvation, dehydration, and lack of basic elements of life imposed on them by Israel, the occupying Power. This atrocious reality also extends to Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank, where the occupying army and settler militias have displaced dozens of families and murdered 96 children since the start of 2023, including 53 who were killed in the past 44 days. Meanwhile, 200 Palestinian children languish in Israeli detention centers, deprived of their most basic rights. The structural and systemic violence against children is emblematic of the illegal occupation regime's entrenched agenda of perpetual colonization, dispossession, and apartheid. This campaign of cruelty against Palestinian children as well as the prospects of their life in dignity, safety, and freedom is a deliberate assault on Palestine's future.

US senate votes unanimously to suspend Azerbaijan's military assistance

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Lawmakers in the US Senate on Thursday voted unanimously in favor of a bill that would halt US military aid to Azerbaijan for the next two fiscal years. If passed by the House and signed by the president, the bill, known as the Armenian Protection Act of 2023, would block the State Department's ability to issue a waiver required under existing law in order for the United States to send military aid to Baku. The measure, introduced by Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.), received bipartisan support. Why it matters: The vote is Congress' clearest move yet to block US military assistance to Baku in the wake of its swift military takeover of Nagorno-Karabakh in September. Last month, 91 lawmakers from both chambers penned a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken calling for economic sanctions against Azerbaijani government officials for Baku's "military attacks and brutal blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh." Chairman of the Senate's Armed Services Committee Jack Reed (D-RI) and the then-chair of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Menendez (D-NJ), urged Blinken in their own letter not to extend the administration's waiver in response to Azerbaijan's invasion of the until recently predominantly ethnic Armenian enclave on Sept. 19. The Biden administration has balked at renewing the waiver, known as a Section 907, for the October 2001-enacted exemption to a 1992 law restricting US government aid to Azerbaijan until it takes "demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh."

The ministerial committee in charge of the extraordinary joint Arab-Islamic summit meets with the Chinese Foreign Minister



The Ministerial Committee in charge of the Extraordinary Joint Arab-Islamic Summit, headed by His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, met today with His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Wang Yi, at the Guest Palace in the capital, Beijing.

The members of the Ministerial Committee participated in the meeting, namely His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Ayman Al-Safadi, His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Sameh Shukri, His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, Dr. Riyad Al-Maliki, and His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Af-

fairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Retno Marsudi, His Excellency the Secretary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Hussein Ibrahim Taha.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Chinese Foreign Minister delivered a speech in which he welcomed the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee, stressing Beijing's support for the call issued by the Riyadh Summit for a two-state solution in accordance with the relevant international resolutions. He also called on the international community to take action to end the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip.

After that, His Highness the Saudi Foreign Minister delivered a speech in which he stressed the necessity of stopping the war in Gaza, an immediate ceasefire, and the importance of the immediate entry of relief personnel.

President for improving Federal Urdu University's affairs



ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday stressed upon all the stakeholders and members of the Senate of Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences and Technology (FUUAST) to work for improving the varsity's affairs to restore it to its iconic position. He deplored that senate meetings of the university could not be held on a regular basis and emphasized the need for filling up important positions to make timely decisions. The president expressed these views while chairing the 49th Special Meeting of the Senate of Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences and Technology (FUUAST), at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President House Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting was attended by the secre-

tary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the executive director of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), and other Senate members of FUUAST. The senate approved the appointment of Prof. Dr Rubina Mushtaq as the Acting Vice-Chancellor of FUAFAST. The meeting also discussed the formation of a search committee for the appointment of a regular vice chancellor of FUAFAST and it was agreed to complete the process of appointment within 60 days. The meeting also agreed that keeping in view the provisions of the FUAFAST Ordinance, the president of Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu Pakistan would continue to serve as the ex-officio member of the senate.

Egypt pushes privatization, sells tobacco company stake to UAE buyer

The Egyptian government has sold a stake in the tobacco products maker Eastern Company to the UAE's Global Investment Holding Co., the first foreign sale of a major state asset since agreeing to a privatization program with the International Monetary Fund last December. Hani Aman, CEO of Eastern, Egypt's largest tobacco product maker and distributor, confirmed the sale to Reuters in a report published Thursday. Global Investment bought 30%, or 669 million shares, of Eastern for 16.40 billion Egyptian pounds (\$531.60 million), or 24.51 pounds per share. Eastern shares were trading around 27.60 on Thursday. Egypt's cabinet announced in September that Global

Investment had agreed to buy a stake for \$625 million, acquiring it from the state-owned Holding Company for Chemical Industries, which held 50.95% of Eastern's shares. The cabinet also said that Global Investment would provide \$150 million to buy tobacco for production purposes. The government now has a 20.95% stake in Eastern following the sale. The investment bank EFG Hermes advised on the transaction. Maged El Ayouti, managing director and deputy head of investment banking at EFG Hermes, said in a statement that the deal has "far-reaching positive implications" for both Eastern Company as well as the broader Egyptian economy.

Minister of Communication, Maritime Affairs and Railways, Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar, held Meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Jiang Zaidong today at Ministry of Railways today



Islamabad: In a significant diplomatic development, the Minister of Communication, Maritime Affairs and Railways, Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar, held a productive meeting today with the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Jiang Zaidong. The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in the realms of transport and communication, with a particular emphasis on advancing the crucial ML-1 project. During the meeting, both parties engaged in constructive dialogue on various topics of mutual interest, affirming the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China. Minister Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar reiterated that the ML-1 project has consistently remained the top priority for the Government of Pakistan, emphasizing the current political will to translate these priorities into tangible on-ground developments. Expressing admiration for the Chinese expertise and partic-

ipation in the ML-1 project, Minister Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar commended the collaborative efforts between the two nations. "We are determined to expedite the implementation of ML-1, and with the political will in place, we are poised to transform plans into action," stated Minister Tarar. Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, representing the Chinese side, highlighted the project's foundation on mutual understanding and underscored its integral role in fostering cooperation and development. "We are fully committed to working with the Pakistani side, and our joint efforts aim to accelerate the realization of the ML-1 project," Ambassador Zaidong affirmed.

Pakistan, Russia agree to collaborate on counter-terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russia have agreed to strengthen collaborative efforts to effectively combat terrorism, underscoring the mutual benefits of such cooperation, the Foreign Office said Friday. The two sides discussed the various forms of radicalization, the spread of terrorist ideologies, and the misuse of information and communication technologies for terrorist purposes, the FO said in a statement. Ambassador Syed Haider Shah, Additional Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, and Ambassador Sergey Vershinin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation co-chaired the 10th meeting of the Pakistan-Russia Joint Working Group on 'Combating International Terrorism and Other Challenges to Security' held here on Thursday. The two sides resolved to work together in combating the financing of terrorism and in other key areas of counter-terrorism. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of both Pakistan and Russia to continue their cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

New Miss Universe crowned in El Salvador

- Nicaragua's contestant finished ahead of 83 rivals, including two transgender women Sheynnis Palacios from Nicaragua was crowned Miss Universe at a ceremony in El Salvador on Saturday. The 23-year-old beauty queen runs a charity which raises funds to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters in her home country. The first runner-up was Anntonia Porsild of Thailand, followed by Moraya Wilson of Australia. The organizers had changed the rules in an effort to make the competition more "inclusive," allowing married women and mothers to participate for the first time. <https://x.com/MissMiss1546642/status/1724983133328846873?s=20> This year's pageant included two transgender contestants – Rikkie Kolle of the Netherlands and Marine Machete of Portugal. Machete finished among the Top-20 finalists. Erica Robin was the first woman to represent Pakistan. She wore a pink 'burkini' during the swimsuit portion of the show. Jane Dipika Garrett from Nepal, meanwhile, became the first plus-size model to compete for the title.

Red Cross president meets with Hamas chief on Gaza war humanitarian issues

GENEVA: The Red Cross said Monday that its president had traveled to Qatar to meet with Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh "to advance humanitarian issues related to the armed conflict in Israel and Gaza." "President Mirjana Spoljaric met with (Ismail) Haniyeh, Chair of Hamas' Political Bureau, and separately with authorities of the state of Qatar," the International Committee of the Red Cross said in a statement. The announcement came as negotiators worked to seal a deal for the release of some of the 240 hostages the Islamist militants took during their unprecedented October 7 attacks on Israel. Israeli authorities say the attack left around 1,200 people dead, mainly civilians. Israel's withering air and ground campaign have meanwhile killed more than 13,300 people in Gaza, also mainly civilians and including thousands

of children, according to Hamas authorities. The ICRC stressed that Spoljaric's visit was part of efforts to hold "direct discussions with all sides to improve respect for international humanitarian law." It pointed out that she has also met "multiple times in recent weeks with families of hostages held in Gaza, as well as senior Israeli and Palestinian leaders." The Geneva-based organization stressed that it was continuing "to appeal for the urgent protection of all victims in the conflict, and for the alleviation of the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza strip." "ICRC staff in Gaza have been delivering life-saving assistance, and an ICRC surgical team continues to perform operations," it said, adding that it was "calling for sustained, safe humanitarian access so it can increase its work."

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