



# Islamabad POST

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**Ties with Armenia depend on Baku-Yerevan relations**

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**Nepal offers huge incentives to investors**

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**Neymar trial opens ahead of World Cup**

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## Briefs

### Struggle for democracy to continue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid tribute to the martyrs of Karsaz tragedy. In his message issued on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Karsaz tragedy, the PPP Chairman said that today reminds us sacrifices of the leadership and workers of Party during the struggle to restore and strengthen democracy in the country. Both leadership and workers fought so many heinous conspiracies and walked through rivers of blood to accomplish the mission of democracy, equality, peace and prosperity in the country.

### Swati sent on judicial remand

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A local court in Islamabad on Monday sent PTI Senator Azam Swati to jail on judicial remand in the "controversial tweets" case. The PTI leader was presented before senior civil judge Muhammad Shabir's court after the expiry of his extended one-day physical remand. During the hearing, Swati's lawyer Babar Awan told the court that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) was praying for the recovery of the tweet sent by Swati. He also claimed before the court that the senator had an injury on one of his fingers and had a fracture as well.

### Gas load-shedding inevitable

FIJAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Musadik Malik, the Minister of State for Petroleum, on Monday warned that gas loadshdding is inevitable in the coming months despite the arrangement of additional 200 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) liquefied natural gas (LNG) in January-February 2023, compared to the same period last year. "Despite the availability of an extra LNG cargo during the upcoming peak winter season, gas load-shedding will be inevitable," Malik said.

## Imran wants elections

# PTI not to allow govt to appoint army chief

Terms Sunday's by-polls referendum against corrupt mafia

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan categorically stated that the public overwhelmingly rejected the imported government in the Sunday-last by-elections, which was actually a referendum against the PDM; therefore, he gave some more days to these bandits for the sake of the country to fix date for early elections or else he would announce his party's long march within few days. Speaking at a press conference following the party's high level meeting here on Monday, PTI Chairman warned that these cable of thieves should bear in mind that elections date should be announced forthwith otherwise he would not delay the long march beyond October, as his party completed all the necessary preparations in this regard. He categorically stated that PTI will not allow Nawaz Sharif, Zardari or Shehbaz Sharif to appoint the new chief of the army staff. In favour of his argument, the former prime minister opined that since all these politicians have been involved in corruption and mal practices therefore they do not have any locus standi to make this important appointment. Imran Khan made it clear that the nation

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## Imran gets bail in prohibited funding case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan was granted interim bail in the prohibited funding case till October 31, his lawyers said. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) is investigating PTI's funds which the party is allegedly received illegally. PTI's lawyers had moved the court to stop the FIA from arresting Mr Khan, who on Sunday won six vacant seats of the National Assembly in the by-polls. A court in Islamabad on Monday approved the interim bail of against the surety bond of Rs100,000. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) last week had granted Mr Khan protective bail until Oct. 18, enabling him to move relevant court for a bail. Special Judge (Central) Raja Asif Mehmood granted bail to the PTI Chairman, who appeared before the court.

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## Come to parliament and negotiate: Rana tells PTI Warns of severe consequences if it decided any aggression or sit-in

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah has warned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of severe consequences if it decided any aggression or sit-in, saying that conduct of premature elections could not be linked with any aggression as the only way for such decision was to negotiate it on the table or come to parliament. Addressing a press conference on Monday, the Interior Minister said that the government along with

Continued on Page 06

## 'Next elections to be held on time'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb says PTI Chief Imran Khan Niazi's call for the march is aimed at creating unrest, chaos and uncertainty

Continued on Page 06



SUHBATPUR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets flood affectees of District Suhatpur. – DNA

## Diplomat murder case: Saudi team to visit Pak

Suspect in the Saudi diplomat murder case was killed in a police encounter

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A six-member investigation team of Saudi Arabia will visit Pakistan to review the progress in the probe into Saudi diplomat Hassan al-Qahtani murder case. The Saudi team will also meet the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probing into the 2011 murder case of a Saudi diplomat Hassan al-Qahtani. Sources said that the prime suspects of al-Qahtani's assassination were hiding in Iran, whereas, Interpol also issued red warrants for the arrest of the accused. Sources said that a suspect in the Saudi diplomat murder case was killed in a police encounter. The Saudi investigation team will stay in Pakistan for two days, sources added. An official of the Saudi consulate, Hassan al-Qahtani, had been killed in Karachi's Defence Phase VI on May 16, 2011, by at least four attackers on two motorcycles after intercepting his vehicle near his residence in Khayaban-e-Shahbaz. Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah had asserted that the culprits involved in the assassination of Saudi diplomat Hassan al-Qahtani in 2011 would be brought to justice soon.

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## PM orders rapid dewatering of flood-hit areas

The Premier directs authorities to control waterborne diseases

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SOHBATPUR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has emphasized the need to utilize all available resources for early dewatering of flood stricken areas of Balochistan. He said this while talking to the media on the occasion of a briefing given to him regarding progress on relief and rehabilitation activities in District Sohatpur on Monday. The Prime Minister added that

Continued on Page 06

## PM Shehbaz, Fazl discuss political situation

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Monday. The country's political and overall situation was discussed in the meeting. – APP

## Norwegian envoy meets Gen Bajwa



RAWALPINDI: Norway Ambassador Per Albert Isaas called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at General Head Quarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Monday. During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest and regional security situation and reiterated the desire to further enhance

bilateral relations in all fields. The visiting dignitary expressed his grief over the devastation caused by floods in Pakistan. He also appreciated Pakistan's efforts for regional stability and pledged to play his role for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels. – DNA

# Nepal offers huge incentives to investors

Ambassador of Nepal Tapas Adhikari says the two countries enjoy cordial political relations

Exclusive

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

**Ambassador of Nepal Tapas Adhikari talked exclusively to daily Islamabad POST. The ambassador discussed various issues including bilateral relations, SAARC and regional cooperation. Here is the text of his interview**

**1. Nepal and Pakistan relations**  
The relationship between Nepal and Pakistan have always been cordial and friendly. The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1960 further enriched the bilateral engagements and understanding. Both the countries enjoy the excellent bilateral relations based on goodwill, mutual trust and cooperation. We celebrated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2019. Both countries hold similar views on many issues of common interests at various regional and international forums. Nepal had opened its Embassy in 1962 in Karachi which was later shifted to Islamabad. Similarly, Pakistan has its Embassy in Kathmandu since 1963. The relations between Nepal and Pakistan further strengthened by the high-level visits and interactions between the political leaders. Bilateral trade, people-to-people contacts, similar cultural and social values, tourism and mountaineering, cooperation

in education sectors, among others, have further enriched the bilateral cooperation. As founding members of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), both countries have full faith in the SAARC Charter and its objectives to promote regional cooperation. In a nutshell, there are various aspects of our relations. I won't go into all the dimensions but would simply like to highlight five major aspects: First is political relations: the two countries enjoy cordial political relations. There are various high-level visits between the two countries. This aspect is important to give momentum to overall aspects of our relations as well. Second, despite a huge trade potential between the two countries the current volume of export from Nepal to Pakistan is just NPR 100 million and import from Pakistan to Nepal is NPR 1.14 billion in 2020



with a deficit of NPR 1.04 billion for Nepal. Bilateral trade statistics have suffered a major setback during the COVID pandemic, but the recent data shows the improving situation. The Embassy is working with businesses towards further enhancing the trade relations in the days to come. Third, tourism and the people-to-people contacts are also excellent. Many Pakistani friends visit Nepal as tourists and Nepali and Pakistani mountaineers are working together in various mountain expeditions. At this stage the absence of direct air link has hampered large flow of tourists, so a direct air link could increase the number of tourists between Nepal and Pakistan in many folds. Fourth and fifth include academic and cultural cooperation. As both Nepal and Pakistan are engaging in their social-economic development, the Pakistan Government's



Pakistan Technical Assistance Programme (PTAP) has been an important platform to expand educational opportunities to other countries. Nepali students are getting easy enrollment in Pakistani colleges and universities under PTAP in particular medical and engineering fields, and we are thankful for that. The Pakistan trained medical doctors or engineers have been contributing to various sectors of national development in Nepal and are serving as goodwill Ambassadors of Pakistan. Since both countries have high mountainous terrains, including high peaks, climbers from both countries and their expeditions have further enriching mutual support, understanding, sharing the skills and training and expanding tourism opportunities between Nepal and Pakistan.



**2. Business Relations**  
Pakistan is a big market with a large production base with a variety of productions. In the last two-year, I met and interacted with hundreds of Pakistani entrepreneurs, business leaders and executives. I also have visited more than a dozen chambers of commerce and industry, interacted with the executive and members of the chambers and found a great interest to increase business relations with Nepal. Although, for the last two years we were mostly busy dealing with Covid-19 and could not concentrate on the implementation of the meetings and interactions, the situation is now improving to further increase direct business interactions between Nepali and Pakistani businessmen.

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Ethiopia supported Pakistani flood affectees: Amb. Jemal – Page 02

Abbasi, Chaudhry assure support for industrial zone – Page 03

Pak considers CPC Congress important in Chinese national ethos – Page 04

Indonesian Muslims gamble on problematic ties to Saudi govt vehicle – Page 05

Serena-Comboxx int'l squash C'ship to start from Oct 19 – Page 06

France braces for strike amid fuel shortage tensions – Page 07

NATO launches nuclear drills amid Russia tensions – Page 08

IG NH&MP  
inaugurates  
residential  
campus

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General (IG) National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) Khalid Mahmood Monday inaugurated the residential campus attached to Sector M-1 at Sector Office Swabi on completion, for officers and employees. Additional Inspector General North Region, Zubair Hashmi, DIG Motorway North Zone Muhammad Yousaf Malik, Sector Commander M1 Shafique-ur-Rehman, officers and employees of Motorway Police were also present on this occasion, said a press release. Speaking on the occasion, he said officers and employees were being provided with best residential facilities. "Best environment is being provided to officers and employees which will help them to perform better in the field." Under this project, three residential campuses attached to Sector M-1 including Paet, Charsadda, Karnal Sher Khan, Swabi and one MT Workshop Rashki Loop, have been completed by Pak PWD. He said all facilities have been upgraded in the residential campus. - APP

Govt striving  
to restore  
normal life

QUETTA: Balochistan CM Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo Monday said that federal and provincial government were utilizing all resources to restore normal life in the flood-affected areas of the province and ensuring the provision of health education and clean drinking water to the victims. He expressed these views during the briefing given on the occasion of PM Shahbaz Sharif's visit to Subhatpur in Balochistan. BNP-M's Chief Akhtar Mengal, Provincial Minister Mir Muhammad Khan Lahri, MPA Mir Saleem Khosa were also present on the occasion. Balochistan Chief Secretary Abdul Aziz Uqaili briefed the Prime Minister and Chief Minister Balochistan about relief activities to flood victims in the areas in detail. - APP

Ethiopia supported Pakistani  
flood affectees: Amb. Jemal

To this end, it is mandatory to extend and redouble the effort to mobilize the funds to rescue, recover, rebuild and reconstruct the nation and ensure justice



## DNA

H.E. Jemal Beker, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan visited flood affectees in the Tent City District of Sindh Province where he distributed basic food, medicine, shelter, and non-food items to more than eight thousand affectees in the vicinity. Tent City is a two-hour drive from Karachi. On my way to the city, I was just thinking about what kind of life, pain, and agony these people are undergoing. Ambassador said that it is very sad and painful to comprehend where one-third of the country was inundated with water, more than 1600 precious life lost, 1.7 million houses destroyed, women

give birth in the tent, 800 thousand livestock, majority of crops were devastated, schools, health facilities, and infrastructures destroyed that heavily affected the livelihood of people beyond imagination. Upon my arrival at the Tent City, I was received by a crowd of people composed of elderly men and women, youth and children. Looking into their face and eye, I am old enough to comprehend the agony and suffering they are undergoing for the causes they are not part of. Coming out of my car, I extend my hand and gave strong hugs to the children around me just to express my empathy and sympathy with them while scanning the camps and visualizing the magnitude of the suffering. Related to this, I have noticed one thing the Pakistani people have strong and solid hearts and growing hope to survive, revive and recover and eagerly wait for their return to their place. But I have just asked myself one question, what would be left over in their locality upon their return nothing but debris and begin life from zero that has further worried me a lot. Certainly, I have learned that the worst is yet to come when looking into the situation there is likely hood of a disease outbreak that would significantly hurt the already victimized society. Truly speaking, Pakistan can not alone address the unfolding scenarios and the international community must redouble its effort and

ensure justice. Indeed, Pakistan became ground zero for climate change calamities for the causes where its share is minimal, however, it suffers the most. Looking into the causes of climate change, developing countries like Pakistan and my Country Ethiopia contribute small but the main causes are developed countries' greed, and resistance to adjust their actions as to the scientific advice and warnings costs the world a lot. Today Climate change became a reality in which all states and non-state actors should oblige to adopt the doctrine of do-no-harm and refrain from their wrongdoing that aggravated the unfolding fiasco on planet earth. It is clear that today's human sufferings were caused by the self-centered,

state of nature of developed State's behavior that polluted the environment and disrupted the ecosystem that brought us here. Therefore, it is imperative for developed countries to avail climate finance, technology, and capacity building for developing countries like Pakistan to mitigate and adapt mechanisms that help to create a resilient economy. To this end, it is mandatory to extend and redouble the effort to mobilize the funds to rescue, recover, rebuild and reconstruct the nation and ensure justice. At this time of agony, the Government of Ethiopia and its people would stand in solidarity and share the pain and suffering with their brotherly people of Pakistan. Indeed, my visit to the

flood affectees area of Tent City is a new experience for me where I observed the real challenge unfolding, and we need to prepare for the worst. On the other hand, Ambassador Jemal Beker held a productive discussion with the Tent City administration, elders, and religious leaders that helped me to understand the reality on the ground and the alarming situations that need to be addressed by the international community collectively. Finally, Ambassador Jemal Beker along with other officials distributed basic foods, medicine, shelter, water, biscuits, and toys to the children. During this distribution activity, one thing said by the middle-aged man captured my attention: 'Ethiopia-Pakistan' zindabad.

ment reflects a unique University Advisory Council initiative of the public-private partnership model. Importantly, he said, all Advisory Council members were devoting their time and resources to promoting skills education at the University and across the country. VC said that a skilled workforce can always find better job opportunities with better earnings than the unskilled. He requested students to learn coding and other skills needed in the country. The founder vice-chancellor of National Skills University Islamabad assumed charge in October 2019 and had uplifted the university into a dynamic skills development institution for the past several years. The university is providing specialized education in various technical subjects including biotechnology, computing, electrical, mechanical, medical, and information engineering. - APP

KP TEVTA  
promoting  
skills

PESHAWAR: Managing Director (MD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Technical & Vocational Training Authority (KP-TEVTA), Professor Engineer Abdul Ghafar Monday said that the institution besides imparting skills to make youth self-employed also enabling them to earn livelihood for their families. - APP

Hotels  
association  
announces  
election  
results

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hotels Association annual election Results of the following Office Bearers were announced at its 58th Annual General Meeting held on September 30, 2022: Mr. Mustansir Zakir Chairman Mian Akram Farid Senior Vice Chairman Mr. Faisal Qayyum Khan Vice Chairman North Mr. Abdul Jabbar Rathod Vice Chairman South Mr. Mustansir Zakir has been elected as Chairman, who is associated with Hashoo Group for more than 25 years, and is CEO of Hashwani Hotels Limited, the owners and operators of Islamabad & Karachi Marriott Hotel and Zaver PC Hotel Gwadar. Mr. Zakir is a Fellow Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) and the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan. He has done his Certification in Hospitality and Strategic Management from Cornell University, USA. Mr. Zakir has remained Chairman and Executive Committee Member of PHA in past, playing a vital role in the hospitality sector on behalf of the Pakistan Hotels Association.

Sino-Pak cultural linkages will  
further enhance understanding

Cheng Xiaonong explained that showcasing Shandong China in Pakistan starting from Qilu Culture of China

LAHORE: To understand China and true manner is possible by understand Chinese thousands years old rich culture which is not only informative but educative and having rich civilization the China is proud on its history, cultural heritages. Chinese Consul General in Lahore-Pakistan Mr. Zhao Shiren was speaking at an inaugural ceremony of "China Intangible Cultural Heritage" Exhibition at Pakistan (China) Shandong Chamber of Commerce (PCSCC) Building in Lahore. The event was attended by Mr.

Cao Ke Deputy Consul General of China, Ms. Cheng Xiaonong-Vice President PCSCC, Mr. P.J. Mir Senior Media person, Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani-Secretary General Pakistan China Friendship Association (PCFA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Usman Shahjehan General Secretary PCFA Punjab apart from Senior Members of PCSCC. Chinese Consul General Mr. Zhao Shiren while speaking mentioned that Chinese Province Shandong is at eastern side on Yellow river and known for its Taoist and world famous Confucian heritages. Having one of the China peaks Taishan feature shrines and stone tables and pilgrimages trails. Showcasing Shandong China here today will help to understand one of the oldest culturally rich civilization of China which is very important to learn from their experiences in various walks of like during their tenures. World renowned Confucian wisdom and already know presently across globe and we are proudly inviting people

to see and to learn from these. The Chinese Deputy Consul General Mr. Cao Ke while explaining about the initiative said that Shandong has played a major role in Chinese history since the beginning of Chinese civilization It has served as a pivotal cultural. PCSCC Vice President Ms. Cheng Xiaonong while welcome the distinguished guests explained that while showcasing Shandong China for the first time here in Pakistan Lahore starting from Qilu Culture of China which refers to the Qi & Lu which will help the peoples to understand China. Mr. P.J. Mir & Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani also briefly spoke on the occasion and appreciate the initiative taken by PCSCC and wish them success in their endeavors. Later on PCFA Punjab General Secretary Mr. Usman Shahjehan present souvenir to the Chief Guest Chinese Consul General Zhao Shiren and PCFA Khyber presents souvenir to Ms. Cheng Xiaonong. The large number of visitors shoes their keen interest in exhibition. - DNA

IPC delegation  
set to attend  
GA meeting  
of A-WEB

ISLAMABAD: IPC is an international Organization, that works closely with individual members of national Parliaments across the globe to jointly resolve global and regional issues that invariably impact the whole of humanity. Among other thematic areas of IPC, one of its important mandates is to send the delegation from IPC to monitor and observe the elections held in the world to assess free, fair, and transparent elections and its electioneering process, and seek guidance from the country's electoral procedures. With continuous effort, IPC gained accreditation for election observation missions from various countries and sent delegations to observe the Parliamentary elections of the UK (2019), Jordan (2020), Netherlands (2021), and the Colombia (2022), and published reports. - DNA

NSU secures  
1st position in  
national coding  
competition

ISLAMABAD: The students of the department of Information & Engineering Technology, National Skills University (NSU) Islamabad have secured the first position in the national level Coding Competition. According to the University, these competitions were organized in the name of Softtest 2022 at National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad. Vice Chancellor NSU said that this achieve-

ment reflects a unique University Advisory Council initiative of the public-private partnership model. Importantly, he said, all Advisory Council members were devoting their time and resources to promoting skills education at the University and across the country. VC said that a skilled workforce can always find better job opportunities with better earnings than the unskilled. He requested students to learn coding and other skills needed in the country. The founder vice-chancellor of National Skills University Islamabad assumed charge in October 2019 and had uplifted the university into a dynamic skills development institution for the past several years. The university is providing specialized education in various technical subjects including biotechnology, computing, electrical, mechanical, medical, and information engineering. - APP

Pak-Germany bilateral consultations,  
negotiations are two important pillars

We are committed to continue our support to Pakistan. Germany wants to help our partners to be more resilient for long-term" said Mr. Karner

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Economic Affairs (MoEA), Joint Secretary, Islam Zeb said that the Pakistan-Germany bilateral government consultations and negotiations were two important pillars of our relationship. He said this while chairing the meeting of Pakistan-German Bilateral Government Consultation, said a press release issued here. The German Delegation was headed by Florian Karner, Minister for Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation. Other members of German delegation include; Dr. Sebastian Paust, Head of Development Cooperation German Embassy, Helene Paust, Development Cooperation German Embassy, Sebastian Jacobi, Country Director KfW Pakistan, Abrar Ahmad, Senior Sector Expert and MEA focal point, Tobias Becker, Country Director GIZ Pakistan, Olaf Handloegten, Cluster Coordinator Sustainable Economic Development, Training and Employment GIZ, Ulrich Hueser, Cluster Coordinator Governance GIZ, Stoyanka Stich, Cluster Coordinator Ener-

gy GIZ, Heike Friemert, Portfolio management GIZ, Albert Grosse Hokamp, Project Leader BGR Pakistan GIZ. Islam Zeb warmly welcomed the German delegation to the Ministry and appreciated Florian Karner for leading this development dialogue. While highlighting the cordial relationship, he stated that Germany is one of the most valued partner of Pakistan which is being home to a large number of Pakistani Diaspora, a reliable source for investment, remittances and economic assistance to Pakistan. Islam Zeb said that Pakistan and Germany have in place well-structured mechanisms for dialogue in various spheres. He expressed gratitude for the German Humanitarian Flood Relief Assistance for the flood victims of Pakistan. Florian Karner, the German Head of delegation, appreciated the MoEA for arranging the Bilateral Consultation. He extended heartfelt condolence to the flood affected families in Pakistan and assured complete assistance for

early restoration. He apprised that Germany has expedited its short-term humanitarian assistance and middle-and long-term cooperation for Pakistan in this difficult situation. The total amount of German support for Pakistan currently adds up to approximately 60m. "We are committed to continue our support to Pakistan. Germany wants to help our partners to be more resilient for long-term" said Mr. Karner. The meeting discussed numerous agendas on which detailed consultation was made. The status of flood related projects and on-going development projects were deliberated along with the hurdles which are delaying the completion of the projects. Islam Zeb questioned the concerned departments for the reason of delays and instructed them timelines to submit responses. Karner appreciated the efforts and proposed priority areas for future commitments which will include Social Security, Climate Change Adaptation and Resil-

ience, Energy Transmission and Renewable Energy, and Promoting Employment through Women Empowerment. On his concluding remarks, Karner apprised the Joint Secretary that the Government-to-Government Negotiations between Pakistan and Germany is going to be held in Frankfurt in May 2023. He also extended warm invitation to the Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq to visit Germany. On his concluding remarks, Islam Zeb appreciated the kind German assistance and reiterated that Pakistan and the Germany enjoys long-standing cooperative relations. Pakistan is working together very closely with the German Embassy for substantially enhancing aid effectiveness, optimizing and better aligning funding allocations for this year. He assured the German delegation prompt resolution of the issues and timelines of the pending projects. Other members include; M. Khalid Khan, Deputy Secretary EAD, Sundas Irshad, Section Officer EAD, Sehar Manno. - APP

**CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
Environment Directorate (West)

**TENDER NOTICE**

Sealed tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis from firms/contractor registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in relevant category for the under mentioned works on the date and time below:-

S#	Name of work rupees	Estimate Cost (Rs)	Earnest Money (Rs)	Cost of Tender Form (Rs)	Date & Time of Receiving of Tender	Date & Time of opening Tender
1	Landscaping / Beautification of Centre Median from N-5 to Faqir Appa Road, I.J. Principal, Islamabad	23,000,000/-	690,000/-	5000/-	03-11-2022 upto 11:30 AM	03-11-2022 at 12:00PM
2	Landscaping / Plantation of North/South Green Belt from N-5 to Faqir Appa Road, I.J. Principal, Islamabad	21,000,000/-	630,000/-	5000/-	03-11-2022 upto 11:30 AM	03-11-2022 at 12:00PM

**Conditions.**

- Tender documents can be obtained from the office of concerned Dy. Director Urban-III, CDA, situated in F-9 Park, Islamabad on any working day before the date of opening of tender on cash payment mentioned as above (non-refundable / Non-transferable). No tender will be issued / sold on the date of opening of tender.
- Tenders will be received and opened in the office of Director Environment (West) in F-9 Park, Islamabad in the presence of Tender Committee, contractors or their authorized representatives at fixed date and time given above.
- Earnest money in shape of deposit at call in favor of DDO (West) mentioned above must be accompanied with the tender. No tender will be issued without call deposit. Earnest money / Call deposit shall be generated only from firm's accounts.
- The competent authority reserves the right to reject any or all tenders as per PPRA rule.
- No application will be entertained for issuing of tender documents on the last date of (28-10-2022) of issuing of tender after 12:30 PM.
- Tender will be issued only to those firms bearing renewal copy of license from PEC in relevant category.
- In case, the total bid amount is less than 10% below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit additional call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10% of NIT amount. This additional performance guarantee (call deposit) shall be submitted along with bid enclosed envelope. Bids having rates below 10% of NIT without additional call deposit will be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of project.
- Application for issuing of tender documents submitted on printed pad bearing name / address / signature of contractor along with power of attorney, partnership deed, and proprietorship deed, valid professional Tax Certificate, renewal PEC license, attested copy of NTN certificate and attested copy of CNIC.
- The bid security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank account and same may be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder.
- The eligibility criteria of the firms with the relevant experience i.e. at last three numbers of work in last two financial years may be observed / full filled before issuance of tender documents.
- The intending bidder will have to provide telephone no of the relevant office/formation issuing work orders for verification purpose.
- No tender will be issued without showing the required documents in "ORIGINAL".
- This advertisement can also be seen on CDA website ([www.cda.gov.pk](http://www.cda.gov.pk)) as well as PPRA website ([www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk))

Deputy Director Urban-III  
Dte of Environment (West), CDA

PID (I) No. 2443/22

## National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER	
Oct 01 / China	National Day
Oct 01 / Cyprus	National Day
Oct 01 / Republic of Korea	Armed Forces Day
Oct 01 / Nigeria	Armed Forces Day
Sept 09 / DPR Korea	National Day
Oct 02 / Guinea	National Day
Oct 03 / Germany	Unification Day
Oct 03 / Republic of Korea	National Foundation Day
Oct 05 / Indonesia	Armed Forces Day
Oct 06 / Egypt	Armed Forces Day
Oct 09 / Uganda	Independence Day
Oct 12 / Spain	National Day
Oct 23 / Hungary	National Day
Oct 24 / UN	United Nations Day
Oct 25 / Romania	Armed Forces Day
Oct 26 / Austria	National Day
Oct 27 / Turkmenistan	Independence Day
Oct 28 / Czech Republic	National Day
Oct 29 / Turkey	Republic Day

## Hotels & Restaurants

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

## Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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## Emergency

Rescue (Police).....	15
Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....	1122
& Rescue Services.....	4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....	9222596
Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20
<b>Enquiry</b>	
Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange.....	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....	5555489
CAA.....	9281092



## Hospitals

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



## Departments

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

## Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....	9209224
Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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# Abbasi, Chaudhry assure support for industrial zone

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI presented a cheque of Rupees one million to Hanif Abbasi for the relief of flood affectees

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Hanif Abbasi and Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry assured that they would fully support ICCI in its efforts for the establishment of a new industrial zone and representation of sitting President ICCI in CDA Board. said this while addressing the business community, said a press release issued here.

Former Special Assistant to Prime Minister Hanif Abbasi and former Federal Minister Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry along with Senator Ahmed Khan, Zia ullah Shah & Raja Hanif Advocate former MPs, Sardar Nasim Khan former Mayor Rawalpindi and Farah Naz Akbar President PML-N Women Wing Islamabad visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) to congratulate the new Office Bearers of ICCI.

They said that 11 new routes for Islamabad have been finalized and very soon the citizens would see electric buses on the roads of the Capital that would provide quality transport and reduce 50% traffic flow. They said that all dead development projects of the twin cities including Bara Kahu By-



pass and Rawal Road Interchange have been revived to address traffic issues and facilitate the growth of business activities.

They further assured that they would cooperate in addressing all highlighted issues including expediting work on IJP Road and de-sealing of Centaurus Mall. They also asked the business community to cooperate with the government for providing relief to the flood affectees. Senator Ahmed Khan also stressed that the govern-

ment should cooperate with ICCI in these important initiatives. He stressed that the Capital should be made a protests free city and a separate venue may be earmarked for such political activities to save the businesses from any losses. He said that the DC rates for land prices have been hiked by 400-500 percent due to which the business of real estate sector was suffering and emphasized that these rates should be rationalized to

facilitate the growth of business activities. Work on IJP road may be expedited to save businesses and commuters from problems and a parking plaza in every major market in Capital may be built to address the parking issues, he added. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, ICCI said that the closure of Centaurus Mall has rendered about 4000 persons unemployed and around 300 families have been made homeless and requested that both

politicians should cooperate in resolving this issue amicably. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI presented a cheque of Rupees one million to Hanif Abbasi for the relief of flood affectees. Khalid Javed, Mian Akram Farid, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Baser Daud, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Muhammad Naveed Malik, Khalid Chaudhry and others were also present at the occasion.

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sardar Saleem Haider here on Monday called the Adviser to Prime Minister for Political & Public Affairs and National Heritage & Culture Engr. Amir Muqam.

During the meeting, they discussed mutual interest issues, particularly matters related to Overseas Pakistanis. Amir Muqam expressed best wishes to Sardar Saleem for taking charge as SAPM for Overseas Pakistan and Human Resource Development. Earlier, eminent scholar and poet of Pashto language Abaseen Yusafzai also called on Adviser to PM Engr. Amir Muqam. The adviser also met people from various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at his office.--APP

## Iqbal asks CDA, RDA to make plan for conservation of water

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday asked Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) to make a comprehensive plan for the conservation of water in twin-cities.

"The authorities of twin-cities are responsible to make

a comprehensive plan for the conservation of water as with the growing population the water is reducing day by day," he said while emphasizing the importance of water.

The minister made these remarks while chairing a workshop organized by the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives in collaboration with

Agernece Française Development (AFD) to show case the institutional and governance models of municipal service delivery in urban cities of Pakistan particularly in twin-cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The workshop was attended by the Member Planning, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Member Environment, representatives

of water and sanitation from all the provinces and other relevant stakeholders. The Ministry is providing a platform for coordination and knowledge sharing among all stakeholders while AFD is extending Technical Assistance on "Assessment of Municipal Services in Islamabad and Proposing a viable institutional solution.--APP

## More deserving persons to be included in BISP

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Faisal Karim Kundi said Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) will include more beneficiaries. Following the vision of Shaheed Benazir to give economic support at door step of every deserving person 70 billion rupees were being distributed under the BISP in flood-affected areas, said a press release here. Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) Sajid Hussain Turi and Faisal Karim Kundi met the delegations of Pakistan People's Party who came from Mohmand, Orakzai and Hangu areas here on Monday. Party district presidents, secretary generals and other officials of Mohmand, Orakzai and Hangu districts were part of the delegations. During the meeting, the delegation members exchanged views on a wide range of issues of regional economic development in a constructive atmosphere. The prospects and measures on the ongoing development projects and the way these projects could strengthen the economic conditions of people in Orakzai, Mohmand and Hangu districts was discussed. The heads of delegations applauded the efforts of Minister Sajid Hussain Turi and Faisal Karim Kundi in their respective districts. The heads of delegations reaffirmed their commitment to adopt joint effective measures in the field of economic cooperation, which was an important part of ensuring socio-economic development and stability in the region. The delegation emphasised that more people from Orakzai, Mohmand and Hangu must be included in Benazir Income Support Program (BISP). The delegation said that a dynamic registry of people of district will update the socio-economic status of the BISP beneficiaries. Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Turi said the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) were among the most underdeveloped regions of Pakistan. Turi further elaborated that he was making all efforts to provide relief to this vulnerable population, more sustainable solutions were needed to bring former FATA at par with other regions of the country in terms of development.

## CDA digitizes 112 Mouzas of Capital, NA informed

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Interior on Monday informed the National Assembly that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) had digitized 112 Mouzas of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

The written reply by the Ministry indicated that CDA plot records regarding the settled sectors had been computerized. The organization digitized 943 sq km, including 400 sq km of CDA and 543 sq km of ICT rural areas, it added. It pointed out that in total 112 Mouzas in ICT had

been digitized which was



incorporated through cadastral mapping (Survey of Pakistan) and was launched in September 2021. The OCDA had also completely computerized sale/

purchase/legal heir ship administration and associated transactions through NRTC installed system, it added. It was informed that citizens could now track their case status through a web link which was provided the moment the citizen submitted a case at CDA facilitation center. The citizens could interact through a 12-hour dedicated help line 918190 through which they might check the status of their case. The case history of each property and transaction was maintained and recorded for future ref-

erence. It was also informed that CDA land records (Plots and allotted Properties) stood digitized since September 2021 wherein the record of allotted plots was available with complete details (Owner, Street Number and Sector). The CDA has also digitized rural land records wherein it has partnered with SU-PARCO and Survey of Pakistan. Geo-mapping of the CDA Rural Record has also been carried out with the assistance of the two organizations.--APP

## President Alvi for early finalization of CEPA with UAE

President conveyed his gratitude to UAE government for providing assistance to the flood victims in Pakistan, which included 57 humanitarian assistance flights and 2 ships carrying relief goods from UAE

ISLAMABAD: The President has urged the need for early finalization of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE to enable Pakistan to increase its exports, adding that Pakistan also needs to explore new avenues in economic diplomacy and investments with UAE. He said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and UAE could be further increased from its current level of USD 10.6 billion to make it commensurate with our excellent relations and close geographic proximity. He made these remarks while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to UAE, Mr. Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today.

The President highlighted that there was huge potential for cooperation between the two countries

in the field of renewable energy, commercial, industrial, infrastructure development and hospitality

sectors. He noted that 1.6 million strong Pakistani diaspora in the UAE was an asset and was playing a

significant role in the progress and development of the two countries. He said that the remittances sent

by the Pakistani diaspora stood US \$ 5.814 billion in 2021-22 which hugely helped Pakistan to overcome its foreign exchange requirements.

The President conveyed his gratitude to the UAE government for providing assistance to the flood victims in Pakistan, which included 57 humanitarian assistance flights and 2 ships carrying relief goods from UAE. He appreciated the support of UAE to Pakistan at FATF and IMF and the deposits made by the Government of UAE to the tune of US\$ 2 billion to enhance Pakistan's liquidity and foreign exchange reserves. While expressing his satisfaction over the Foreign Direct Investment of US\$ 2.9 billion made by UAE in Pakistan, he said that there was a need to increase this investment in the coming years. The President asked the

Ambassador-designate to create digital linkages of the Pakistani diaspora with the online higher education institutions of Pakistan like AIOU and Virtual University to help them improve their digital skills and also take up high-value courses to enhance their capacity and skills level, which would help them in improving their income. He especially highlighted the DigiSkills Training program of the Prime Minister, which could be promoted among the diaspora in order to equip them with the requirements of developed economies. The President also advised the envoy to sensitize the UAE leadership with regard to increasing cases of Islamophobia in Indian society and their pursuit of Hindutva, which was endangering the lives of minorities, especially Muslims.--APP



## Court summons ETPB over Lal Haveli case

RAWALPINDI: A district and sessions court here on Monday summoned the deputy administrator of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) over an eviction notice to Lal Haveli. According to details, Awami Muslim League Chief Sheikh Rashid filed an appeal in the Court to momentarily abstain the department from dispossessing him of a property adjacent to his Lal Haveli residence. Earlier, the ETPB had served a notice to Sheikh Rashid directing him to vacate the land and rooms adjacent to his Lal Haveli residence within seven days. While hearing the case, Additional District and Sessions Judge Khurshid Alam Bhatti asked the ETPB officials to appear before the court on October 18.--APP

## APM calls on Engr Amir Muqam

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sardar Saleem Haider here on Monday called the Adviser to Prime Minister for Political & Public Affairs and National Heritage & Culture Engr. Amir Muqam.

During the meeting, they discussed mutual interest issues, particularly matters related to Overseas Pakistanis. Amir Muqam expressed best wishes to Sardar Saleem for taking charge as SAPM for Overseas Pakistan and Human Resource Development. Earlier, eminent scholar and poet of Pashto language Abaseen Yusafzai also called on Adviser to PM Engr. Amir Muqam. The adviser also met people from various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at his office.--APP

## Swati sent to jail on judicial remand

ISLAMABAD: A local court of Islamabad on Monday sent PTI's Leader Azam Khan Swati to jail on 14 days judicial remand in an FIR pertaining controversial tweets about the state institutions. The accused was produced before the court of senior civil judge Muhammad Shabbri after completion of his physical remand time. The FIA's prosecutor prayed the court to grant three days physical custody of Azam Swati for further investigation into the matter. The defence lawyer Dr. Baber Awan argued that the FIA yet requesting further remand just to recover the said tweets. He claimed that one finger of his client was injured and fractured as well. After listening arguments, the court sent the accused to jail on judicial remand. Swati was taken into custody by the FIA's Cybercrime Wing (CCW) from his home in Islamabad on October 13, after which he was presented before senior civil judge Shabbir Bhatti's court in the federal capital which approved a two-day remand. The agency's cybercrime wing had registered a case against Swati later over the controversial tweets.--APP

## IHC seeks list of illegal housing societies

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday sought details from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) regarding illegal housing societies in the federal capital. Chief Justice Athar Minallah, hearing the case, directed the CDA to submit the list of illegal housing societies within one day. Additional Attorney General Munawar Iqbal Dogal adopted the stance that there was no legal hindrance for introducing housing societies on the name of government institutions. He said that the names of departments and ministries could be used for housing societies as per the laws of cooperative housing societies. He, however, said that the government servants shouldn't be part of any housing society.--APP

## Briefs

**66 issued challan for wrong parking**

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi have issued 'challan' [tickets] to 66 wrongly parked vehicles that were creating hindrances in traffic flow outside Holy Family Hospital (HFH). According to CTP spokesman, following the directives of Chief Traffic Officer Rawalpindi Naveed Irshad, the in-charge Traffic New Town Circle along with his team have issued challans to 66 vehicles for creating obstruction on the entrances and exits of Holy Family Hospital (HFH). The hospital management, the business community and local people appreciated the action of the in-charge Traffic New Town Circle and his team.

On the occasion, Chief Traffic Officer Rawalpindi Naveed Irshad said that improperly parked vehicles not only create block traffic but also pose difficulties to the patients coming to the hospital and emergency vehicles. Irshad said the drivers of private vehicles were urged to prove that they are responsible citizens by fulfilling the legal requirements to avoid any kind of action.—APP

**Two held for illegal LPG decanting**

RAWALPINDI:Rawalpindi District Police under an ongoing operation against illegal decanting of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and conducted raids and arrested two accused.

According to police spokesman, Ganjmandi Police arrested Pir Muhammad and Salah-u-Din for operating illegal LPG agencies.

Police confiscated LPG cylinders and refilling gadgets from their possession and registered separate cases against the accused, he added. He said police would continue their operation against the rules violators and the illegal LPG agencies would be sealed. Superintendent Police, Rawal Town warned the violators to stop the illegal business immediately otherwise strict action in accordance with the law would be taken.—APP

**Police arrest accused in attempt to murder**

RAWALPINDI:Rawalpindi Police here on Monday arrested an accused wanted in an attempt to murder case registered in Naseerabad Police Station.

According to a police spokesman, Naseerabad police managed to arrest an accused namely Qalander Khan, who along with accomplices had allegedly injured three persons namely Safiullah, Fahad and Farhad Khan, two days ago in a stabbing attack. A case was registered at Naseerabad police station. He informed that police working on human intelligence and scientific lines managed to net the accused.

Superintendent of Police, Potohar said that Rawalpindi district police were taking stern action in accordance with the law against the lawbreakers. He said the operations would continue and all the accused and POs would be sent behind the bars.—APP

**ANF seizes over 689 kg drugs, arrests 24**

RAWALPINDI:Anti-Narcotics Force Pakistan has seized over 689 kg of drugs worth US \$14.645 million in the international market, arrested 24 persons and impounded nine vehicles while conducting 24 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country.

According to an ANF spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 164.350 kg opium, 29.023 kg heroin, 483.400 kg hashish, 12.195 kg methamphetamine (Ice), 300 ecstasy tabs and 3700 alprazolam tabs.

ANF North recovered 425.073 kg of drugs in eight operations, arrested eight accused and seized three vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 118.800 kg opium, 3.473 kg heroin, 302.400 kg hashish and 300 ecstasy tabs.—APP

# Pak considers CPC Congress important in Chinese national ethos

## China never interfered in any other state matters and has never used force against other countries

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan considers the historic 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) an important event in the life and history of the Chinese national ethos. Amidst the global and regional challenges, and the rise of threats of global climate change, food, and energy security crisis, China is leading the vision to foster forward the ideals of the forefathers to set the national course in days to come, according to an article published by Gwadar Pro on Monday.

The historic Congress began on October 16, participating by representatives from all over China to share

their wishes, aspirations, and insights for making the destiny of their country for the next five years.

It is expected that the 20th Congress will discuss the progress made since the 19th Congress and review the past decade of the new era. The discussion will likely be around the context of building strength to deal with emerging regional and global challenges.

Before the 20th Congress, several other essential decision-making meetings happened that created the pathway for the 20th Congress to be productive and based on the wishes and aspirations of the people.

Important decisions are expected to be made in this congress, especially related to the leadership, struc-

tures of CPC, governance matters, foreign policy matters, regional and international challenges, and how China should take specific positions on the issues that impact the people of the country.

For the reform and opening-up period, China has chosen a steady path that is progress and development-oriented. China never interfered in any other state matters and has never used force against other countries.

The only strategy that China has used for constructive engagement with other countries was to share the development, progress, and technology to help countries uplift their lives. The CPC leadership has ensured that this path of development progress should

be maintained.

Pakistan is one of the largest beneficiaries of China's development and progress. Ever since its policy of opening-up and the subsequent ventures like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its most active China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and now the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and Global Security Initiative (GSI), China has remained on an upward trajectory in the context of bilateral as well as multilateral collaboration for mutual benefit with many countries.

China has supported Pakistan and is genuinely considered an all-weather friend with the essence of iron brotherhood. The upcoming 20th National Con-

gress of the Communist Party of China is also crucial for Pakistan since the discussion will be around the future course of economic, trade, bilateral, and multilateral cooperation.

The new dimension of the period of development cooperation with Pakistan will be impacted. CPEC is in the second critical phase, where industrial collaboration is ongoing with social and economic impacts.

The upcoming congress might also consider ways to deepen cooperation with Pakistan and the regional countries. CPEC has not only remained a game changer for Pakistan but has created an immense lifeline for the people of Pakistan to build their lives on.

China has always remained

an essential cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy, and the engagement has remained phenomenal. China has supported Pakistan in tackling COVID-19, the recent floods, and so on.

With resilience, determination and steadfastness, China has achieved its goals through systematic ways to make progress and development.

Through these meetings and five years plans, China has achieved its impetus to build socialism with Chinese characteristics.

As a leading member of the global community, China is standing tall in its resolve to build peace, progress, and a shared future with equal economic opportunities for all including Pakistan, the article added.

## ISSI delegation visits Gwadar

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a delegation visit to Gwadar from October 11-14, 2022. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director-General ISSI led the delegation comprising senior diplomats, businessmen, academics, and media persons. The objective of the delegation visit was to familiarize members of academia, business community, diplomats and journalists to the Gwadar port and city that is central to the success of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Visit provided delegation an opportunity to learn first-hand about the ongoing development and future plans of Gwadar port and city. During the visit, delegation received briefings from Gwadar Development Authority, Gwadar Port Authority, China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC), and armed forces representatives. Delegation interacted with local business community, district administration and



local people. Delegation also visited Gwadar University to interact with faculty and students. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG ISSI, delivered a talk on 'Regional and Global Imperatives of CPEC' at Gwadar University. ISSI intends to follow-up on the visit with producing a detailed report and conven-

ing events to focus on the development of Gwadar port and city. Delegation members included, Amb. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, former Ambassador to China; Ms. Aisha Farooqui, Additional Secretary SCO, MOFA; Mr. Zahid Latif Khan, President Islamabad Stock Exchange; Raja Amer Iqbal, former Presi-

dent Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Shakeel Munir, former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Dr. Zahid Anwar, Pro-Vice Chancellor Peshawar University; Mr. Farrukh Pitafi, anchor person PTV World; and Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Center.

## PTCL, evision join hands to launch video streaming platform

ISLAMABAD:Pakistan telecom company, PTCL has signed an agreement with evision – the media and entertainment wing of global telecom services provider e& – to launch its own video streaming platform in Pakistan.

The new Digital Video Over-The-Top (OTT) platform will host the richest collection of Hollywood and Pakistani entertainment content besides a rich assortment of national and international news and sports channels, thereby catering to the diverse news and entertainment needs of everyone in the family, said a news release on Monday.

Group Chief Commercial Officer, PTCL & Ufone, Adnan Anjum and Chief Executive Officer, evision, Olivier Bramly inked the agreement during GITEX Global 2022 in Dubai, where senior executives including President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone, Hatem Bamatraf and Chief Executive Officer, e& life, Khalifa Al Shamsi were also present.

Evision is the media and entertainment wing of global telecom giant, e& and the leading provider of media and entertainment content in the MENA region. Evision-led consortium

has the majority shares in the leading video streaming platform in MENA, StarzPlay that will technically help PTCL with deploying the new Digital Video OTT Platform to host movies and seasons from leading Hollywood studios in addition to Pakistani films and dramas to cater to a wide range of viewership in the country.

The new Digital Video OTT platform will also offer access to over one hundred news and sports channels and a lot of educational and fun content for children. Sharing his thoughts regarding the agreement, President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone, Hatem Bamatraf said, "I am grateful to evision for their support in this initiative that furthers our efforts to diversify our services and positively impact more aspects of our customer's lives. Technology is the most effective enabler of our age, and we continuously strive to harness its potential for our customers' benefit. We find news and entertainment a huge part of our people's lives and it offers us a good opportunity to reinvent television and online streaming experience to bring them more control and choice in their viewing."—APP

## NPO to organize webinar on 'HR & People Analytic'

ISLAMABAD:The National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a webinar on "HR & People Analytic" on October 20 (Thursday).

The workshop will provide information on HR changing role, translation of HR performance in financial terms, understanding of HR & people performance through financial lens, said an NPO document.

It would also highlight journey of metrics to analytic, measuring performance and HR reporting and HR as a business partner.

The objectives of the webinar include understanding of HR in financial terms, using analytic in different areas of HR, able to take or guide to take any business decision better, able to measure and prescribe future strategies for people performance and business performance, and able to align HR strategy with business strategy through analytic. The webinar has been designed for senior management, middle management, team leaders, engineers, project managers and supervisors.—APP

## IRSA releases 97,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD:The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 97,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 67,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1536.63 feet and was 138.63 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 36,700 cusecs while outflow as 35,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1176.60 feet, which was 126.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,800 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. Whereas, the release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 36,000, 53,400, 44,700 and 26,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 5,700 cusecs was released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

## Tractor production decrease 36.24%

ISLAMABAD :The production of farm tractors in the country witnessed a decrease of 36.24 percent to 7,991 units during the first quarter of current fiscal year 2022-23, against the production of 12,533 units in the same months of last year.

During the quarter under review, the production of trucks also witnessed decreasing trend as it went down from 1,516 units as compared to 946 units, showing a decline of 37.59 percent, according to Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA) revealed. Production of pickups, Light Commercial Vehicle (LCVs) and Jeeps also dipped by 19.58 percent to 8,398 units during the months under review from 10,443 units during same months of last year. However, the production of buses witnessed an increase of 113.79 percent from 116 units to 248 units during the quarter under review, PAMA added.—APP

## Nine drug peddlers held

RAWALPINDI:Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers on Monday arrested nine accused besides recovering over eight kg charras from their possession.

A police spokesman said that Rattaamral police held Muhammad Siddique for having 1650 grams charras while New Town police rounded up Samar Iqbal on recovery of 1,250 kg charras. Westridge police arrested Yasir Naveed and recovered 1,180 grams charras. Similarly, R.A. Bazar police netted Faizan and seized 1,220 grams charras. Pakhwari police in their operation conducted a raid and nabbed Dawood Shah for having 1,370 grams charras and Umair with 570 grams charras.—APP

## Public debt to GDP ratio to fall 71.7% in FY23: WB

ISLAMABAD Pakistan's public and publicly guaranteed debt to GDP ratio is expected to fall gradually in the upcoming years from 78% recorded at the end of Fiscal Year 2021-22 (FY22) to 71.7% in FY23 and 71.9% in FY24, said a report recently published by the World Bank. "At the end of FY22, public and publicly guaranteed debt had increased to Rs 52,214 billion (78.0 percent of GDP) from Rs 42,199 billion (75.6 percent of GDP) at end-FY21", the report titled "Pakistan Development Update, October 2022" said. It added, the new debt was largely sourced through long-term domestic debt instruments carrying variable interest rates, which improved the overall maturity profile but also increased debt servicing costs and interest rate risks.

Of the total public debt, the share of external debt was 37.6 percent at end-FY22, whereas short-term debt was 13.6 percent. The fis-

cal deficit reached a record high of Rs 5,260 billion (7.9 percent of GDP) in FY22, up from Rs 3,403 billion (6.1 percent of GDP) in FY21. However, the report added that in line with fiscal consolidation efforts and lower subsidy expenditures as a share of GDP, the primary deficit (excluding grants) is forecast to narrow from 3.1 percent of GDP in FY22 to 3.0 percent in FY23, despite negative impacts to revenue bases and increased expenditure needs due to the floods. Similarly, the fiscal deficit is projected to contract by one percentage point to 6.9 percent of GDP in FY23 and expected to gradually narrow over the medium term as revenue mobilization measures take hold, particularly GST harmonization and personal income tax reform. Substantial growth in expenditures, particularly on energy subsidies and debt servicing payments, outweighed revenue growth.

As non-interest expenditure rose, the primary deficit in-

creased to Rs 2,077 billion (3.1 percent of GDP) – over three times the primary deficit in the previous year, the report added. Total revenue increased to Rs 8,035 billion (12.0 percent of GDP) in FY22 from Rs 6,903 billion (12.4 percent of GDP) in FY21, as tax revenue increased to 10.4 percent of GDP.

The main drivers of the tax revenue increase were direct taxes and sales tax on goods, in line with strong domestic economic activity, higher prices, and higher imports. According to provisional estimates, almost three-fourths of sales tax on goods was sourced from imports. Meanwhile, Petroleum Development Levy (PDL) revenues in FY22 fell to their lowest levels since 2015, as the Government reduced taxes on petroleum products to mitigate inflationary pressures. Non-tax revenue declined to 1.6 percent of GDP, largely due to a 27.2-percent decrease in the profits of the SBP.—APP

## ESCO issues power suspension schedules

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to IESCO spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 18 th October, From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Bhara Kahu, NIH, T&T, Golf City, Trith, Bhara Kahu-II, Athal, Kot Shera, Kot Gula, Wahdat Colony, PMC Colony, Amanpur Feeders from 10:00 am to 13:00 pm, Dhrekot, Chamankot, Ringla, Dana Express, Dhala feeders, from 13:00 pm to 17:00 pm Minhasa Subawah, Nimbal, Beirut, Ghaziabad feeders and surroundings will remain closed. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

## Prof Khurshid bestowed with Turkey's Award

ISLAMABAD : Founding Chairman (now Patron-in-Chief) of Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), academician, statesman, veteran politician who is also internationally known as the father of Islamic Economics Professor Khurshid Ahmad has been bestowed with Turkey's prestigious Islamic Economics Award for his lifelong contributions to the field of Islamic Economics and Finance, during the 10th Islamic Economics Workshop being held in Istanbul.

The award is announced each year by the Islamic Economics Research Center (IKAM), which is based in Istanbul, and works under the umbrella of the popularly known ILKE Science, Culture and Education Foundation (Ilim Kültür Eitim Vakfı), Turkey. The prestigious award, which has been previously won by eminent scholars like Dr Omar Chapra, Prof Monzer Kahf and Dr Sabri Orman (late) in the preceding years, was received by Istanbul-based Pakistani academician Ahsan Shafiq on behalf of the Professor, who could not travel to attend the ceremony himself due to his old age and staggering health.

## BISP strives for welfare of masses: Marri

She also established that the aim of such initiatives of the Government of Pakistan under BISP is to build a strong society

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Monday said that the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is striving hard for the welfare of underprivileged segments of the society.

On the occasion of International Day for the Eradication of Poverty Shazia Marri said that the launch of the BISP reflects the vision of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, which aims to provide a comprehensive system of social security to the disadvantaged sections of the society, especially women.

"It is to bring a sustainable and positive change in the lives of deprived families by providing economic and social security and ending poverty", she added.

On the occasion, the minister said the significance of the BISP increases with respect to this day as the purpose of the day is to acknowledge the efforts and struggles of people living in poverty, to provide them with opportunities to move forward and to recognize that Poverty is a violation of basic human rights which need to be addressed. The main theme of this



day is honor is universal, that is, honor is not related to the economic condition of a person, but

to his human values, the Chairperson BISP continued and observed that in Pakistan, men and wom-

en are equally victims of social oppression due to poverty.

Under the BISP, Rs. 7000 on quarterly basis are given to the deserving women through the Benazir Kafalat program, and the children from 4 to 22 years of age of these women are given Benazir Taleemi Wazaif from 1500 to 4000 rupees so that they can get education.

The Chairperson BISP emphasized that compared to boys; the educational scholarships of girls are a little higher so that parents can educate their children with a relative ease.

Through Benazir Nashonuma, deserving pregnant women and lactating mothers are provided nutritious and balanced food. The nutritional needs of the new-born children are met for their better nourishment.

She also established that the aim of such initiatives of the Government of Pakistan under BISP is to build a strong society. "Today we pledge together that we will continue our efforts to eradicate poverty from Pakistan so that we can give a better future to the coming generations", the minister concluded.

## Fixing mess in UK calls for true leadership

ALTHOUGH she has only been in office for less than two months, UK Prime Minister Liz Truss is already mired in a trust crisis. Instead of seeing her as a new "Iron Lady", the people in the United Kingdom have witnessed a bumbling caricature that evokes Mr. Bean more than Margaret Thatcher. Always calling for changes without saying how, Truss has left the UK government, including her Cabinet, in the dark on what exactly her remedies are to the country's many tribulations. That's why even many of her Conservative Party colleagues are urging her quick resignation, something many senior Tories believe is the best thing she can do to "rescue" the party, if not the country. Senior Conservatives were reportedly planning to hold talks on a "rescue mission" on Monday that would see the swift removal of Truss as leader, after Jeremy Hunt, the new chancellor of the exchequer, "dramatically" tore up her economic package. Apparently, Truss' sacrificial ousting of Kwasi Kwarteng from the post of chancellor of the exchequer has failed to appease her critics and her time in office seems to be coming to a swift and ignominious end. It is no secret that many senior MPs want her to resign "within days". Some publicly called on Truss to stand down after the implosion of her tax-cutting program earlier this month. The latest poll results showed that the Labour Party, with an approval rate of 52 percent, is well ahead of the Conservatives at 22 percent, and 53 percent of respondents said Truss should resign and 73 percent said her image is negative. Yet having recently ousted former prime minister Boris Johnson after scandals, the Conservative Party is still struggling to coalesce around a move against Truss, which might offer a life line to keep her afloat for a while. But it is hard to see how she can survive as the leader of the country. Truss herself is probably aware that she has been caught out of her depth and her departure from office is only a question of how soon unless she can come up with something in quick order that gets her to the safety of the public opinion shallows. Some party moderates have suggested that she may survive the crisis if she survives this week, as it is already public knowledge that it will not be easy for the country to overcome its current economic challenges no matter who's the leader. But with the Brexit eggs beginning to hatch, the economic situation in the country looks set to worsen and the de facto state of anarchy that the UK now finds itself in will only become more pronounced the longer there is a vacuum of leadership. Truss intended to arrest her sinking political fortunes by firing Kwarteng. But it now seems that the move has only served to accelerate her own exit from Downing Street.

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## EU biggest loser in Russia-Ukraine war

THE outlook for Europe's largest economy remains bleak due to Germany's energy supply crisis and inflation. "Overall the prospects for the German market and its industry are very dire," Christian Seyfert, who heads the German Association of Industrial Energy Consumers, told CBS News last month. "That is due to inflation and the skyrocketing gas prices." And that was before the series of explosions that disabled the Nord Stream gas pipelines. The two pipelines that supply Russian gas to Germany were severely damaged last month by four mysterious explosions that are presumed to have been acts of sabotage. In a bid to do whatever it takes to support its already strained economy, Germany has been reactivating coal plants and considering turning its decommissioned nuclear power plants back on. Yet it was because Germany needed to fill the energy gap as it wound down its use of coal and nuclear energy that the country ramped up its gas imports from Russia, as former German chancellor Angela Merkel explained on Thursday. "From the perspective of that time, it was very rational and understandable to obtain pipeline-bound gas from Russia, which was cheaper than LNG from other parts of the world," she said on Thursday, adding that, "Even during the Cold War, Russia was a reliable energy supplier." In fact, as Merkel's remarks indicate, contrary to claims of Washington, it is not Russia that has weaponized energy. That dubious distinction goes to the United States. As a member of Ronald Reagan's National Security Council revealed, the US has a track record of attacking the critical energy infrastructure of other countries, including that of Russia. In 1982, a Central Intelligence Agency operation to sabotage Soviet industry triggered a huge explosion in a Siberian gas pipeline that caused "the most monumental non-nuclear explosion and fire ever seen from space". In fact, it has been suggested that the US' efforts to provoke the Ukraine conflict are a glorified weaponization of energy aimed at enfeebling Russia. With some arguing, it not only has the capability and capacity to commit acts of international sabotage, but also the political will to weaponize energy as a form of economic warfare. The difficulties that Germany faces are not limited to it alone. The whole of the EU is struggling with the energy crunch, and as collateral damage in the US' energy war. Despite this, the EU countries have been clinging to the US in their hour of need, and the US has obliged by extending a helping hand, although its poorer-quality LNG comes at a dramatically marked up price. Winter is coming, the days are getting colder. Perhaps as they rue the soaring cost of gas and their faltering economies, the EU countries will reflect on the price they are paying for being the US' stooges.

# Indonesian Muslims gamble on problematic ties to Saudi government vehicle

James Dorsey

Mr. Wahid accompanied Mr. Al-Issa in 2020 to the secretary general's initial meeting with Nahdlatul Ulama, the first in the League's 60-year history. Yet, he refused to join Mr. Al-Issa in 2020 on his historic visit at the head of a delegation of Muslim scholars to Auschwitz, the Nazi extermination camp in Poland. To be fair, Nahdlatul Ulama, while virulently opposed to political Islam, has demonstrated its democratic credentials by confronting the PKS politically but not disputing its right to compete in free and fair elections or being politically active within the legal confines of Indonesian democracy. Sacrificing PKS is a small price for the League to pay for what Nahdlatul Ulama offers

NAHDLATUL Ulama, arguably the world's only Muslim mass movement propagating a genuinely moderate and pluralistic form of Islam, has forged an unlikely, albeit temporary, alliance with the Saudi-controlled Muslim World League. The League is Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's chief propagator of a socially less restrictive but autocratic interpretation of the faith that demands absolute obedience to the ruler. In a bold but risky strategy, Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest Muslim civil society movement with 90 million followers in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim majority-country and democracy, hopes that the alliance will undercut Saudi and League support for an Indonesian political party associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). Against all odds, Nahdlatul Ulama also envisions its Humanitarian Islam philosophy rubbing off on the League as a result of cooperation with the Indonesian group. The philosophy embraces religious and political pluralism, unambiguously endorses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and advocates reform of what it terms "obsolete" elements of Islamic jurisprudence. Persuading the League to endorse a genuinely moderate form of Islam would have enormous significance. It would lend the prestige of the Custodian of Islam's two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, to Nahdlatul Ulama's effort to reform Islam. That, however, is a long shot, if not pie in the sky. More likely, the League sees reputational benefit in its association with Nahdlatul Ulama. The League also probably hopes to co-opt the Indonesian movement to prevent it from becoming a serious competitor for hearts and minds in the Muslim world. Neither group may succeed in fulfilling its aspirations. Nahdlatul Ulama has a century-long history of fiercely defending its independence and charting its moderation course. At the same time, there is little reason to believe that the League can embrace anything but what Mr. Bin Salman authorizes. If the last two months provide an indication, Mr. Bin Salman and his loyal lieutenant, League secretary general Mohammed al-Issa, can, at best, be expected to opportunistically pay lip service to Humanitarian Islam. Moreover, the kingdom has long demonstrated its determination, often in cooperation with the United Arab Emirates, to stymie endeavours for political change across the Middle East. Most recently, Saudi Arabia sentenced two women to respectively 34 and 45 years in prison for tweets that allegedly "cause public unrest and destabilise civil and national security" and "tear (Saudi Arabia's) social fabric."

Last week, a Saudi court committed to death row three members of the Howaitat tribe that was forcibly ejected to make way for Mr. Bin Salman's US\$500 billion science fiction Neom megacity on the Red Sea. The three men had resisted the ejection. Adding fuel to the fire, Mr. Bin Salman reportedly appointed Awadh bin Ali bin Ayedh al-Mayshar al-Ahmari, a detective allegedly involved in the cover-up of the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, as president of the kingdom's counter-terrorism court that handed down the recent harsh verdicts. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has interpreted freedom of religion as inter-faith dialogue that does not stray beyond lofty statements and high-profile meetings and conferences rather than lifting a ban on non-Muslim houses of worship in the kingdom. To be sure, Mr. Bin Salman has curbed the authority of the religious police, enhanced women's rights and opportunities, and enabled Western-style entertainment, but that did not entail religious reform. Instead, it amounted to long overdue social change by decree. As a result, Nahdlatul Ulama stands a better chance in loosening the ties between the League and the PKS than persuading Mr. Bin Salman that in addition to social change, genuine religious reform and good governance should be the legs of his efforts to diversify the Saudi economy. One litmus test of the League's relationship with Nahdlatul Ulama will be whether Hidayat Nur Wahid, a PKS luminary, remains a member of the League's Supreme Council. Mr. Wahid accompanied Mr. Al-Issa in 2020 to the secretary general's initial meeting with Nahdlatul Ulama, the first in the League's 60-year history. Yet, he refused to join Mr. Al-Issa in 2020 on his historic visit at the head of a delegation of Muslim scholars to Auschwitz, the Nazi extermination camp in Poland. To be fair, Nahdlatul Ulama, while virulently opposed to political Islam, has demonstrated its democratic credentials by confronting the PKS politically but not disputing its right to compete in free and fair elections or being politically active within the legal confines of Indonesian democracy. Sacrificing the PKS is a small price for the League to pay for what Nahdlatul Ulama offers. The association has already paid off with no public indication that the League has met any of Nahdlatul Ulama's aspirations. Instead, the League has milked its partnership with Nahdlatul Ulama for what it is worth on social media. As the convener of the Religion Forum 20, a newly created official Group of 20 engagement group, Nahdlatul Ulama has invited the League to co-host next month's summit of religious leaders in Bali in advance of a meeting of leaders of the

G20 that groups the world's largest economies. Indonesia is this year's chairman of the group. The faith summit aims to "help ensure that religion in the 21st-century functions as a genuine and dynamic source of solutions, rather than problems." Add to that Nahdlatul Ulama's recognition of the League as a non-governmental organisation even though it is wholly government-controlled and primarily government funded. The invitation was in recognition of the League's break with its past as a major vehicle in the global spread of Saudi ultra-conservatism before the rise of Mr. Bin Salman in 2015. The invitation also followed an approach by the Saudi government to its Indonesian counterparts requesting that the League have a platform at the R20. The approach "stroked with dynamics in the Indonesian government. There was a sort of feedback loop. In the end, Nahdlatul Ulama and the government reinforced each other," said a well-placed source. Nahdlatul Ulama's National Awakening Party (PKB) has four ministers in Indonesian President Joko Widodo's government, including Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, the religious affairs minister, and a brother of the movement's General Chairman Yahya Cholil Staquf. Mr. Widodo has embraced Nahdlatul Ulama's push for a genuinely moderate Islam but, at the same time, has been willing to legitimize Saudi and Emirati efforts aimed at ensuring that moderation does not entail political liberalisation. In contrast to Nahdlatul Ulama, the two Gulf states have steered clear of anchoring social change in jurisprudential reform of Islamic law. The alliance with the League spotlights Nahdlatul Ulama's difficulty balancing its domestic objectives with its effort to position itself internationally as the voice of a genuinely socially and religiously pluralistic and tolerant Islam. Partnering with the League in the hope it will pay more than a domestic political dividend entails reputational risk, with the kingdom's troubled human rights and freedom of religion track record potentially again moving centre stage due to increasingly strained US-Saudi relations. Nahdlatul Ulama deserves credit for what is a daring strategy. The question is whether the group could have secured the domestic dividend without legitimising an autocrat's toolkit and whether the reputational risk will prove worthwhile. — Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar, an Adjunct Senior Fellow at Nanyang Technological University's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, and the author of the syndicated column and blog, *The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer*.

# Settlers attacking Palestinians with impunity as elections loom

Chris Doyle

The last week has highlighted the climate of permissibility and impunity these settlers enjoy. This has been the case since the Israeli occupation began in 1967, but the settlers of 2022 bask in the extraordinary confidence that, in today's Israel, they are no longer on the outside but are represented in all major institutions, including the Supreme Court. If far right forms a major part of the next Israeli coalition government after the Nov. 1 elections, then settlers will see it as an even greater opportunity for a land grab and further unrelenting violence...

THE last week has seen arguably one of the most intense bouts of Israeli army and settler violence against Palestinians since the height of the Second Intifada. It is a moment to contemplate how what used to be a few thousand settlers on the margins now find themselves at the heart of the Israeli establishment. If you dive back to the late 1970s and early 1980s, with Likud in power for the first time, you find the Israeli settler movement brim full of aggressive confidence about settling — or, in reality, colonizing — the West Bank. Wildcat settlements started cropping up and settlers formed violent armed gangs to terrorize Palestinians. Settlers also started moving into the center of the Palestinian city of Hebron, as well as East Jerusalem. Back in 1981, the West Bank settler population was just 17,000, which was alarming enough. Ariel Sharon was pushing to boost the number to 20,000 in advance of elections. But the settler movement always had a long-term horizon too. This was an era when the World Zionist Organization's Settlement Division was busily planning for a settler population of 150,000. The settlers also had their own smaller organizations. Two Israelis involved with the settler movement had a destructive impact on the Oslo process: Baruch Goldstein killed 29 Palestinians at prayer inside the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron in February 1994 and Yigal Amir, who helped found a settler outpost, murdered Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin 18 months later. Settlement pioneers would be astounded at the sheer scale of the settlement industry in 2022. With a population of more than 700,000 all over the West Bank, their leadership is now planning for a population of a million. They are armed, powerful and unaccountable. Settlers continue to mount attacks on Palestinians at Hawara near Nablus, the northern Jordan Valley, around Ramallah, in East Jerusalem and also in the South Hebron Hills. More than 30 settlers from the settlement of Susiya, with Israeli soldiers alongside, stormed the village of Wadi Jaish in Masafar Yatta, destroying three tents and stealing trees from families. All of this is more than the usual settler harassment

of olive farmers at this time of year, although the olive harvest has been a target. Settlers last week set fire to a Palestinian-owned farm near the city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, killing 30,000 chickens. It is all part of quotidian life under occupation. Settlers block roads, throw stones at cars and houses, raid villages and farmland, set fields and olive groves alight, rip up crops and subject property to physical assault. Some are happy to hurl Molotov cocktails or use live fire. Even Palestinian children can be targets, especially en route to school. One newish tool is drones. Friends in Nablus complain of the buzz of Israeli surveillance drones. Settlers also use them to try to catch out any Palestinians putting up what Israel would deem to be illegally constructed buildings. Few areas of the West Bank are safe from the armed settler mobs. All this settler activity is scaled up, magnified and multiplied. Yes, not all of the 700,000 are part of the phalanx of Jewish supremacist, racist pyromaniacs tearing up the West Bank, but more than enough of them are there to terrify the unarmed Palestinian population. One reason for settler exuberance is that settlers and their supporters are no longer on the periphery; they are truly welded into the Israeli establishment. The Israeli army and the settlers work very much in tandem. Time and time again, video evidence shows settlers firing live rounds while the Israeli soldiers do likewise. The last week has highlighted the climate of permissibility and impunity these settlers enjoy. This has been the case since the Israeli occupation began in 1967, but the settlers of 2022 bask in the extraordinary confidence that, in today's Israel, they are no longer on the outside but are represented in all major institutions, including the Supreme Court. If the far right forms a major part of the next Israeli coalition government after the Nov. 1 elections, then the settlers will see it as an even greater opportunity for a land grab and further unrelenting violence against their Palestinian neighbors. Of course, settlers serve in the army, so many of them are active soldiers. For Palestinians, including children, who land up in the

Israeli military court, it is often a settler judge who sentences them. One settler champion who may make it into a Benjamin Netanyahu-led Cabinet is the far-right MK Itamar Ben-Gvir, an overt racist and populist. He supports expelling Palestinians and leads what may become the third-largest party in the Knesset. According to Israeli media reports, he meets with opposition leader Netanyahu at least once a week to coordinate. Ben-Gvir summed up his attitude when he pulled out a gun in the Palestinian neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, telling the settlers with him that, "If (Palestinians) throw stones, shoot them." In the same area, settlers were heard screaming, "Slaves, you're here to clean our houses," intermingled with "death to Arabs" chants. Such appalling racism is all too common. "Here live enemies — expel or kill" was scrawled on a wall in the Palestinian village of Urif. The complicity of the Israeli army and police in settler violence is alarming. Anyone who has spent time with Palestinian communities near settlements will have witnessed this time and time again. Israeli soldiers are there to protect the settlers, not the Palestinians. It is worse as the army increasingly facilitates settler attacks, as can be seen in the pogrom-like settler violence at Hawara in recent days. The legal system plays its role. The Israeli human rights group Yesh Din determined that, from 2005 until the end of 2021, only "approximately 3 percent of investigation files opened following ideologically motivated offenses Israelis committed against Palestinians in the West Bank led to convictions." In the run-up to the Israeli elections, the settlers clearly feel they have the green light to escalate. Israeli soldiers have chucked up an alarming Palestinian fatality count, highlighting that they too have full clearance to shoot and kill. As ever, Palestinians have every reason to hate Israeli election season. If the overt racist settler right, as opposed to those who try to disguise their bigotry, makes it into the next Israeli coalition, the world will be tested. Who will accept this, approving anti-Arab racism, and who will speak out? Do not hold your breath. — Courtesy: Arab News

## Briefs

## PTI not to allow govt...

FROM PAGE 01 wanted an immediate election as they had already given their verdict against the imported rulers imposed through foreign conspiracy. "I will pay tribute to the voter and supporters for this historic triumph," he added. "This was not an election but a referendum, the voters knew that we were not supposed to sit in the assembly, yet people voted our candidates repeatedly," he maintained. Imran Khan warned the government that if once we announce the March, then no one can give a guarantee as to what will be the result, as multitudes of people would take to the streets responding to his call to the nation for the anti-government march. The PTI Chairman said that in May 25, PTI was not pre-prepared but this time around we have completed our preparations and Rana Sanullah have no idea about it. He said that the gang of thieves had nothing to do with the country since they have no stake here because they stashed all their plundered wealth abroad. "These bandits will not be bothered by the worst economic scenario in Pakistan. The whole nation has been witnessing that only a small thief is held by the law while the big wigs get expulsion," he added. However, he vowed: "Time is up for Nawaz and Zardari, whatever they do they will be defeated," he exclaimed, adding that giving them more time would be tantamount to plunge the country deep further in the quagmire of problems. Lashing out at Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan said that Nawaz wanted to delay the elections because he was scared to go to polls due to the PTI's rising popularity. He stated that Nawaz was actually waiting for the PTI's wave of support to subside before elections could be held but contrary to it the party was gaining more popularity with each passing day as the Sunday's by-polls was its clear manifestation. Imran Khan said that Nawaz Sharif can contest the election only when his theft was forgiven, as he was yet to tell where the London flat money came from.

## PM orders rapid...

FROM PAGE 01 25 thousand rupees are being distributed among flood affected families. He said that the government will provide seeds to farmers for the next cultivation season. The Prime Minister said that the affected people have not been charged electricity bills for the last two months. The Prime Minister directed the concerned authorities to take further measures to control spread of waterborne diseases in flood affected areas. He appreciated the efforts of the provincial government in providing clean drinking water and distributing mosquito nets among affected people. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also visited Jacobabad and reviewed relief and rehabilitation efforts in the flood-affected areas. Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Flood Relief Camp established in Sohbatpur to review available facilities for flood stricken families on Monday. On this occasion, he also met flood affected families and school children and asked questions about problems being faced by them. The Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Uqaili briefed him about measures taken for assistance and rehabilitation of flood and rain affected. He said that 359 medical camps are working in Sohbatpur and twelve thousands tents have also been distributed in flood affected areas of Sohbatpur.

## Diplomat murder...

FROM PAGE 01 The Interior Minister made these remarks during a meeting with the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki who called on him in Islamabad in June. During the meeting, Rana Sanullah said that security cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would be further enhanced. "Both the countries would jointly fight internal and regional security challenges," he said, adding that any conspiracy to mar Pakistan-Saudi relations would be foiled jointly.

## Serena-Combaxx int'l squash C'ship to start from Oct 19

Apart from Pakistan, a group of 30 foreign players from 14 countries (Germany, Spain, Egypt, Singapore, Austria, Malaysia, Serbia, USA, Hungary, England, Qatar, Czech Republic, Iran & Kuwait) will be playing in Men & Women events

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Squash Federation has been putting tremendous efforts for revival of international squash in the country. In the same context, PSF in collaboration with Serena Hotels and Combaxx Sports, has arranged CAS-International Squash Championship for Men & Women at Mushaf Squash Complex, Islamabad. The tournament will be played from 19-23 Oct, 22. The Men event has a prize purse of US\$ 30,000/-, whereas the Women event has US\$ 12,000 prize money. The opening ceremony is scheduled on 19 Oct, 22 at 1500 hours whereas the championship finals would be played on 23 Oct, 22.



Apart from Pakistan, a group of 30 foreign players from 14 countries (Germany, Spain, Egypt, Singapore, Austria, Malaysia, Serbia, USA, Hungary, England, Qatar, Czech Republic, Iran & Kuwait) will be playing in Men & Women events. 3.

It must be acknowledged that Pakistan Air Force under the patronage of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu, has been extending tremendous support to Pakistan Squash Federation for the game's promotion in the country and we are hope-

ful for bringing the glories back to the country, which we have enjoyed for many years in the past. On the other hand - besides Govt support, with keen interest and support of corporate sector, especially Serena Hotels & Combaxx Sports the event is likely to live up to the expectations with their support along with PAF. Inshallah Pakistan will regain the top slot in the world of sports and Pakistan's flag fluttering high in the world of sports again. It is expected that the foreign players will enjoy the traditional hospitality of Pakistan during their stay in the federal capital of Islamabad. Moreover, this arrangement would surely help in raising the soft image of Pakistan over the world of squash.

## Team mystics win Red Bull Clutch Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Campus Clutch Pakistan saw the culmination of the National Finals of Red Bull Campus Clutch, the world's biggest university Valorant tournament in Pakistan. The second season of the competition brought over 100 teams, comprised of more than 600 student gamers, battling to take the top spot at the Red Bull Campus Clutch Pakistan National Finals. Four qualifiers with five rounds each later, we had our fantastic four in SALT Esports, Team PPeeks, Team Genesis and Team Mystic - formerly known as Team Snakes. Two semi-final matches and a final battle later, we had our Red Bull Campus Clutch 2022 Pakistan champions: Team Mystic. After losing to SALT Esports in Qualifier #1, we were shocked and disappointed at the same time because we had underestimated them. However, we knew that if we work hard, we can easily win the National Finals. We did."

Abdul Sami Khero aka KING, member of Red Bull Campus Clutch Pakistan 2022 winner Team Mystic. It's a classic redemption story for Team Mystic. SALT Esports defeated them in the first qualifier final to book their spot in the national finals. Team



Mystic still made their way into the finals and the eventual, much-anticipated face-off between the two teams was just the perfect bookend where Team Mystic got their win back. It's almost like this season of Red Bull Campus Clutch was written by Aaron Sorkin. Representing ILMA University, Bahria University and the Youngstown State University, Team Mystic came into the finals hungry and more confident than ever as they had been practicing day and night since securing the final berth in the finals. The grand battle was played on three maps: Ascent, Bind and Icebox. Team Mystic won the first two maps (Ascent and Bind) to win the title. "Things were not in our favour in the first half of the first map. But our In-

Game Leader (IGL) Storax told us during the pause that no matter what we will win this game. Everybody started feeling confident and we came back in the second half. I believe that a professional player should not give up until the last round," said KING, who's a student of ILMA University. The motivation worked and the game didn't even go to the third map Icebox as Team Mystic clean swept the first two maps (Ascent and Bind). Even their opponents were all praise for Team Mystic and had expected a tough fight in the finals. The team had been practicing for Red Bull Campus Clutch for two months, so winning it all in a storybook ending was naturally their favourite moment of the journey. They celebrated the victory with a kingly feast after an exhausting uphill fight. Team Mystic now has their sight set on the Red Bull Campus Clutch World Final. "We will work very hard and double our practice for the World Final and show the world what Pakistan is capable of," said Sami. The clock now ticks in anticipation of the Red Bull Campus Clutch World Final where the cream of the Valorant crop from different countries around the world will compete against each other in a fight to win the crown and to be called the world champions.

## Real Madrid more mature than Barca, says Xavi

MADRID: Barcelona coach Xavi said Real Madrid beat his team in the Clasico because they were more mature. Los Blancos earned a 3-1 win at the Santiago Bernabeu to replace Barca at the top of La Liga on Sunday, moving three points clear of their Catalan rivals. The defeat came after a draw with Inter Milan in the Champions League which leaves Barcelona on the verge of a second successive group stage elimination. "They beat us on maturity, in knowing how to compete," Xavi told a press conference. "We competed worse than our opponents, that's why we lost the game. They are a team that's more mature than ours at this moment." Barcelona signed various players in the summer, including La Liga's top goalscorer Robert Lewandowski, Jules Kounde and Raphinha. Real Madrid's side is more settled, with the only player starting the Clasico not at the club last season being midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni. Madrid moved ahead through Karim Benzema after Vinicius Junior got behind Sergi Roberto, with Fede Valverde drilling home the second. Ferran Torres pulled one back but a Rodrygo penalty sealed Madrid's win. "We played against a great team, who are very sure of their plan," continued Xavi. "The first goal cannot be allowed to happen. And you go in at 2-0 down, after they had just three chances and we made various. "We have to mature. Against Inter, Bayern Munich, in Milan, here, these are games where we weren't (mature enough), but we will learn." Barcelona host Villarreal on Thursday as they look to keep the pressure on the division's new leaders, who visit Elche on Wednesday. "We have to change the dynamic," added Xavi. "The season is very long, sometimes you're down, but we have to be strong, keep believing, working, I don't know any other way to get to success. "These are just three points and now we have to prepare for the next game against Villarreal." - Agencies

## Neymar trial opens in Barcelona ahead of World Cup

BARCELONA: With the World Cup barely a month away, Brazilian superstar Neymar goes on trial in Spain on Monday over alleged irregularities in his transfer to Barcelona nearly a decade ago. The trial, which is set to open at 10:00 a.m. (0800 GMT) at the Provincial Court of Barcelona, is the culmination of a years-long legal saga over his 2013 transfer from the Brazilian club Santos. Neymar is one of nine defendants on trial on corruption-related charges, among them his parents and their N&N company, which manages his affairs. All three are facing charges of business corruption. Investigators began probing the transfer after a 2015 complaint filed by DIS, a Brazilian company that owned 40 percent of the player's sporting rights when he was at Santos. Barcelona said the transfer cost 57.1 million euros, but prosecutors believe it was at least 83 million euros. The club said it paid 40 million euros to N&N and 17.1 million to Santos, of which 6.8 million was given to DIS. But DIS alleges that Neymar, Barcelona and the Brazilian club colluded to mask the true cost of the deal. Among the other defendants are two former Barca presidents, Sandro Rosell and Josep Maria Bartomeu, and ex-Santos boss Odilio Rodrigues Filho. Neymar, now with Paris Saint-Germain, is expected in court on the first day, although that has not been officially confirmed. He will testify on either October 21 or October 28, but it is not known if he will have to be physically present. The trial is due to end on October 31. If convicted, he could face two years in jail and a 10-million-euro (\$9.7 million) fine. Real Madrid president Florentino Perez will take the stand via videoconference to explain how a 2011 secret pre-contract deal between Barca and Neymar influenced the market. - APP

## T20 WC: Scotland shock West Indies in Group B

LONDON: Scotland, ranked 15th in the world, started their Men's T20 World Cup campaign in brilliant fashion by shocking two-time winners West Indies. Chasing 161 to win, a mixture of woeful batting and disciplined bowling saw the Windies bowled out for 118, to lose by 42 runs in Group B. Scotland made 160-5, with opener George Munsey striking an unbeaten 66 from 53 balls. Zimbabwe beat Ireland by 31 runs in the late Group B game. "It is a special win for us," said Scotland captain Richard Berrington, whose side beat Bangladesh in last year's World Cup. "A lot of hard work has gone into getting us to this point in the last 12 months. "I'm extremely proud of the boys for going out there tonight and showing off our skills." The result means West Indies, who are ranked seventh

in the world, will likely need to win both of their remaining games to progress. They face Zimbabwe on Wednesday (09:00 BST), while Scotland face Ireland (05:00) knowing a victory will likely see them qualify. The top two sides from each group will qualify for the Super 12s, which start on 22 October. The winner of Group A and runner-up from Group B will face England. Scotland get it right, while Windies disappoint. Scotland raced to 52-0 after 5.3 overs - a stark improvement on their opening stands in last year's tournament, where their highest score was 33 - before a 45-minute rain delay halted their progress. Windies started poorly with the ball, offering too much width, but were much improved after the break, banging the ball effectively into the pitch. It slowed the scoring rate significantly



and also brought the wickets of Matthew Cross and Richard Berrington, as both flat-batted to mid-on and mid-wicket respectively. Munsey lacked fluency after the delay but stuck at it, and reaped his rewards as he clubbed three boundaries from the final over, having hit his previous one in the fourth over. There were also powerful cameos from Calum MacLeod (23 off 14) and Chris Greaves (16 off 11) as Scotland dragged themselves up to a defensible, but potentially not match-winning,

total. As was the case last year, Windies were woeful with the bat. It felt like it was shot or block with minimal ability to rotate the strike. They particularly struggled against the left-arm spin of Mark Watt, who regularly bowled from 24 yards instead of 22, and off-spin of Michael Leask, with the pair taking 3-12 and 2-15 respectively, while bowling 27 dot balls. Pace bowler Brad Wheel, who was part of the Hampshire side that won T20 Blast this summer, also bowled well, claiming 2-32. - DNA

## 'Next elections to be held on time'

FROM PAGE 01

in the country. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad on Monday evening, she said Imran Khan remained imposed on the people of Pakistan for four years, but he failed to deliver. She said during that four-year tenure Imran Khan brought the country on the verge of bankruptcy. The Minister said the Imran Khan-led regime not only sold Kashmir, but also compromised country's sovereignty for his personal gains. Talking about results of recent by-polls, the Minister said it should be kept in view that PTI lost its two seats in these elections. She further said that winning by-elections does not grant a license to wage an attack on the Federation. Regarding the arrest of Senator Azam Khan Sawati, the Minister said Imran Khan should have taken notice of the illegal arrests of the entire PML-N leadership including Nawaz Sharif and his family during his tenure. To a question, the Minister said it is the constitutional right of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to appoint the new Army Chief under the law. Marriyum Aurangzeb said Imran Khan cannot deprive the Prime Minister of this constitutional right by force and threats.

## Nepal offers huge incentives to investors

FROM PAGE 01

Firm and land registration process is simplified and Nepal has surplus electricity that could be utilized for industrial sectors. Special economic zones have been established to attract export oriented business. Nepal is a developing country and all countries are focusing on attracting foreign direct investment. We would like to learn from Pakistan's and other countries best practices and policy to make our rules, regulation and system more competitive to attract foreign direct investment to increase economic and employment opportunities.

4. Mount Everest Day Human civilization has

always been aspiring to do new things and when the surveyors confirmed that the Mt. Everest was the highest peak of the world in the 19th century, they tried to reach the top of the peak. In this process, different groups of mountaineers tried to reach the top of Mt. Everest and on 31 May 1953 Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Edmund Hillary succeeded to reach at the top of the world. At that time the mountaineers were not trained like modern days. Their communication equipment, weather forecast system, mountaineering gears, transportation systems etc. were totally different in comparison to modern days but they climbed and made a history of humankind reaching top

of the world. To commemorate the first scaling of Mt. Everest which we call Sagarmatha and Chomolungma in local languages, the Government of Nepal decided to celebrate Mt. Everest Day in 2008. The day is also dedicated to the mountaineers who succeeded and those who lost their life while trying to climb Mt. Everest. Beside the commemoration of the first scaling of Mt. Everest, the day is also celebrated to generate awareness of the mountain ecosystem, climate change and the importance to preserve the mountain and mountain people's life and culture.

5. Gandhara civilization Pakistan has rich in religious and cultural herit-

age. It is the place where great religions and philosophy of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Sufism were first established or flourished. Among them, the Gandhara civilization is one of the important historical and cultural heritage of Pakistan and human kind. There are Buddhist artifacts scattered across Taxila, Takhta-Bahi and in different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other areas of Pakistan. Taxila used to be a center of learning and propagating Buddhism in different parts of the world. It shows that Buddhism had deep roots in these areas. Buddhism is the fourth largest religion by number of followers in the world and there are many Buddhist coun-

tries or countries influenced by the philosophy of Buddhism. Each country has their own type of Buddha's image but Gandhara Buddha is different from all of them. The Gandhara Buddha image is much more influenced by Greek art, making it a unique style of Buddha's image in the world. I am happy to see the preservation of the Buddhist artifacts in Pakistan despite being an Islamic country and I think this is something the people of the world should know about. The Full Moon Day in the month of May is important day in the Buddhist Calendar. It is called Buddha Purnima or the Day of Vesak. The Buddha was born, enlightened and attained parinirvanaor

death on this day. To recall the teachings or philosophy of Buddha on peace, love and compassion and to respect and recall the contribution of his philosophy for the world peace, the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1999 had passed a resolution to commemorate the Day of Vesak or Full Moon Day. This year, we celebrated the Buddha Purnima or the Full Moon Day in Taxila with a small group of Pakistani friends and school children. I hope the day will get enough attention, support and contribution from Pakistani Government and people in particular as a custodian of Gandhara civilization which has such an important Buddhist heritage.

## Briefs

## Japan PM orders probe into Unification Church

TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida ordered a government probe into the Unification Church on Monday, after the assassination of former premier Shinzo Abe renewed scrutiny of the sect. The church has been in the spotlight because the man accused of killing Abe was reportedly motivated by resentment against the group, which has been accused of pressuring adherents to make hefty donations and blamed for child neglect among members. Officially known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, the organisation was founded in Korea by Sun Myung Moon and its members are sometimes called "Moonies". The church has denied wrongdoing, but a parade of former members have gone public with criticism of its practices, and revelations about its links with top politicians have helped tank Kishida's approval ratings. Kishida told parliament on Monday that there were "many victims" of the church and its related groups who had found themselves in poverty or facing family breakdown. "Efforts to help them are still insufficient," he said, so "the government will exercise its right to probe the church, based on the Religious Corporations Act". The government also wants to implement other measures, such as strengthening "initiatives to prevent child abuse and help the offspring of religious followers with their education and employment", Kishida said.

## Medvedev warns Israel over arms deliveries

## AGENCIES

MOSCOW: Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Monday warned Israel against arms deliveries to Ukraine. In a post on Telegram, Medvedev, currently the deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, said supplying weapons to Ukraine will be "a rash step," fraught with the destruction of relations with Russia. "Israel seems to be going to supply weapons to the Kiev regime. A very rash step. It will destroy all interstate relations between our countries," he said. Medvedev claimed that Israel is going to send weapons to people using Nazi symbols in their uniforms and banners, defending the ideas of Nazi Germany, which among other things, pursued a policy of systematic extermination of representatives of other races and nations, including Jews.

## Burkina Faso opens talks on future

OUAGADOUGOU: Political parties, social and religious groups and representatives of the security forces launched talks on Friday to chart the next phase in Burkina Faso's future after the country's latest coup. The gathering of some 300 people in the capital Ouagadougou is taking place two weeks after the jihadist-torn Sahel state was rocked by its second military takeover in less than nine months. A 34-year-old captain, Ibrahim Traore, leading disgruntled junior officers, forced out Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. Damiba had seized power only in January, toppling Burkina's last elected president, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré. The national forum is due to appoint a transitional president to rule before power is eventually returned to civilians. Supporters of Traore are clamouring for him to be that man, although he has said he does not want the job. Several hundreds demonstrated Friday in the capital to call for Traore to be appointed president. "We want captain Traore or nothing," demonstrator Sayouba Ouedrapogo told AFP near the conference centre where the talks opened. Traore did not attend the forum but junta member captain Marcel Medah read out a message from him urging national unity and peace. — APP

## France braces for strike amid fuel shortage tensions

Macron said on Monday he wanted a solution to the fuel crisis "as quickly as possible", adding: "I stand with our fellow citizens who are struggling and who are fed up with this situation"

## AGENCIES

PARIS: France on Monday braced for nationwide transport strike action as the government and unions remained in deadlock over walkouts at oil depots that have sparked fuel shortages. Leading unions have called for strikes Tuesday in their biggest challenge yet to President Emmanuel Macron since he won a new presidential term in May. The move comes after workers at several refineries and depots operated by energy giant TotalEnergies voted to extend their strike action, defying the government which has begun to force staff back on the job. Motorists scrambled to fill tanks as the fuel strike, which has lasted for nearly

three weeks, cripples supplies at just over 30 percent of France's service stations. The government, increasingly impatient with the striking workers, said it was forcing key staff back to work. "The time for negotiation is over," Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told the BFMTV broadcaster Monday. The government said it would begin to requisition workers at the Feyzin depot in southeastern France on Monday, having already employed the same strategy at the Mardyck depot in the north of the country. Fuel workers voted to continue stoppages at several refineries run by TotalEnergies, the coordinator for the hard-left CGT union Eric Sellini said, rejecting a pay package agreed between the group's management

and mainstream unions. Three out of seven of the country's oil refineries and five major fuel depots (out of around 200) are affected, the government said. Macron said on Monday he wanted a solution to the fuel crisis "as quickly as possible", adding: "I stand with our fellow citizens who are struggling and who are fed up with this situation". During a visit to the Paris car show, Macron also said he would summon the cabinet ministers for finance, energy, the environment and transport as well as the government spokesman later Monday "for an update on solutions". Strike action at Esso-ExxonMobil meanwhile ended at the end of last week at the company's two French refineries, after a pay deal between management and moderate unions

which represent a majority of workers. A return to normal supply conditions at petrol stations will take at least two weeks after strikes end, the government has warned. Unions in other industries and the public sector have also announced action to protest against the twin impact of soaring energy prices and overall inflation on the cost of living. Leftist unions CGT and FO have called for a nationwide strike Tuesday for higher salaries, and against government requisitions of oil installations, threatening to cripple public transport in particular. Rail operator SNCF will see "severe disruptions" with half of train services cancelled. Transport Minister Clement Beaune said. Suburban services in the Paris region as

well as bus services will also be impacted, operator RATP said, but the inner-Paris metro system should be mostly unaffected. Beyond transport workers, unions hope to bring out staff in sectors such as the food industry and healthcare, CGT boss Philippe Martinez told France Inter radio. Their action will kick off what is likely to be a tense autumn and winter as Macron also seeks to implement his flagship domestic policy of raising the French retirement age. But the economic squeeze partly caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, along with the failure of Macron's party to secure an overall majority in June legislative polls, only adds to the magnitude of the task. On Sunday tens of thousands of protesters marched in Paris to express

their frustration at the rising cost of living. The demonstration was called by the left-wing political opposition and led by the head of the France Unbowed (LFI) party, Jean-Luc Melenchon. Security forces fired teargas and launched baton charges after they were pelted with objects, while on the fringes of the march, masked men dressed in black ransacked a bank. Some protesters wore yellow fluorescent vests, the symbol of the often violent anti-government protests in 2018 that shook the pro-business government of Macron. "We're going to have a week the likes of which we don't see very often," Melenchon told the crowd. Organisers claimed 140,000 people attended Sunday's march, but police said there were 30,000.

## Borrell brushes off 'jungle' controversy

## NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: Facing charges of racism, the EU foreign policy chief on Monday passed up the chance to make amends, instead brushing off the controversy as something normal. Asked how he is holding up after controversial remarks calling Europe a "garden" and the rest of the world a "jungle," Borrell told reporters that he is fine. "I am very okay, why not? Why should I not? Every week is very intense," he told reporters in Luxembourg ahead of an EU foreign ministers' meeting. "From time to time, something erupts in the public opinion but I can assure you that every day is as intense as the previous one," he said. In a speech to rookie diplomats in Belgium last Thursday, Borrell said, "Europe is a garden," while "most of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden." He also urged against "building walls" around the garden, saying instead, "Europeans have to be much more engaged with the rest of the world," but most commentators charged that his remarks were "racist" and "colonialist."

## Moscow announces end of partial mobilization

MOSCOW: Moscow has completed tasks on partial mobilization set by the Russian Defense Ministry, the city mayor announced on Monday. "According to the military commissar of Moscow, the partial mobilization tasks established on the basis of a presidential decree and the tasks of the Defense Ministry have been completed in full," Sergey Sobyannin said in a statement on his website. Sobyannin added that meeting places for the mobilized people will close on Oct. 17 at 2 p.m. Moscow time (1100GMT). "The notices, sent out during the mobilization process to the place of residence and enterprises, are no more valid," the mayor said. On Sept. 21, President Vladimir Putin declared partial mobilization to enlist up to 300,000 people between the ages of 18 and 50 in the Russian military. — APP

## Thousands displaced by flood in Victoria state

## NEWS DESK

MELBOURNE: Thousands of people in the Australian state of Victoria have been displaced by the ongoing flood as the country battles extreme weather. According to Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, so far 11,000 displaced victims have applied for state payments, ABC News reported. "That gives you a bit of a sense of exactly how many people are out of their homes," the broadcaster quoted Andrews as saying. "This is a very, very significant event affecting many tens of thousands of people," he added. The devastating flood also caused huge damage to roads, power systems and houses in several areas of the state. According to the state government, more than 10,000 repairs on roads have been carried out while 359 roads in the state are still closed and 1,860 properties are without power. The state government also announced AUD \$351 million (\$218 million) to help the flood-affected communities while AUD \$165 million (\$102 million) will be spent on road repairs and cleanup efforts. "There isn't a second to waste as we begin recovery in flood-affected communities — whether it's support for households, clean-ups, or local roads, we'll deliver the support Victorians need," said Andrews in a separate statement. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese also visited the flood-hit areas of Victoria and New South Wales along with other senior officials. "I do want to say that we are living in very dangerous times in the days and weeks ahead. What we have is a potential of further rain events here in western New South Wales," the prime minister told reporters.

## Ties with Armenia depend on Baku-Yerevan relations

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Türkiye on Monday lashed out at Greece for falsely accusing Ankara of mistreating migrants, calling Athens "shameless." "Known for its record on violations of international law, it is natural for Greece to attempt to slander Türkiye as its own crimes multiply," Mevlut Cavusoglu told a news conference after a meeting in Istanbul of foreign ministers of the Council of Turkic States.

His remarks came when he was asked about Greek Migration and Asylum Minister Notis Mitarachi accusing Türkiye of mistreating 92 refugees on the Greek-Turkish border, sharing a photo on Twitter of men who had been stripped of their clothes. Cavusoglu said four more migrants were pulled out of the Aegean Sea in the past week, adding that such incidents are happening in the middle of the sea as refugee boats are skewered and people are left to die.

"There are EU member states that deem everything Greece says true. This is what encourages Greece," the top diplomat said. On Sunday, the Turkish communications director hit back



at Notis, saying "the Greek machine of fake news is back at work ... (trying) to cast suspicion on our country by sharing false information." "With these futile and ridiculous efforts, Greece has shown once again to the entire world that it does not respect the dignity of refugees by posting these oppressed people's pictures it has deported after stealing their personal possessions," Fahrettin Altun said on Twitter. "The Greek authorities must first account for the infants they caused to drown in the Aegean, as well as the people they stripped naked, beaten with belts, and left to freeze to death," he added. Türkiye and human rights groups have documented numerous cases of

migrants trying to cross the border to Greece being beaten, stripped, and their belongings stolen. Greece has long pursued an illegal policy of pushing back asylum seekers trying to reach its shores as an entry point to Europe. Human rights groups and leading media outlets have frequently reported the pushbacks and other human rights breaches of Greek authorities, which violate EU and international laws. Türkiye and rights groups have also condemned the practice, saying it violates humanitarian values and international law by endangering the lives of vulnerable migrants, including women and children.

Asked about ties with Armenia, Cavusoglu affirmed that any positive step in Azerbaijan-Armenia relations will inevitably help Ankara's relations with Yerevan. He further voiced Türkiye's readiness to meet with Armenia on "all platforms," adding that Ankara is "sincere" about normalizing ties with Yerevan.

Türkiye and Armenia last December appointed special representatives for talks on normalizing ties, with the first meeting held in Moscow on Jan. 14. The parties have held four meetings so far.

## Hina meets key French figures

## DNA

PARIS: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar had a busy day in Paris. Hina Rabbani Khar met Jean-Louis Bourselles, President of the Foreign Affairs Commission at the French National Assembly, in Paris. They discussed Pak-France bilateral relations, parliamentary cooperation, floods in Pakistan, climate change and regional and global issues. She also met a group of French intellectuals, members of think tanks and scholars at the Pakistani Embassy in Paris. Issues of national, regional and global importance came under discussion in the meeting. High-level contacts between Pakistan and India resumed and Director General of Federal Investigation Mohsin Butt will attend the 90th General Assembly of Interpol in New Delhi tomorrow. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the meeting and the FIA DG will attend the meeting along with a delegation.



PARIS: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar meets Christian Cambon, President Commission for Foreign Affairs, Defense & Armed Forces of the French Senate. — DNA

## EU to launch training mission for Ukraine troops

Luxembourg: The EU is set to step up its military support for Ukraine on Monday by launching a mission to train 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers and providing 500 million euros more for weapons. Foreign ministers from the bloc's 27 member states are expected to sign off on the decisions at a meeting in Luxembourg and diplomats say the mission should become operational next month. "It's a big first for the EU," said one European diplomat. "We've never done a training mission of that scope." After almost eight months of war, Ukraine's forces are making progress on the battlefield and Kyiv's western backers are keen to make sure its troops have the capacity to keep fighting. Several EU nations — including Germany and France — are already training Ukrainians to use the modern artillery systems, missile launchers and air defences they are delivering to Kyiv. But the EU has lagged behind in providing large-scale training to help the country's military face off against Rus-

sia's invading forces. The United States, Canada and Britain have already been training thousands of troops. London is aiming to train 10,000 within this year and looking to more than double that next year. The final details of the European training are still being hammered out. But an official said the plan is initially to provide basic training to 12,000 soldiers and specialised instruction to 2,800 more. Ukraine's neighbour Poland is due to serve as the main hub for the mission. "It is the way out for the Ukrainians and way back in," said one European diplomat. Germany is also set to be a key staging post for training. Programmes currently run by individual member states are set to continue and could be incorporated in the EU mission later. "Everyone in the EU will do what they can in correspondence to the needs of Ukrainians," the diplomat said. The diplomat said a budget of some 60 million euros per year was foreseen. — APP

## S. Korea military drills kick off

SEOUL: South Korean defense forces on Monday kicked off their annual military exercises amid growing tension on the Korean Peninsula. The military drills aimed to monitor North Korea's movement, maintaining an emergency response posture to any threat from Pyongyang, the Yonhap News Agency reported. "Comprehensively assessing the recent situations, we are closely tracking and monitoring (the North's) related movements and maintaining a firm readiness posture," the agency quoted Col. Kim Jun-rak, spokesperson for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), as saying during a regular briefing. "The exercise will be carried out in a substantive way with a focus on maintaining preparedness and enhancing joint operational capabilities," Kim added. The exercises will continue through Oct. 28. On Sunday, the South Korean presidency warned that North Korea is expected to carry out its seventh nuclear test at any time after recent missile tests. "As North Korea's provocations have become more frequent, we're putting all of our efforts into maintaining a readiness posture with a sense of alertness," the agency quoted an unnamed senior presidential official telling reporters. "It's a 24-hour readiness regime," he said. On Friday, North Korea fired another short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) into the East Sea, two days after they fired two long-range strategic cruise missiles, involving units operating "tactical nukes." — Agencies

## New UK finance minister scraps mini-budget

He called the energy bailout a "landmark policy supporting millions of people through a difficult winter. And today I want to confirm the support"

## NEWS DESK

LONDON: Britain's new finance minister on Monday announced a reversal of almost all of the tax cuts announced in the government's mini-budget last month. Jeremy Hunt was only appointed chancellor of the exchequer on Friday. The mini-budget was announced by his predecessor Kwasi Kwarteng, with the support of Prime Minister Liz Truss, who gave Kwarteng his walking papers last week after 38 days in office. The mini-budget sparked chaos in financial markets, due to its huge, unfunded tax cuts. Hunt, from the moderate wing of the ruling Conservative party, was brought in to restore the reputation of Britain's financial decision-making and to calm financial markets. "The government has today decided to make further changes to the mini-budget, and to reduce unhelpful speculation about what they are, we've decided to announce these ahead of the medium-term fiscal plan, which happens in two weeks," said Hunt. The main changes were scrapping cuts to

dividend tax rates; scrapping reforms to rules regarding the taxation of the self-employed; scrapping a VAT-free shopping scheme for foreigners visiting the UK; scrapping a freeze on alcohol duty; scrapping a planned 1% cut in the basic rate of income tax indefinitely that was scheduled for next year; and limiting the energy bailout until only April 2023, rather than two years, after which the scheme will be reviewed. On income tax, Hunt said: "It is a deeply held Conservative value, a value that I share that people should keep more of the money they earn. But at a time when markets are rightly demanding commitments to sustainable public finances, it is not right to borrow to fund this tax cut. So I've decided that the basic rate of income tax will remain at 20% and it will do so indefinitely until economic circumstances allow for it to be cut." He called the energy bailout a "landmark policy supporting millions of people through a difficult winter. And today I want to confirm the support we are providing between now and April next



year will not change. "But beyond that and prime minister and I have agreed it would not be irresponsible to continue exposing public finances to unlimited volatility in international gas prices. So I'm announcing today a Treasury led re-

view into how we support energy bills beyond April next year." At the end of his statement, Hunt sought to inject calm into financial markets, saying: "The most important objective for our country right now is stability." Previously, Hunt warned the public that tough choices were to come, which would involve a mixture of tax rises and public spending cuts. Labour Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves said: "All the Chancellor's statement underlines is that the damage has been done. This is a Tory crisis made in Downing Street, paid by working people with higher mortgage and higher borrowing costs. They've lost all credibility." Speaking to Sky News, prominent Conservative backbencher Tobias Ellwood reached all the way back to 1956 for comparison, saying: "This is the worst crisis since Suez. It's good news this reckless experiment with Britain's finances is now over. We now need to exhibit the scale of statecraft not seen in a generation if we want to turn this around."

**Briefs**

**Safdar says Maryam will bring Nawaz back**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and husband of party Vice President Maryam Nawaz, Captain (r) Safdar said on Monday that the reason why PTI Chairman Imran Khan won on six seats in the by-elections held in 11 constituencies yesterday (Sunday, October 16, 2022) was that he himself contested on these seats. He was talking to media in the press room of the Islamabad High Court. He said that Imran knew that if he had fielded any other person as the party's candidate on these seats, he or she would have suffered a humiliating defeat. "The real competition would begin after the arrival of former prime minister and PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan," he opined. "It was Maryam Nawaz who earlier had brought Nawaz Sharif, her father, back from London, and she will bring him back again," he predicted. Safdar said that the PML-N workers had run the election campaign on their own. He reiterated the PML-N's claim that the 2018 general elections had been stolen from the party.

**Germany starts admission programme for Afghan refugees**

WEB DESK

BERLIN: Germany has started a new programme to admit Afghans deemed most at risk following last year's Taliban takeover in Kabul, the interior and foreign ministries said on Monday. Berlin has pledged to take in around 38,000 Afghans particularly at risk under the rule of the hardline Islamists and some 26,000 people had already arrived in Germany. The new programme will admit 1,000 Afghans per month and their family members. It targets particularly exposed Afghans who are active in women's and human rights advocacy or those at risk for working in the fields of justice, politics, media, education, culture, sport or science. Afghans who have experienced violence or persecution because of their gender, sexual orientation, or religion can also benefit from the programme. "Based on defined admission criteria, we can offer protection to particularly endangered and vulnerable people from Afghanistan," Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said in a statement. Germany will cooperate with civil society organizations to select and reach the targeted groups. It was not immediately clear how long the programme will be in place. Berlin has not recognised the Taliban as a legitimate government since they took over Afghanistan in August 2021 as U.S.-backed foreign forces withdrew after two decades of war.

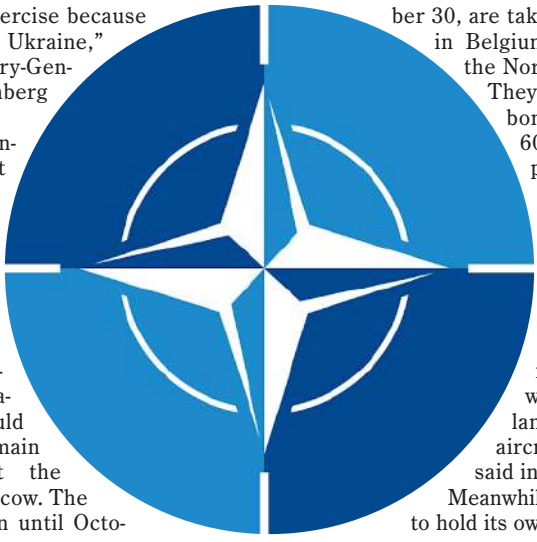
# NATO launches nuclear drills amid Russia tensions

Russian President Vladimir Putin, and other Russian officials; have at multiple occasions alluded to Russia's nuclear arsenal since the start of invasion of Ukraine

DNA

BRUSSELS: The alliance stressed that although the exercises had been planned before the invasion of Ukraine, it would "remain vigilant" toward nuclear threats from Moscow. NATO on Monday began its annual series of nuclear preparedness drills on the heels of veiled threats from Russian President Vladimir Putin that he might consider a nuclear option after military setbacks in Ukraine. The alliance stressed, however, that the drills are a "routine, recurring training activity" that had been planned before Russia invaded Ukraine. A NATO press release stated that the drills are "not linked to any current world events." "It would send a very wrong signal if we suddenly now cancelled a routine, long-

time planned exercise because of the war in Ukraine," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said last week. "We need to understand that NATO's firm, predictable behavior, our military strength, is the best way to prevent escalation." Stoltenberg added that the 30-nation group would however "remain vigilant" about the threat from Moscow. The drills, which run until Octo-



ber 30, are taking place mostly in Belgium, the UK, and the North Sea. They involve US B-52 bombers as part of 60 total aircraft participating in training flights. Also among the aircraft involved in the drills are fourth and fifth generation fighter jets, as well as surveillance and tanker aircraft, the alliance said in a press release. Meanwhile, Russia is set to hold its own annual nuclear

drills, named "Grom" (Thunder), which are routinely conducted in late October. Russian President Vladimir Putin, and other Russian officials; have at multiple occasions alluded to Russia's nuclear arsenal since the start of the invasion of Ukraine. Last month, Putin said "our country also has various means of destruction," adding that Moscow will use "all means at [its] disposal to protect Russia." On Wednesday, the British daily The Times reported, citing NATO sources, reported that Russia was preparing nuclear tests in the Black Sea. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Thursday that Moscow will face "severe consequences" if it launches a nuclear strike on Ukraine. He added that the circumstances for NATO to use a nuclear weapon were "extremely remote." The alliance includes three nuclear powers: the US, the UK and France.

## PTI expresses concern over Biden's statement



ISLAMABAD: The senior leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Monday expressed serious concern over the statement of the American President regarding the independence and sovereignty of Pakistan. They were expressing their views at a meeting held in Islamabad to review the current political situation of the country. PTI Chairman Imran Khan presided over the meeting. In the meeting, full gratitude was expressed for the historic success of PTI in the by-elections across the country. Imran Khan praised the workers and officials for mobilizing the people for elections at the constituency level in a very short time. The meeting took a detailed review of US President Joe Biden's inflammatory statement and the reaction of the 'imported' government in this regard. The participants reviewed in detail the reaction of the public. The meeting strongly condemned the torture of senator Azam Swati. The meeting approved to take measures to investigate the torture of Senator Azam Swati and take strict action against those responsible. The meeting held detailed consultations on planning the final phase of the real freedom movement. It merits mention that the PTI bagged six NA seats and two Punjab Assembly seats, while Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) could only secure one seat of the provincial assembly and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) also secured two NA seats. The PTI chief won the seats in Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Faisalabad, and Nankana Sahib after beating the ruling coalition's candidates, but faced defeat at the hands of PPP's Abdul Hakeem Baloch and Musa Ali Gillani. The constituencies where polling took place included NA-22 Mardan-III, NA-24 Charsadda-II, NA-31 Peshawar-V, NA-108 Faisalabad-VIII, NA-118 Nankana Sahib-II, NA 157 Multan-IV, NA-237 Malir-II, NA-239 Korangi, Karachi. - DNA

# Russia launches new attacks using drones

KYIV: Russia attacked Ukrainian cities with drones on Monday, killing at least four people in an apartment building in downtown Kyiv during morning rush hour, and targeted infrastructure across the country in the second wave of air strikes in a week. Ukrainian soldiers fired into the air trying to shoot down the drones after blasts rocked central Kyiv. An anti-aircraft rocket could be seen streaking into the morning sky, followed by an explosion and orange flames, as residents raced for shelter. A pregnant woman was among four people killed in the attack on the residential building, Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko said. Ukraine's Interior Minister Denys Monastyrskyi said there had been deaths in other cities but did not give a full toll. Black smoke poured out of the windows of the Kyiv apartment building and emergency service workers toiled to douse flames. "I have never been so afraid... It is murder, it is simply murder, there are no other words for it," said Vitali Dushkevsky, 29, a food delivery courier who rents an apartment in the blasted building. His flatmate, who gave his name only as Nazar, said they had

tried to leave their flat only to find the staircase "all gone". Nearby, Elena Mazur, 52, was searching for her mother, who had managed to call her to say she was buried under rubble. "She is not picking up the phone," Mazur said, hoping she had been rescued and taken to hospital. Ukraine said the attacks were carried out by Iran-made "suicide drones", which fly to their target and detonate. Russia's defence ministry said it had carried out a "massive" attack on military targets and energy infrastructure across Ukraine using high-precision weapons. Unlike drones that return to base once missiles are launched, "kamikaze" or "suicide" drones are destroyed in an attack. Al Jazeera's defence analyst Alex Gatopoulos said these munitions can hover above an area to identify a target before diving to destroy it. Like cruise missiles, they can strike targets hundreds of kilometres away, but cruise missiles are expensive, and Gatopoulos said "kamikaze" drones are a cheaper yet precise alternative. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia had bought 2,400 "kamikaze" drones but its fleet is being depleted quickly. - DNA

## ECP rejects PTI plea to recount votes on PP-139

SHARAPUR: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday rejected PTI's plea seeking a recount of votes in PP-139 Sheikhphura-V - which it lost to the PML-N. The PTI candidate, Abu Bakar Sharaquri, had approached the ECP for a recount, but his request has been rejected and the final result has been released by the Election Commission. It merits mention here that PML-N candidate Chaudhry Iftikhar Bhango had obtained 36,435 votes, while PTI candidate Abu Bakar Sharaquri could only bag 34,973 votes. In the 2018 general elections, this seat was won by the PML-N. At that time, Jalil Ahmad Sharaquri, the candidate of the PML-N, embraced the victory. During the number game situation in Punjab, he [Sharaquri] resigned from the PML-N and joined the PTI, after which the

ticket was given to Jalil Sharaquri's cousin Abu Bakar Sharaquri in his place. Meanwhile, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said we have won Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) two seats in the by-elections. In a press talk held in Islamabad, he said that we are considering the by-election as our victory. "We have won the by-election as PTI has lost its two seats", he hinted. Khawaja Muhammad Asif said that the arrival of Nawaz Sharif is very important for Pakistan as he is only the man who can rescue the country in the present situation. He said the next General Election will be held as per schedule in the light of the Constitution. The minister said that the PTI chairman Imran Khan himself was fighting everywhere. Where Imran himself did not fight the election, the party lost, he added. Replying to a question, he said, "Shah Mehmood Qureshi is a great politician but his daughter lost the constituency". To another question, he said, there is no such thing as MQM's displeasure. - DNA

## IHC summons DIG in missing citizen case

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday summoned DIG Operations capital's police in personal capacity in a case seeking recovery of missing citizen. Justice Aamer Farooq, hearing the case, expressed annoyance over absence of DIG operations and said that the conduct of the police was not respectable. The officers used to get sick when the court issued summon notices to them, he said. The court observed that the police officials had been giving different statements before it for last four months regarding the citizen Muhammad Hamid. The court said that the police should inform whether the missing citizen alive or not. It said that there were basic human rights as per the constitution, adding that any citizen could be arrested and tried but he should not be get disappeared. The court adjourned further hearing of the case till coming Friday. - APP

## Iran prison fire death toll rises

AGENCIES  
DUBAI: Eight prisoners died as a result of a fire at Tehran's Evin prison over the weekend, Iran's judiciary said on Monday, doubling the death toll from a blaze that has increased pressure on the government as it struggles to contain mass protests. The fate of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman who died in custody on Sept. 16 after she was apprehended by Iran's morality police for "inappropriate attire", unleashed a wave of protests that spread rapidly and to all layers of society. The unrest has turned into one of the boldest challenges to Iran's clerical rulers since the 1979 revolution, with protesters calling for the downfall of the Islamic Republic, even if the protests do not seem close to toppling the system. Iran's judiciary said the blaze on Saturday evening was started by prisoners in a workshop after a fight, and that those killed had died of smoke inhalation. All were from a section of the prison for inmates jailed for robbery-related crimes, it said.

## Saudi Air Chief lauds PAF indigenous capabilities

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A Saudi Armed Forces delegation led by Major General Hamed Bin Rafei Al Amri, Director Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. During the meeting, matters of regional security situation, enhanced bilateral and defence cooperation were discussed. Major General Hamed Bin Rafei Al Amri expressed his grief over the devastation caused by recent floods in Pakistan and offered sincere condolence to the families of the victims. He praised efforts of PAF personnel for their support to civil administration in relief activities and rehabilitation process of the flood affectees. The dignitary also acknowledged the rising indigenous capability of PAF in aviation industry and agreed to further optimize the existing ties between both the air forces particularly in training and operational domains. Chief of the Air Staff shared broad contours of PAF's modernization drive to achieve operational capability in the contemporary warfare in air, space and cyber space domains as per the PAF's operational construct and said that Pakistan Air Force is fully focused in acquisition and development of these technologies. The Air Chief said that Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enjoy longstanding religious, cultural and historical bonds which are manifested through strong ties between both the countries. CAS thanked the visiting dignitary for the unflinching support extended by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and reiterated that assistance from our global partners shall be vital for rescue and rehabilitation of the flood victims in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Major General Hamed Bin Rafei Al Amri, Director Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces, calls on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff. - DNA

# EU slaps rights sanctions on Iran, warns of more

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: Several European Union foreign ministers on Monday called for sanctions against Iran over the transfer of Iranian drones to Russia, as the bloc agreed a separate set of asset freezes and travel bans over Tehran's crackdown on protests. Kyiv has reported a spate of Russian attacks with Iranian-made Shahed-136 drones in recent weeks, saying on Monday that Tehran was responsible for the "murders of Ukrainians". Iran denies supplying drones to Russia since its invasion of Ukraine. The Kremlin has not commented. "I think it (new sanctions) should be worked out immediately," Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu told Reuters as the bloc's foreign ministers were due to discuss the transfer of Iranian drones to Russia.

Reinsalu said Kyiv's reports on the Iranian origin of the drones should be taken seriously, with sanctions acting as a deterrent to show "this has consequences." France and Germany, both parties to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, have also made it clear they believed new sanctions in connection to the drones were necessary and that the drone transfers should be seen as a violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution. The EU could move towards imposing new sanctions against Iran over the matter, according to two diplomats involved in preparing talks among the ministers, though no detailed decisions were expected on Monday. "Iranian drones are used apparently to attack in the middle of Kyiv, this is an atrocity," Denmark's Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod said as he arrived at the meeting of EU foreign ministers in

Luxembourg, urging a response. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the bloc would look for hard evidence about Iran's role. Meanwhile, the EU foreign ministers added 11 Iranians and four institutions, including Iran's morality police chief, to a travel ban and asset freeze list for their role in the crackdown on protests after the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini. "Unanimous decision today to take action against those in #Iran responsible for the death of #MahsaAmini and violent repression of peaceful protests," Borrell tweeted. Tehran says it is keeping order against foreign-instigated troublemakers. Additional EU sanctions on Iran will not be limited to blacklisting some individuals should Tehran's involvement in Russia's war on Ukraine be proven, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn said.

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