

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIV No. 273 Reg. mails-B/ID-445 Saturday November 23, 2024, Jamaadi ul Awwal 20, 1446 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Saudi Arabia is our closest ally:

Venom against Saudi Arabia unforgivable crime; nation to break such hand: PM

Premier warns propaganda against Saudi Arabia harms national interest, urging strong opposition to such actions; Says personal and political agendas behind PTI's statements; Kachhi Canal to open doors of prosperity to Balochistan people

TAUNSA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday, recounting Saudi Arabia's unconditional financial and diplomatic support to Pakistan, warned that any venom-spitting against such a brotherly country was an unforgivable crime and called for the national unity to counter such anti-state elements.

The prime minister, addressing the inauguration of the Restoration of Kachhi Canal damaged by 2022 floods, said whether it was the Kashmir issue, the United Nations or the UN Security Council, Saudi Arabia always acted as Pakistan's advocate and benefactor, as the Kingdom also bailed out Pakistan recently to seek IMF program.

"Despite this, such venom-spitting is an unforgivable crime. I as the prime minister of Pakistan want to announce that the nation will break any hand trying to undermine the Pakistan-Saudi friendship. This is not a joke. The allegation is beyond understanding. The largest national interest is being 'slaughtered' to serve the short-term political interest," he remarked after inaugurating the project that will irrigate over 715,000 acres of land in Balochistan and revive life in the area turned barren after the floods. The prime minister told the ceremony also attended by federal ministers Attaulah Tarar, Ahsan Iqbal, Awais Leghari and Dr Musaddik Malik, Punjab

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, and Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti, that during the last 77 years, Saudi Arabia attached no strings or pre-conditions to its support to Pakistan and the current leadership had also asked its administration to invest in Pakistan as MoUs worth billions of dollars had already been signed.

Commenting on a statement by the spouse of PTI founder regarding Saudi Arabia, he said: "There can be no animosity to Pakistan bigger than this" and explained that such people were naive to the magnitude of the damage through their "venomous" words. Prime Minister Shehbaz recalled the Kingdom's support to Pakistan after it carried out

the nuclear tests in 1998 in the form of a free-of-charge oil facility as well as financial support.

He told the gathering that the feasibility study of the Kachhi Canal Project was started in 1998 during Nawaz Sharif's tenure and was completed in his second tenure after suffering a lot during Pervez Musharraf time.

He appreciated the WAPDA and Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal and their respective team for accomplishing the repair project and assured the federal government's all-out support for the second phase. Prime Minister Shehbaz also appreciated the Balochistan chief minister for reviving the merit-based order and launching the solarisation of tube-

wells.

Similarly, he also spoke highly for the Punjab Chief Minister for launching the project of a cancer hospital, free tractor scheme for farmers to bring about the agricultural revolution and other initiatives in the education and health sectors.

Earlier, in her address, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said the canal project would bring about prosperity in Balochistan besides enhancing coordination and closeness among the provinces. She said the credit for all mega public welfare projects like motorways, youth scholarships, modern transport facilities including Orange Line, Metro or Speedo buses and student bikes went to the PML-N governments.



TAUNSA BARRAGE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presses the button to open gates for flow of water from Indus River into Kachhi Canal.

Visits Peshawar:

COAS resolves to hunt down enemies of peace to ensure lasting stability and security

RAWALPINDI (APP): General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on Friday visited Peshawar, as a follow up of the National Apex Committee meeting held on November 19 and prelude to Provincial Apex Committee meeting to be held soon.

The COAS was provided a comprehensive briefing on the prevailing security situation and the progress of ongoing counter-terrorism operations in the region, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. Chief Minister KPK and field commanders were also present at the occasion.

Paying profound trib-

ute to the Shuhada and Ghazis, the COAS emphasized the unparalleled sacrifices being rendered for the defense of the motherland.

He remarked that these sacrifices served as a cornerstone of national resilience, inspiring and unwavering dedication of the armed forces and of law enforcement agencies.

The COAS commended the high morale, operational readiness, and unyielding commitment of the troops in effectively countering all forms of threats. He reiterated the Army's firm resolve to dismantle hostile terrorist networks and eradicate the illegal spectrum undermin-

ing national security.

Highlighting the collective determination of the nation and its security forces to combat terrorism, the COAS stressed that thwarting the nefarious designs of inimical elements remained a top priority.

"Through synchronized and robust operations, Pakistan Army in collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) will relentlessly hunt down the enemies of peace to ensure lasting stability and security," he assured.

Earlier, upon his arrival, the COAS was received by the Corps Commander Peshawar.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi presenting plot allotment letter to the widow of the police martyr.

Mohsin Naqvi launches housing scheme for Police welfare after 25 years

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant move for the welfare of law enforcement personnel, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has inaugurated a long-awaited housing scheme for the police, marking its first launch in 25 years.

The project, named NPF One Capital Park City, was unveiled by Naqvi in a ceremony held in Islamabad, aimed at improving the living conditions of police officers, their families and the families of martyrs.

Addressing the gathering, Naqvi highlighted that the housing scheme would offer plots to police personnel, families of fallen officers and those injured in the line of duty. "Under this initiative, police officers, martyrs' families and the

injured will be granted the opportunity to own plots," Naqvi said. He also emphasized the government's ongoing efforts to take further steps for the police welfare under the National Police Foundation.

The interior minister personally visited the seats of police employees from various provinces, presenting them with allotment letters for plots in recognition of their services. He congratulated the recipients, stressing the importance of supporting those who serve the nation with dedication.

The initiative has been made possible under the leadership of Managing Director Sabir Ahmed, whose efforts have been instrumental in revitalizing the National Police Foundation

in recent months. Naqvi praised the Foundation for generating profits through such projects, ensuring that these funds are directed toward enhancing the welfare of the police force.

Naqvi also assured that the government is working towards securing sufficient funds for martyrs' families, emphasizing that every martyr's family should have adequate financial support. Additionally, he confirmed that the National Police Foundation is responsible for the ongoing care of injured police officers.

Looking ahead, the Interior Minister announced plans for a joint project between the National Police Foundation and the Capital Development Authority (CDA).



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani along with Mr. Manzoor Ahmed Kakar, Senator from Baluchistan visited National Emergencies Operations Center (NEOC) at NDMA Headquarters.

Imran defends Bushra Bibi's remarks, dismisses claims of Saudi involvement in his ouster

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former prime minister Imran Khan has come to the defence of his wife, Bushra Bibi, after her comments allegedly implicating Saudi Arabia in his government's ouster sparked backlash.

Khan claimed that Bushra's words were "taken out of context" to create unnecessary controversy around Pakistan's "brotherly" relationship with Saudi Arabia. Khan further highlighted Saudi Arabia's support during a 2022 OIC

foreign ministers' summit in Islamabad, which he said demonstrated the Kingdom's loyalty to Pakistan.

He reiterated that his wife is not involved in politics, and her message to the nation merely echoed his words in anticipation of the November 24 protest.

He described the event as a day to "break free from slavery," framing it as a pivotal moment for Pakistanis to choose between "the yoke of submission" or "the crown of freedom."

Six motorway sections to be closed for maintenance

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police on Friday announced that six sections of the motorways would be closed from Friday night at 8 pm due to maintenance and repair works. According to Motorway police North Zone spokesman, Muhammad Saqib, M-1: Islamabad to Peshawar, M-2: Islamabad to Lahore, M-3: Lahore to Abdul Hakeem, M-4: Pindi Bhattian to Multan, M-14: Dera Ismail Khan to Halka and M-11: Lahore to Sialkot would be closed for maintenance.

Seven terrorists killed in Balochistan, KP operations

Security forces kill 4 terrorists in 3 separate engagements in Balochistan; 3 khwarij in IBO in Bannu

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Security Forces on Friday killed four terrorists in three separate engagements in Balochistan.

"An intelligence based operation was conducted in Awaran District on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, two terrorists were successfully neutralized; both high value targets identified as Niaz @ Ghuman and Zareef @ Shah Jahan," said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

In another operation in Dera Bugti District, own troops effectively neutralised one terrorist, it further said.

In yet another engagement in Kech District, own troops, while conducting an intelligence based operation, killed another terror-

ist.

"The killed terrorists were involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces as well as the innocent civilians and were highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies," it said.

Meanwhile Security Forces killed three khwarij terrorists in an Intelligence based operation (IBO) in Bannu district.

"In the early hours of Friday, Security Forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Bannu District on reported presence of khwarij," said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

During conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged khwarij location, as a result of which, three khwarij were sent to hell while two khwarij got injured, it said.

CJP extends jail reforms initiative to KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr Justice Yahya Afridi has underscored the need for a just and equitable criminal justice framework, emphasizing that a humane and efficient prison system forms its backbone.

The Chief Justice stated this while chairing a consultative meeting convened today at Peshawar.

The CJP appreciated the prison management in KP, noting that 1,289 prisoners charged with minor offenses had been released through camp courts conducted by judicial officers over the past three months and urged other provinces to replicate these efforts to alleviate overcrowding.

The meeting was in continuation to the series of nationwide discussions ini-

tiated earlier this month by the Chief Justice of Pakistan in Lahore and Islamabad, aimed at formulating a comprehensive National Jail Reform Policy. The agenda focused on prison reforms and inmate welfare as key components of a broader strategy to modernize Pakistan's criminal justice system.

The Chief Justice PHC Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim highlighted the lack of rehabilitation facilities for the convicts in the province, stressing the need to develop a strong rehabilitation system for absorption of the convicts in the society. He proposed sentence remissions to inmates who achieve educational excellence during their confinement, aligning with broader rehabilitation goals.

Muqam strongly condemns allegations against Saudia

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam has strongly condemned the allegations against Saudi Arabia.

The minister said that Bushra Bibi made false allegations against Pakistan's friends which was an old tactic of PTI, said a press release issued here on Friday. He said Bushra Bibi has conspired to make Pakistanis unemployed abroad.

"Earlier, Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia had become unemployed and imprisoned due to failed policies of PTI. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appealed to the Saudi leadership and obtained forgiveness in the

past", the minister expressed.

Sometimes, he said they blame America and sometimes Saudi Arabia, these people have dominated Pakistan for four years. Those who received gifts, watches and jewelry from Saudi Arabia have once again proven that they are benefactors and forgetful of kindness, he added.

Bajwa denies Saudi role in Imran's ouster

Monitoring Desk LAHORE: Refuting Bushra Bibi's statement about Saudi government's role in the ouster of former premier Imran Khan, ex-army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia held friendly ties during the PTI regime.

Talking to a private tv channel, the former army chief termed Bushra Bibi's statement a pack of lies. He asked how a friendly country could interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs.

He pointed out that the OIC summit was held in Islamabad on March 21, 2022, questioning whether there had been any tension in the ties between both countries, would Saudi Arabia have allowed the summit to take place in Pakistan.

Detailing Imran's visit to KSA, Bajwa said Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman himself came to receive the former in Jeddah. "Shah Mehmood Qureshi and I were present at the dinner during the visit," said Bajwa.

The ex-army chief said he had no inkling as to what is wrong with Bushra Bibi. He expressed concern over her statement, saying Imran can endorse it to make it a narrative.

Malaysian Air Force Chief calls on CAS Zaheer Ahmed

ISLAMABAD (APP): During his first-ever visit to Pakistan, General Tan Sri Dato' Sri Mohd Asghar Khan bin Goriman Khan, Chief of the Royal Malaysian Air Force called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force on Friday at Air Headquarters.

The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, military cooperation, joint training and collaboration in the industrial

domain, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

On his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to General Tan Sri Dato' Sri Mohd Asghar Khan bin Goriman Khan.

During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff highlighted the robust bilateral defence ties that exist between Pakistan and Malaysia.

PM constitutes committee to resolve PPP's concerns

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday constituted a committee to ensure cooperation in political and other matters, and to resolve the issues between Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The members of the committee include Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema.

Other members include

Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Engineer Amir Muqam, Prime Minister's Advisor Rana Sanaullah, Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan, Senior Minister of Punjab Marriyum Aurangzeb, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Jaffer Khan Mandokhel, and Bashir Ahmed Memon.

According to a press release issued by the PM Office, the prime minister has tasked the committee with the responsibility of political cooperation and resolving issues after detailed consultations with the Pakistan Peoples Party.

PPP alliance with PML-N is of compulsion, not of love: Governor

LAHORE (Online): Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan has said PPP alliance with PML-N is of compulsion rather than of love.

"If PPP becomes minus then the premiership can sustain no more. Governor is a constitutional post and in principle chief minister has to come to governor but despite it I myself went to meet Chief Minister (CM). We want things are done on merit and PPP be consulted being ally. 6 months have passed but CM neither telephoned nor she made any consultation, he said this while addressing participants of National Security Workshop under National De-

fence University Islamabad Friday.

I tried to make contact with CM by telephone several time but zero response came every time. Deadlock took place. I don't deem it proper to go to her now, he added.

He said that PPP didn't forge alliance with PML-N out of love, but out of compulsion. Punjab Governor said that he has informed his leadership President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari about the situation in Punjab. He said that as per tradition Chief Minister should have visited the Governor, adding that he broke that barrier and went to the Chief Min-

ister himself. He said that he assured Chief Minister that being coalition partners they should work together as a team. He said that Peoples' Party only wants the supremacy of merit.

Punjab Governor said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari played a key role in getting the 26th Constitutional Amendment passed. Punjab Governor said that the experience of alliance with the PML-N in the past was a bitter experience. He further stated that we expected that the PML-N would have learnt lessons from the past. He said that despite written agreements and consultative meetings, no implementation has taken place so far.



LAHORE: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott meeting with Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora.

CM reviews 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' programme

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed her unwavering commitment to fulfilling the promise of providing affordable housing to the underprivileged and urged the relevant authorities to expedite completion of the 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar Programme'.

Speaking at a special review meeting here on Friday, she said the programme was not just a slogan but a tangible effort to improve the lives of the common man. "Apni Chhat Apna

Ghar is a dream for every citizen, and we are determined to make it a reality," she affirmed.

The CM was updated on the progress of the scheme, with 927 applicants having received their first installment of loans. She informed that more than 800 houses under the initiative are nearing completion. "Ensure that the second installment payments are made promptly to help these families move forward," she directed.

CM Maryam

Nawaz was further briefed that over 50,000 applicants' data had been transferred to Akhuwat Foundation for verification. Of these, 38,000 applicants have been verified, with more than 20,900 submitting the necessary documentation.

As of now, 8,424 applications have been fully processed. She highlighted the success of the digital portal, which has seen over 600,000 registered users and more than 325,000 applications for house construction.

Minister promises transparency in hospitals revamping project

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique reaffirmed the government's commitment to transparency in the ongoing hospitals revamping project, stressing that there would be no compromise on quality and timelines. He made these remarks while presiding over a meeting at the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department, here on Friday.

The minister stressed the importance of completing the revamping projects in various government teaching hospitals of Lahore on time. He stated that contractors had been



BAHAWALPUR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the residence of Federal Minister for Housing & Works, Riaz Hussain Pirzada to offer condolences on the sad demise of his brother Sajjad Hussain Pirzada.

Global moot urges for collective action to mitigate climate change

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): A global conference of experts titled "Empowering Communities: The Case for Locally Led Adaptation in Climate Resilience," hosted in Azerbaijan's Baku city, emphasized the urgent need for collective action against climate change to mitigate the impacts of disasters.

Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, addressed a distinguished forum at a special event hosted in the Pakistan Pavilion during the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, says a message reaching and released to the media here on Friday.

The event saw the participation of prominent figures, including Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, representatives from the German Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Cres-

cent Societies (IFRC), national societies, and other key humanitarian stakeholders.

A thought-provoking panel discussion featured distinguished speakers, including Member Managing Board Jamaican Red Cross Audrey Mullings, Ms. Ninni Ikkala Nyman, and Manzoor Ali from IFRC, Head of Delegation German Red Cross in Pakistan Asif Aman, and PRCS Deputy Director Climate Change Sajjad Ali, who focused on the significance of locally driven adaptation strategies.

Two killed, four others injured as roof collapsed

RENALA KHURD (APP): A mother and daughter on Friday died, and three brothers and father received injuries as the roof of their old house collapsed in Village 19/1 RA. According to rescue sources, the roof suddenly caved in, due to which a woman, namely Abida Bibi, and his daughter Ifrat were killed on the spot. While three brothers, including 6-year-old Anas, Ibrahim, 5-year-old Ali.

Two friends shot dead in Swabi

PESHAWAR (APP): Two close friends were killed and another injured when their alleged rivals fired at them inside a general store in Swabi district on Friday morning. Police said two friends named Jawad and Fawad and owner of the shop, Umair were fired at by the assailants inside the shop, which police said was a likely result of an old rivalry between the deceased and attackers.

NIC Hyderabad's Global Entrepreneurship Week 2024 concluded

HYDERABAD (APP): The National Incubation Center Hyderabad wrapped up its most dynamic Global Entrepreneurship Week yet, turning four days into a celebration of innovation, community, and entrepreneurial spirit. The event kicked off with inspiring opening remarks from NIC Hyderabad's new Project Director, Sana Shah here Friday.

From November 18 - 21, the center buzzed with activity as startup founders, industry experts, and students came together to learn, connect, and grow. NICH startups like Pak Bio Energy, Chaloo, Aashi Herbs, OrderMs and Sab Bachao sharing their

journey from idea to impact, inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs in the audience.

The "Queens of Commerce" panel, moderated by Shahzana Memon, brought together powerhouse female founders Laraib Fatima from Brand Craft Studio, Kanwal Aftab from Cloves and Cardamom, Nadia Patel from Fempro and Amneh Shaikh from Polly & Other Stories who captivated the audience with their stories of breaking barriers and building successful businesses. Their candid conversations about challenges and triumphs resonated deeply with aspiring entrepreneurs.

In collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan, NIC Hyderabad celebrated Women Entrepreneurship Day. Chief Manager Adeel Iqbal shared SBP's future roadmap for supporting women entrepreneurs. Beenish and Shahida from the Women Chambers provided valuable community insights, while the powerful journeys of Aashi Herbs and Agri Revolution, two trailblazing NIC startups, showcased success stories.

The week continued with a lineup of impactful workshops. Muneeb ur Rehman led the "Entrepreneurs' Mental Health Summit", emphasizing techniques for managing stress

International News

Over 60 feared dead as Israel bombs homes in Gaza

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: The Israeli military bombed at least five crowded homes in northern Gaza early with many casualties buried beneath the rubble, Palestinian health officials said, as troops deepened an incursion along the territory's northern edge. Rescue operations were under way in the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, medics said. Hamas media put the number of fatalities at 66, most of whom it said had not been recovered.

Hussam Abu Safiyya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya, one of three medical facilities barely operational in the besieged northern area, said at least 200 people lived in the residential district that was bombed in Beit Lahiya and that many people remained missing. Abu Safiyya said medics were recovering injured people and treating them on-site because they had no ambulance vehicles to move them to hospitals.

Even if the injured

make it to hospital, many then die because of a lack of medical supplies and specialised surgeons after Israel detained or expelled most of the medical staff, Abu Safiyya said. Israeli operations in Gaza have focused for weeks on the northern edge of the territory, where the military has laid siege to three major towns and ordered residents to flee. Residents in the three towns — Jabalia, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun — said Israeli forces had destroyed hundreds of houses in since they began the latest offensive on Oct 5.

Palestinians say Israel appears determined to depopulate the area permanently to create a buffer zone along the northern edge of Gaza, which Israel denies. Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), said on Thursday that 80 per cent of the Gaza Strip is now high-risk, with many people increasingly desperate. "They are trapped with no safe place

to go. In northern Gaza, people remain under a tight siege. They run for their lives in vicious circles and have been deprived of humanitarian aid for more than 40 days now," he said in a post on X. "Across Gaza, the delivery of the little aid allowed in has become overly complex including because of insecure routes," he added. The administration of US President Joe Biden last month told Israel it had 30 days to improve the flow of aid to Gaza or risk consequences to US military assistance.

On Nov 12, Washington said it had concluded that Israel had made progress and was not impeding aid to Gaza. Many aid groups disagreed. Adding to the challenges, armed gangs have stepped up looting of aid trucks, contributing to spiralling prices of essential food items such as flour. The price of a 25kg sack of flour, if available, has risen to 700 shekels (\$186) from 50 shekels (\$13) over the past week.



People search for survivors in the rubble of a building hit by an overnight Israeli strike in the Beit Lahiya area of Gaza.

Israeli strikes kill 47 people in eastern Lebanon, official says

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: Israeli strikes killed at least 47 people in eastern Lebanon, a Lebanese official said, pressing the campaign against the Iran-backed Hezbollah group as a US mediator sought to advance ceasefire talks in Israel.

US mediator Amos Hochstein, who said a ceasefire was "within our grasp" during a visit to Lebanon on Tuesday, met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz. There were no immediate statements.

Indicating there were still gaps to close, a senior Lebanese official told

Reuters that Beirut had sought changes to the U.S. ceasefire proposal, to include ensuring a speedier withdrawal of Israeli forces from south Lebanon.

The diplomacy marks the most serious attempt yet to end the conflict between Israel and the heavily armed, Iran-backed Hezbollah, part of the regional spillover of the Gaza war that erupted more than a year ago.

Bachir Khodr, governor of Lebanon's Baalbek-Hermel province, said at least 47 were killed and 22 wounded in Israeli strikes in the Baalbek region.

10 killed in attack on Sufi shrine in Afghanistan: interior ministry

Monitoring Desk KABUL: Ten people were killed when a gunman opened fire on a Sufi shrine in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province, an interior ministry spokesman told AFP on Friday.

"A man fired on Sufis taking part in a weekly ritual at a shrine in a remote area of Nahrin district, killing 10 people," the ministry's Abdul Matin Qani said.

A Nahrin resident, who knew victims of the attack, told AFP that worshippers had gathered at the Sayed Pacha Agha shrine on Thursday evening.

They had begun a Sufi chant when "a man shot at the dozen worshippers", he said on condition of anonymity.

"When people arrived for morning prayers, they discovered the bodies," he added. Attacks regularly target Sufis during rituals or gatherings in Afghanistan, a country with a very large Muslim majority but where the Taliban authorities impose a strict interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia, which is different from Sufism.

In April 2022, 33 people, including children, were killed in an explosion that targeted a Sufi mosque during Friday prayers in Kunduz province.

Putin says Ukraine war is going global

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that the Ukraine war was escalating towards a global conflict after the United States and Britain allowed Ukraine to hit Russia with their weapons, and warned the West that Moscow could strike back.

Russia, Putin said, had responded to the use of US and British missiles by firing a new kind of hypersonic medium-range ballistic missile at a Ukrainian military facility. More could follow, Putin warned.

He said civilians would be warned ahead of further strikes with such weapons. After approval from the administration of President Joe Biden, Ukraine struck Russia with six US-made ATACMS on Nov 19 and with British Storm Shadow missiles and

US-made HIMARS on Nov 21, Putin added.

"From that moment, as we have repeatedly underscored, a regional conflict in Ukraine previously provoked by the West has acquired elements of a global character," Putin said in an address to the nation carried by state television.

The United States, Putin said, was pushing the world towards a global conflict. "And in case of escalation of aggressive actions, we will also respond decisively and in a mirror manner," he said.

Putin said the Ukrainian missile attack with ATACMS had failed to inflict any serious damage. But the Storm Shadow attack on Kursk region on Nov 21 had been directed at a command point and led to deaths and injuries, Putin said.

China blames US policy on Taiwan for defence leaders not meeting

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China's defence ministry blamed the United States' stance on Taiwan for his minister not meeting his US counterpart during a gathering this week in Laos.

Defence Minister Dong Jun turned down US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's request to meet during a gathering of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) defense ministers, US officials said on Wednesday.

"The U.S. side cannot undermine China's core interests on the Taiwan issue while engaging with the Chinese military as if nothing is wrong," a ministry spokesperson said in a statement on Thursday.

The remarks raised questions over whether only a change in US policy

towards the island can restore military-to-military talks at the defense minister level between the two countries.

The failure to meet is "entirely the responsibility" of the US, the Chinese spokesperson said.

The spokesperson also urged the US to "immediately correct its mistakes" and strive to create favourable conditions for high-level military exchanges between the two sides.

China views democratically governed Taiwan as its territory, a claim that Taiwan's government rejects.

The U.S. is Taiwan's most important international backer and arms supplier, despite the lack of formal diplomatic recognition.

Adani shares rally in India after founder's US charges

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Shares in Indian billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate rallied on Friday to pare the previous day's frenzied sell-off sparked by US charges alleging the tycoon paid more than \$250 million in bribes to secure lucrative government contracts.

Wednesday's bombshell indictment in New York accused Adani and multiple subordinates of deliberately misleading international investors as part of the bribery scheme.

Adani, once the world's second-richest man, is a close ally of Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi and critics have long accused him of improperly benefitting from their relationship.

Ukraine launches UK Storm Shadow cruise missiles into Russia, a day after using US ATACMS

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Ukraine fired a volley of British Storm Shadow cruise missiles into Russia the latest new Western weapon it has been permitted to use on Russian targets a day after it fired US ATACMS missiles.

The strikes were widely reported by Russian war correspondents on Telegram and confirmed by an official on condition of anonymity. A spokesperson

for Ukraine's General Staff said he had no information.

Moscow has said the use of Western weapons to strike Russian territory far from the border would be a major escalation in the conflict. Kyiv says it needs the capability to defend itself by hitting Russian rear bases used to support Moscow's invasion, which entered its 1,000th day this week.

At least 150 people killed in violence in Haitian capital in past week: UN

Monitoring Desk GENEVA: Soaring violence in Port-au-Prince since last week has left at least 150 people dead, bringing the number of deaths in Haiti this year to over 4,500, the United Nations said Wednesday.

"The latest upsurge in violence in Haiti's capital is a harbinger of worse to come," UN rights chief Volker Turk warned in a statement. "The gang violence must be promptly halted. Haiti must not be allowed to descend further into chaos."

Violence has intensified dramatically in Port-au-Prince since November 11, as a coalition of gangs pushes for full control of the Haitian capital.

Well-armed gangs control some 80 per cent of the city, routinely targeting civilians despite a Kenyan-led international force that has been deployed to help the outgunned police restore some government order.

"At least 150 people have been killed, 92 injured

and about 20,000 forced to flee their homes over the past week," Turk's statement said.

In addition, "Port-au-Prince's estimated four million people are practically being held hostage as gangs now control all the main roads in and out of the capital".

The Haitian capital has seen renewed fighting in the last week from Viv Ansanin, an alliance of gangs that in February helped oust former prime minister Ariel Henry.

Turk said that at least 55 per cent of the deaths from simultaneous and apparently coordinated attacks in the capital resulted from exchanges of fire between gang members and police.

He also highlighted reports of a rise in mob lynchings. Authorities said Tuesday that police and civilian self-defence groups had killed 28 gang members in Port-au-Prince after an overnight operation as the government seeks to regain some control.

PM directs implementation as IT ministry presents action plan on \$25bn IT exports

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication on Friday presented a detailed action plan to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif aimed at boosting the country's IT exports to \$25 billion in five years.

The prime minister, who had tasked the IT ministry with the said target, chaired a review meeting here and appreciated the action plan, and instructed to ensure its implementation, according to a PM Office press release.

The action plan featured measures to bring reforms in different IT-related sectors and address the issues.

In his remarks, the prime minister said that there was no dearth of capable manpower and resources. The effective use of resources and skill training of the manpower could take the IT exports even beyond the targeted \$25 billion.

He asked all the relevant departments for collaborative efforts to address the challenges in the IT sector reforms and informed the participants that he would personally oversee the implementation process.

The prime minister instructed the Higher Education Commission to de-

velop an action plan for youth's education and skill training of international standards.

Calling for implementing the proposals to meet the Gulf countries' demand for IT experts, he asked the IT ministry to define the targets and their timelines to enhance exports. In this regard, he also directed to constitute a committee to ensure the implementation of the reforms and carry out necessary collaboration with different departments.

In the briefing, the prime minister was told that his decision to prioritise the IT sector led to a 34% increase in IT exports dur-

ing the last four months. It was informed that Pakistan's IT ranking improved from 79 to 40, e-governance ranking by 14 points, and 2500 new IT companies were registered.

The participants were informed that for the next five years, a \$15 billion target has been set for IT sector exports, \$10 billion for digitization, and \$1 billion for telecom exports.

The meeting was briefed on the Labor Management System aimed at capacity building of the workforce in collaboration with the educational institutions, using the demand data of the industries.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding reforms in Information Technology sector.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi reviewing parade during the passing out ceremony of ASPs of 50th STP at National Police Academy

Passing-out parade of 50th Common ASPs held at National Police Academy

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Police Academy hosted the prestigious passing-out parade for the 50th Common Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) on Wednesday.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi graced the event as the chief guest, lauding the newly trained officers and sharing a vision for a more modern and efficient police force.

The event commenced with Minister Naqvi inspecting the parade and addressing the contingents. A salute was presented by smartly dressed ASPs,

showcasing the discipline and rigor instilled during their training.

The minister congratulated the graduating officers, emphasizing their vital role in fostering trust and respect within communities.

"I extend heartfelt congratulations to all the passing-out ASPs. Your conduct and behavior will determine the respect you earn from the public," said Naqvi. He stressed the importance of empathy and service in the police force, urging officers to prioritize the needs of the underprivileged.

Bushra's allegations against Saudi Arabia nothing but failed attempt to save PTI's diminishing politics: Asif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Friday said Bushra Bibi's allegations leveled against Saudi Arabia were nothing but a failed attempt to save the PTI's diminishing politics, terming them "regrettable" and "dirty acts."

Addressing a press conference here, the minister said Pakistan has a historical, religious and economic relations with Saudi Arabia adding that she always helped Pakistan in difficult times.

Over 2.8 million Pakistanis are working in Saudi Arabia who send billions of dollars remittances to Pakistan every year, he added.

The minister said, "Our cordial and friendly relationship with Saudi Arabia should not affect due to someone's personal political gains. Such a controversial statement is an effort to save PTI's sinking ship," he added.

He said, "There is a conflict between the sisters-in-law; the family [PTI founder's] is embroiled in a dispute over inheritance". Bushra Bibi

has claimed the political inheritance of founder of PTI. Our politics has never witnessed such a low, he said, adding Bibi has started her projection and the people would realize the reality shortly, he added.

The minister said that the founder of PTI was accused of taking a gift, selling it, depositing a small amount with Toshakhana and keeping the rest for himself.

Regarding law and order in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), he said that there was a poor security situation in the province. "Even yesterday, there was bloodshed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, yet the chief minister attacks the federal government of Punjab every other day," he remarked.

He said that the CM KPK did not make any efforts to curb terrorism in the province. Regarding the current political situation in the Centre, he said that the November 24 protest call would be a "third attack".

NA body on Parl. affairs lauds Ministry's performance

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs on Friday commended the performance of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs during its meeting chaired by Rana Iradat Sharif Khan.

The Committee recommended further improvements in the mechanism to ensure faster resolution of public grievances.

The Prime Minister's Public Affairs and Grievances Wing briefed the Committee on its operations. The Wing focuses on

addressing concerns of non-digital enabled citizens and Pakistan's diaspora, aiming to provide relief and resolve their issues efficiently. The Committee urged the Ministry to enhance the Wing's visibility through advertising campaigns, ensuring that more people can access and benefit from its services.

Extending condolences to the victims of the recent tragic gun attack on a passenger van in Parachinar, which claimed 42 lives, the committee offered prayers for the departed souls.

Search and combing operation conducted at PS Tarnol jurisdiction

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police conducted a grand search and combing operation at the Tarnol police station jurisdiction on Friday.

A public relation officer told APP that, under the supervision of SP Sadar Zame Khan Zaib, a grand search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of Tarnol police station by Islamabad Police, CTD, FC, and lady police teams.

He said during the search operation 5000 suspicious persons, 700 houses, shops, hotels and 104 motorbikes and vehicles were thoroughly checked while 100 suspects were shifted to the police station for further verification.

Petition against ban on VPN: IHC issues notice to interior secretary, PTA

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while issuing notice to interior secretary and PTA in connection with petition against closure of VPN has sought reply from the Interior ministry orders regarding ban on VPN came up for hearing in IHC Friday.

The petition against closure of VPN came up for hearing before Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamer Farooq.

The counsel for the petitioner argued that he is

a citizen who has been affected directly due to order of closure of VPN. Complete ban has been imposed on social media website X.

The petitioner has requested the court to declare null and void interior ministry notification dated November 15. The notification declared violation of basic human rights.

The court while issuing notice to interior secretary and PTA has sought reply from them besides adjourning the hearing of the case for indefinite period.

Court issues written order on declaring Gandapur proclaimed offender

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad while declaring Chief Minister (CM) KP Ali Amin Gandapur proclaimed offender in the case registered against him in police station I-9 has issued written order on this count.

Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra of ATC Islamabad issued written order.

The order said case has been separated from other accused after declar-

ing Ali Amin Gandapur absconder.

The order said the non-bailable arrest warrants of accused Raja Arshid, Wasiq Qayyum, Raja Khurram Nawaz, Faisal Javed and Umar Tanvir were issued during the hearing while Sardar Masroof, Murtaza Toori and Zahid Bashir who are counsels for all absconding accused filed exemption plea for absconding accused.

10 outlaws arrested; weapons, drugs recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended 10 outlaws involved in different criminal activities including drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession.

A public relation officer told APP that, the Islamabad Police Shalimar, Sumbal, Koral, Bhara Kahu, Nilore, Sumbal and Sihala police teams took legal action against accused involved in possessing illegal weapons and drug peddling activities.

He said the police team also arrested 7 accused namely Zakariya, Sarfraz, Ayaz, Bilal Tariq, Zubair Qayyum, Adnan Aziz and Aqsa Norin and recovered three 30 bore pistols, two rifles, one dagger, 1,060-grams hashish and 300-grams ice from their possession.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan posing group photo with the handball winner UPTeam during the closing ceremony of the Prime Minister's University Sports Olympiad 46th All Pakistan Interschool Athletics Men and Women Championship 2024-25 at Pakistan Sports Complex.

Commodore Ateeq ur Rehman promoted to rank of Rear Admiral

KARACHI (APP): Commodore Ateeq ur Rehman Abid has been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral with immediate effect.

Rear Admiral Ateeq ur Rehman Abid got commission in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1995.

The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Naval Academy, Karachi, Naval War College, USA, and Royal College of Defence Studies, UK, said a press release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy).

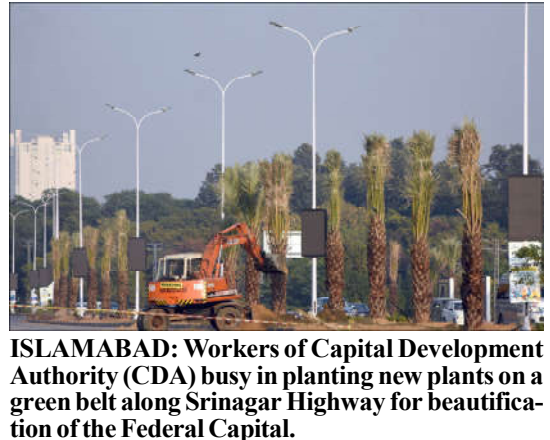
The Flag Officer has completed various professional courses from national and international institutes. He has done International Security and Strategic Leadership Studies Course from UK, Naval Staff Course

from USA, Pakistan Navy Staff Course from PN War College Lahore and National Security and War Course from National Defence University, Islamabad.

The Admiral has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments.



from USA, Pakistan Navy Staff Course from PN War College Lahore and National Security and War Course from National Defence University, Islamabad. The Admiral has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments.



ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) busy in planting new plants on a green belt along Srinagar Highway for beautification of the Federal Capital.

PCP stresses fact-checking, responsible reporting to combat fake news

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Press Council of Pakistan (PCP), as part of its commitment to combating fake news, underscored the importance of responsible reporting and the need for meticulous fact-checking before sharing information.

The session, exclusively organized for journalists on Friday and chaired by PCP Chairman Arshad Khan Jadoon here Friday, brought together members of the journalist community from Islamabad and Rawalpindi to discuss strategies for countering fake news and misinformation. During the session, the participants were provided with a detailed briefing on the PCP's structure and its pivotal role in safeguarding against misinformation, slander, and unethical reporting.

The PCP's commitment to protecting both

media and public interests was underscored, along with its function as a shield for journalists, ensuring their rights and shielding them from undue external interference. Chairman Arshad Khan Jadoon shared insights into the complaints received over the past nine months of his tenure and their resolution as per legal standards. He elaborated on the operations of the inquiry commission and the mechanisms for addressing complaints, highlighting the council's renewed efficiency following the appointment of its chairman after a five-year hiatus. The post of Chairman PCP had remained vacant for the past five years. The incumbent government made a formal appointment to the position, enabling the Council to function efficiently in ensuring the proper dissemination of information.

IHC moved for revocation of bail of Bushra Bibi

ISLAMABAD (Online): FIA has filed petition in Islamabad High Court (IHC) for cancellation of bail of Bushra Bibi.

FIA has requested the court to revoke the bail of Bushra Bibi for not appearing in the court persistently.

Bushra Bibi and others have been made respondents in the petition.

The petition said the court wrote in the order Bushra Bibi will not misuse bail. Bushra Bibi is not appearing in most of the hearings after seeking bail. Therefore, court should cancel bail of Bushra Bibi.

ISSI hosts roundtable on Pak, US ties with CSIS delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Centre for Strategic Perspectives at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a roundtable discussion on "Pakistan-U.S. Relations," with delegation from Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), comprising Senior Vice President Daniel Runde and Senior Associate Ambassador Robin Raphael.

The event was attended by practitioners, academics, think-tank experts and researchers, said a press release issued here on Friday.

In his welcome re-

marks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized the significance of CSIS as a renowned U.S. think-tank, particularly in shaping the discourse and influencing U.S. policy. He noted that the timing of the visit was crucial, as it coincided with the conclusion of the U.S. Presidential and Congressional elections and the time of Cabinet formation before the new Administration takes office in January 2025. With global attention focused on what Trump would mean for America and the rest of the world, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood dilated on the

historically cyclical pattern of Pakistan-U.S. relations—alternating between engagement and estrangement. He emphasized the need for long-term sustainability and stability, including through efforts to broaden the relationship's scope that would benefit both nations. He also highlighted the vital importance of economic relations with the U.S. for Pakistan, suggesting that besides the traditional areas of bilateral trade and investment attention should be focused on new areas of cooperation such as energy, IT, and climate change. These were vital for evolving a more rounded relationship beyond the historical focus on security and strategic events.

'PTI's politics of intimidation no longer be tolerated': Danyal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Danyal Chaudhry Friday condemned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for employing intimidation tactics, emphasizing that the government would no longer tolerate such actions.

In a recent interview with a private news channel, Danyal Chaudhry lambasted PTI's protests, asserting that they disproportionately harm Pakistan's most vulnerable populations, including the poor

and farmers, rather than targeting the government.

"The government will not tolerate any disruptions to peace and will not give in to blackmailing tactics," Danyal Chaudhry cautioned.

Danyal also made it clear that there would be no National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) for Imran Khan until he takes responsibility for the May 9 riots.

Responding a query, he said, "Pakistan will only prosper under democratic rule, not anarchic politics."

IWMB says: Margalla Viewpoint master plan approved

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) said on Friday that the master plan for the eco-restoration of the Margalla Viewpoint project has been unanimously approved by the 5th Implementation Committee.

This significant development marks a milestone in the efforts to transform the Margalla Hills into a thriving ecosystem and a popular tourist destination.

According to IWMB spokesperson, the master plan, prepared by architect Imrana Tiwana collaborat-

ing with Architect DB Studio based in Islamabad, is the result of meticulous planning and collaboration amongst all stakeholders.

The plan envisions a green space that not only restores the natural beauty of the Margalla Hills but also provides a unique recreational space for residents and tourists.

Key Features of the Master Plan includes promenades and walking Trails, reflecting pool and Eco-display area, open air amphitheatre, play area for children, sitting areas for elders, prayer area, visitor information centre, office spaces and parking areas.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of passengers stands at a bus station at Faizabad in the Federal Capital. Islamabad authorities have announced strict security plans for November 24 due to a planned PTI protest at D-Chowk. All entry and exit points to the city will be sealed, and transport services will remain shut.