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Anwar Ibrahim gets sworn in as Malaysia's 10th Prime Minister

Detailed News On Page-07

'Full-fledged' crisis ongoing in Iran: UN

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Embolo gives Swiss 1-0 win over Cameroon

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Asim Munir appointed new Army Chief

Appointments sealed after President approves PM's nominees for COAS, CJCSC



Gen. Sahir Shamshad Mirza

Gen. Syed Asim Munir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Uncertainty surrounding key appointments in the military ended after President Arif Alvi on Thursday signed the summary and approved the appointment of Lieutenant General Asim Munir as the next chief of army staff and Lt Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff committee (CJCS). Earlier in the day, speculations ended after the government announced that Lt Gen Munir was selected by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to become Pakistan's next army chief, replacing General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb confirmed on Twitter that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, using his Constitutional right, had also named Lt Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza as CJCS. The decision was announced after PM Shehbaz held a federal cabinet meeting earlier today to mull over the high-profile appointments after the allied parties authorised him to pick the officers for the top slots. PM Shehbaz's nominee for the army chief has also been retained by the federal government under the Pakistan Army Act, according to sources, as he was about to retire later this month.

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President, PM laud services of outgoing CJCS

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Nadeem Raza paid a farewell call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here at the PM House on Thursday. The prime minister lauded the services of General Nadeem Raza for the defence of the country. He acknowledged the professionalism and dedication of General Nadeem Raza and also expressed best wishes for him. The outgoing CJCS expressed gratitude to the prime minister for acknowledging his services for the national defence and for the institution of armed forces. Later, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Nadeem Raza paid a farewell call on President Dr Arif Alvi at the President's House. As the CJCS, it was General Raza's last meeting with the president as the federal government has named Lieutenant General Sahir Shamshad Mirza as the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. General Raza – a highly decorated officer – has been serving

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ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Army Staff (Designate) Gen. Syed Asim Munir and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (Designate) Gen. Sahir Shamshad Mirza called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in separate meeting. – DNA

PM to pay two-day visit to Turkiye To jointly inaugurate MILGEM Corvette Ships

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will pay a two-day official visit to Turkiye on November 25 at the invitation of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Alongside President Erdogan, PM Shehbaz Sharif will jointly inaugurate the third of the four MILGEM Corvette Ships for the Pakistan Navy's PNS Khaibar at the Istanbul Shipyards. The two leaders will also hold wide-ranging discussions encompassing bilateral relations, regional situation and other issues of common interest. The prime minister will interact with leaders of the Turkish business community. The president of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB) will also call on the prime minister during his stay in Istanbul. Pakistan and Turkiye enjoy fraternal ties deeply embedded in commonalities of faith, culture and history and underpinned by exceptional cordiality and mutual trust. The MILGEM project, based on joint collaboration between the two countries, represents a significant milestone in the Pakistan-Turkiye strategic partnership that continues to progress on an upward trajectory. The launching ceremony for the first Corvete for the Pakistan Navy, PNS Babur, was performed in Istanbul in August 2021 while the groundbreaking for the Second Ship, PNS Badr, was held at Karachi in May 2022. Frequent leadership level exchanges are a defining feature of the eternal bonds of Pakistan-Turkiye friendship.

No objection over landing of helicopter

Distt Admin disallows landing of PTI chief heli in Parade ground

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The General Headquarters (GHQ) on Thursday formally informed PTI that it has no objection over the landing of Imran Khan's helicopter at the Parade Ground in connection with the party's November 26 Jalsa in Rawalpindi. However the district administration has refused to grant permission to the heli of the PTI chairman Imran Khan. In a written letter, the military's leadership suggested the PTI to seek permission from the Islamabad administration as the Parade Ground falls under its jurisdiction. Meanwhile, PTI leader Ali Nawaz Awan sought the federal government's approval for the landing and departure of Imran's helicopter at Parade Ground. Referring to the federal government's

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President meets Imran Khan at Zaman Park

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi reached Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan's residence at Zaman Park to take part in the party meeting on Thursday. Earlier, the president departed from Nur Khan Airbase through a chartered plane to meet the PTI chairman after the federal government's announcement of the appointment of new army chief and the chairman joint chiefs of staff committee.

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Flood recovery plan key to financial support: IMF

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's timely finalisation of a recovery plan from devastating floods is essential to support discussions and continued financial support from multilateral and bilateral partners, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Wednesday. Pakistan was already battling a full-blown economic crisis, with decades-high inflation and dwindling foreign exchange reserves, when it was hit by floods earlier this year. It had entered a \$6 billion IMF bailout programme in 2019, and the ninth review is currently pending. "The timely finalization of the recovery plan is essential to support the discussions, along with continuing financial

support from multilateral and bilateral partners," IMF resident representative Esther Perez Ruiz said in a message to Reuters. She added that IMF staff is continuing discussions with Pakistani authorities over policies to reprioritize and better target support toward humanitarian needs, while accelerating reform efforts to preserve economic and fiscal sustainability. Devastating floods killed more than 1,700 people and inflicted billions of dollars of damage. Pakistani authorities' estimates of the damage have varied from \$10 billion to \$40 billion. Pakistan's finance ministry said last week that it would "expeditiously" finish technical engagement with the IMF

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Briefs

Ishaq Dar lauds PM's decision

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Thursday praised the Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif's decision to appoint Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee on seniority-cum-merit bases. In a tweet, the minister said the PM's seniority-cum-merit based decision to appoint Gen Syed Asim Munir as Chief of Army Staff and Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza as Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee was praiseworthy.

DG ISPR slams India's unfounded allegations

Indian General Officer's lofty claims and surreal ambition is intellectually insulting

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Nov 24 (DNA): Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR DG) Major General Babar Iftikhar on Thursday denounced the unfounded allegations of so-called launchpads in Azad Jammu and Kashmir by a senior official of the Indian Army. In an ISPR news release here received, the ISPR DG said the unwarranted statement of a high-ranking Indian Army Officer concerning Azad Jammu and Kashmir was an apt manifestation of Indian Armed Forces' delusional mindset and showcases the vivid imprint of domestic political showboating on Indian military thought. Maj



General Babar said the fallacious remarks and unfounded allegations of so-called "launchpads" and "terrorists" were an attempt to divert attention from Indian Army's repressive use of force and gross human rights violations against innocent, unarmed Kashmiris striving for their right to self-determination, upheld by

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Donor Conference in January

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said the donors conference to collect funding for reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in the flood-hit areas was expected in the first week of January. Presiding over a meeting here regarding the strategic plan for post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation at National Flood Response and Coordination Center (NFRCC), minister said roadshows would also be held in major capitals of the world for reconstruction and rehabilitation projects.

Key appointments: All's well that ends well

The PTI long march is likely to end up in a public meeting and that is it

Comment

Ansar M Bhatti

Let me begin this piece by borrowing the last paragraph of my article published in this newspaper on Tuesday November 22, 2022 which reads, "Pakistan has literally become a laughing stock in the eyes of many, especially our adversaries. The situation therefore demands better sense to prevail. The leading political parties' i.e PTI and PML N need to rise to the occasion. They have to shelve their personal liking and disliking for the greater interest of Pakistan. They must keep in mind that they would not get anything if things go out of control and non-political forces are left with no option but to make an immediate intervention". On Thursday, November 24 the Prime Minister appointed the senior most Lt

General Syed Asim Munir Shah as the Army Chief and second in the seniority list Lt. General Sahir Shamshad Mirza as the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. Both of them now have become the four star generals and will have another three years to service the force. The better sense finally prevailed and the PTI leadership instead of creating any hurdles decided to accept this decision or maybe they did not have any other choice. Whatever may have been the consideration behind the decision to approve these appointments, one thing is for sure that their move will help achieve some sort of political stability albeit the economic stability will continue to pose some serious challenges. The PTI perhaps played smart by immediately acceding to the Prime Minister proposal regarding these two key appointments. The PML N and allied parties wanted the PTI leadership to sit on this decision. In that case bad blood would have been created between the

PTI leadership and the newly-appointed military leadership. But to the disappointment of the government ranks, Imran Khan rather acted in a wise manner and thus avoided any possible face-off with the new military leadership, at least for the time being. As mentioned in my earlier article, the PTI chairman in the beginning told his confidantes that he would accept anybody as the army chief but not Asim Munir. However afterwards he changed his tone and tenor by publicly pronouncing that he won't mind whosoever is elevated to these highest offices. Now when the dust has settled, it is time for some musings. The incumbent army chief will have a great onus on his shoulders. Since Imran Khan had built a narrative as if General Asim Munir had any soft corner for the PML N therefore he may try to corner the PTI. Independent sources strongly believe that there was never a connection between the newly-appointed army chief and PML N leadership. A sen-

ior PML N leader, on the condition of not being named, said that since Imran Khan when he as prime minister had removed Asim Munir from the post of DG ISI only after months of his appointment as the spy master, therefore PML N leadership presumed as if after becoming the army chief he might try to settle scores. The only technical problem with the appointment of Asim Munir as the army chief was his retirement date, but the Cabinet during its meeting on Thursday had frozen his retirement date, which means even if the President would have delayed the approval, Asim Munir would still continue with his job. Anyhow thanks to some saner elements those things were not driven to that extreme. Now the question is how would the PTI react in public? One thing is for sure that the party has decided not to stage any sit-in Islamabad. The senior party leaders said that the PTI leadership will now try to have some political dialogue in order to pave the way for the elections.

The senior leaders also told me that the Saturday's long march gathering may not turn into a dharna, as earlier announced by the party leadership. It will be just a procession where Imran Khan would deliver his speech and announce his future course of action. My understanding is that Imran Khan will move cautiously on this issue and may not take a hard line regarding these appointments. However he may express his and party's wish that they would like to see the new military leadership acting in an absolutely impartial manner. And for the military it should not be a problem because General Qamar Javed Bajwa in his last address had made it clear that the army, as an institution, had decided to keep away from politics. Another challenge the new military leadership will have to tackle is to manage cordial relations with especially friendly countries such as Saudi Arabia

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Police taking steps to curb crimes, IGP Sindh tells OICCI

KARACHI: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Thursday said Sindh Police was making all-out effort to curb crimes particularly street crimes, killings during robberies and drug abuse. Majority of the criminals were drug addicts, he stated while addressing the members of Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) during his visit to OICCI office here. He told the OICCI members that the Sindh Police was moving forward under a strategy and plan of action utilizing modern techniques to control street crimes and stop drug business. The IGP said police would not spare anyone who cause life and financial damage to citizens, and ensure the eradication of those evils from the society through indiscriminate police action. IGP Sindh said indiscriminate actions against the drug peddlers were being ensured at the provincial level. Ghulam Nabi Memon said comprehensive recommendations containing amendments in the Prohibition of Narcotic Drugs Act were also being sent to the Sindh government, aiming to make the existing law more effective. He said the Sindh government was providing full support for the upgrading and capacity building of counter terrorism department (CTD), rapid response force (RRF) and Investigation wing of Sindh Police. —APP

Education Card to benefit 244,000 students

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan Thursday said that the Education Card would benefit 244,000 students enrolled in government colleges of the province. The scheme includes waiver of the entire tuition fee and would cost approximately Rs 1 billion to the provincial exchequer. In a statement issued here, the chief minister said that the Education Card was a unique project of the provincial government which would prove to be an encouraging initiative in promoting higher education in the province. The chief minister stated that investment in human capital was of paramount importance and was one of the pivotal agendas of the incumbent government adding that visible steps had been taken in that regard to ensure promotion of Higher Education in the province. The chief minister reiterated that the reforms and initiatives of the provincial government had started yielding positive results and public trust in government educational institutions had been restored. Mahmood Khan clarified that a number of steps had been taken to ensure that the educational institutions in the province were made fully functional. In this regard, 76 colleges had been upgraded whereas 37 new colleges had been established in the province to provide uniform access to educational facilities. The establishment of Pak-Austria Fachhochschule Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology at Haripur is another milestone achieved by the provincial government towards promotion of education in the sector of applied sciences as per contemporary needs. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif chairs federal cabinet meeting. —DNA

Governor KP asks traders to tap potential of KP

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari visited Governor House Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to congratulate former Senator and former President FPCCI Haji Ghulam Ali on his appointment as Governor, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Zubair Ahmed Malik Former President FPCCI & ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President FPCCI & ICCI, Khalid Chaudhry former SVP ICCI and others were in the delegation. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh President FPCCI, Anjum Nisar & Mian Nasir Hyatt Maggo former Presidents FPCCI, Shahzeb Akram, Salman Chawla, Sheikh Muhammad Aslam, Qurban Ali, Mirza Abdul Rehman, Sohail Altaf and others were also present on the occasion to congratulate Haji Ghulam Ali. Talking to the delegations of the business community during a luncheon meeting with them, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said that the business community should develop unity in its ranks to get their issues resolved. He called for a national consensus to steer the economy out of the current crisis. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has excel-



lent business and investment opportunities in various sectors including tourism, minerals, oil & gas, agriculture & livestock, infrastructure, hydropower, and information technology, so the business community of Islamabad should tap investment potential of KPK. Accepting the invitation of Ahsan Bakhtawari, he assured that he would soon visit ICCI to

take forward the efforts for national unity. He assured that he would support ICCI in all possible ways in its efforts to promote the interests of the business community. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Haji Ghulam Ali is a prominent business leader of the country and has al-

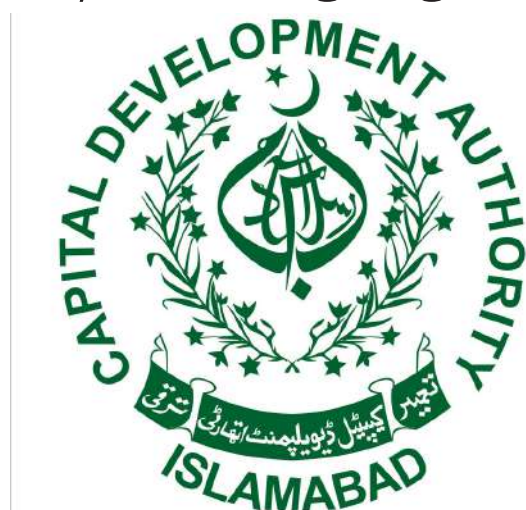
ready performed well as former President FPCCI, therefore, his appointment as Governor KPK has given a new confidence to the business community as they hope that Haji Ghulam Ali will play an active role for the betterment of the business community. He emphasized that prominent business leaders should be appointed as Governors in other

provinces to bring the economy out of troubles. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is rich in natural resources and there are vast opportunities, especially to develop tourism in the province, so he suggested that the KPK government should consider giving more attractive incentives to investors, which would attract more investment to the province.

Developmental work of CDA in full swing

Additionally, the earthwork work in Sector I-12/1 and I-12/4 is also going on at a fast pace

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Chairman Capital Development Authority Captain (R) Muhammad Usman Younis, Special attention is being given to sector development in Islamabad. In this regard, the residual development work in all sectors is being completed while the hindrances in the sector development are also being removed. In this regard, in line with the directions of the Chairman Capital Development Authority Captain (R) Muhammad Usman Younis, the development works are being carried out at fast pace in Sector I-12 of Islamabad by the concerned departments. In this regard, more than 18% of the development works have been completed in sub-sectors I-12/2 and I-12/3, while steps are being taken to accelerate the pace of work in the remaining parts



of these sub-sectors. Effective strategies are being adopted so that all the obstacles in development works can be resolved at the earliest.

Additionally, the earthwork work in Sector I-12/1 and I-12/4 is also going on at a fast pace. While the Land Directorate is in constant contact

with the victims to resolve the problems of the victims of relevant sector. In this regard, an important meeting will also be held with the affectedes in coming week and soon the remaining development works will be started. It should be noted that the development work in Sector I-12 was stalled for a long time, but now special attention is being paid to the sector development. So that the allottees can be given possession of the plots. On this occasion, Chairman Capital Development Authority Captain (R) Muhammad Usman Younis said that meeting the housing needs in view of the growing population is among the top priorities of the organization so that those who have been waiting for the construction of houses on their plots for a long time their long dream was fulfilled.

World Antimicrobial Awareness Seminar organized at KMU

PESHAWAR: Institute of Basic Medical Sciences (IBMS) and Public Health Reference Laboratory (PHRL), Khyber Medical University (KMU), in collaboration with the Dosti Welfare Organization (DOSTI) and Global Education Campaign (GEC), organized the World Antimicrobial Awareness Seminar (WAAS)

2022 under the theme "Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together" on Thursday at Multipurpose Hall Khyber Medical University, Hayatabad. In the seminar, panelists highlighted global issue of Antibiotics Resistivity. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites

change over time and no longer respond to medicines, making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness, and death. As a result of drug resistance, antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines become ineffective, and infections become increasingly difficult. —APP

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UNOPS for capacity building to ensure rule of law in various departments

Pakistan Police force also faces same issue. Consequently, Govt of Pakistan has set a 10% quota for women in the police force

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Office For Projects Services Pakistan organized a day-long workshop to highlight the needs and issues of Rule of Law in the ministries, provincial departments, and law enforcing agencies (LEAs) working in the country. Inspector General National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) Khalid Mahmood was the chief guest at the event, said a press release issued by UNOPS. The event was attended by senior officials and focal persons of KP Police, Punjab Police, Frontier Constabulary, ICT Police Islamabad, National Highway & Motorway Police, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), National Police Academy (NPA) Islamabad, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Pakistan, Pakistan Railway Police, Balochistan Police, Sindh Police, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Police, and Gilgit-Baltistan Police.

The workshop was led by Sajjad Afzal Afridi, IG Police (Rtd), who is currently working as Rule of Law Specialist with the UNOPS. The participants and focal persons of over 15 police departments discussed the need for better coordination, and sharing of best practices amongst all the rule of law departments to ensure they continue with their daily duties and provide critical services to the people. Khalid Mahmood, IG NHMP said, "In the aftermath of recent floods in the country it is evident that sustainable and resilient infrastructure is the only way forward. Various Police Departments in the country are in dire need of green infrastructure, be it police stations, offices, or training colleges. I am thankful to UNOPS for providing us with this platform where all the departments have discussed and highlighted important issues like the need to have

better coordination amongst ourselves." It was also discussed that the participation of women in public sector jobs in Pakistan has been hindered due to several factors, including the lack of a women-friendly work environment, unequal access to professional opportunities, gender disparity in educational and professional development, and cultural social issues. The Pakistan Police force also faces the same issue. Consequently, the Government of Pakistan has set a 10% quota for women in the police force. Despite the government's efforts to increase female representation, the current percentage of women in the police force remains below 2%. Additionally, most of these women are at the constable level, with very few in Superintendent positions. Shahzad Hassan, Office In-charge UNOPS Pakistan said, "UNOPS Pakistan has al-

ready worked with the National Highways and Motorway Police and Sindh Police departments. We have built hostels for the female police officers and trainees, and are well aware of the needs of LEAs working in the country. We are thankful to our donors and look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with the law enforcement agencies in Pakistan." UNOPS was already working in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals: 3 Good health and well-being, 4 Gender Equality, 6 Clean water and sanitation, 9 Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, 13 Climate action, 16 Peace Justice & Strong Institutions, and it is aligned with the Pakistan Government's Vision 2025 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework for Pakistan 2023-2027. —APP

Briefs

Industrial area police arrests 264 accused

ISLAMABAD :Industrial area police of Islamabad have arrested 264 outlaws during the last five months involved in criminal cases of heinous nature and recovered looted items worth 27.34 million from them. Police said that Industrial Area police teams conducted a massive crackdown against the criminal elements and succeeded in apprehending 264 criminals during the last five months. Police teams also recovered looted items worth Rs. 27.34 million from them including gold ornaments, vehicles, motorbikes, and mobile phones. Police also recovered narcotics from them while it also completed investigations on 421 cases and submitting their challans in relevant courts. Moreover, police also recovered nabbed 223 professional beggars and their handlers during the last five months. IGP Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has appreciated this performance. He said that it is the prime responsibility of the police to provide relief to the citizens and every possible effort would be made to ensure it.—APP

RCB's board meeting reviews different schemes

RAWALPINDI :Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) President/Station Commander Brig. Salman Nazar on Thursday presided over the monthly board meeting to review the overall progress of different schemes. The meeting was attended by RCB's Executive Officer Imran Gulzar, Vice President Malik Maneer Ahmed, elected members, Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, Malik Tahir Ayub, Haji Zafar Iqbal, Malik Mansoor Afsar, Ch. Shakoor Ahmed, Malik Saghir Ahmed, minority member Khurram Shehzad Gul and others. The meeting, besides discussing in detail the agenda items, also analysed the income and expenditures of the RCB and approved 100 residential building plans. To a question, the RCB spokesman replied that RCB's anti-encroachment drive was in full swing in the Cantt area. During the operation, the spokesman said that the anti-encroachment team had demolished several illegally constructed sheds saying that notices had also been served to the owners warning them to "remove encroachments without any further delay". Moreover, he said that "eight truckloads of different items" including hand carts, tables, and chairs had been seized from different vendors and shopkeepers who had illegally set up their stalls on pathways and roads in different areas.—APP

ANF seizes over 54 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan on Thursday seized over 54 kg of drugs, 3795 liters prohibited chemical and arrested five accused while conducting five counter-narcotics operations throughout the country. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF in an operation at Bacha Khan International Airport Peshawar recovered four charras-filled capsules from the possession of a passenger, resident of Bannu. In another operation, ANF seized 21.6 kg charras from secret cavities of a car intercepted on Ring Road Peshawar and rounded up two accused, residents of Peshawar, who were trying to smuggle charras from Peshawar to Mansehra. The spokesman informed that ANF Balochistan recovered nine kg charras from the possession of two accused arrested from Quetta Airport Road. In two other operations, ANF Balochistan also seized 24 kg charras and 3795 liters prohibited chemical from Quetta and Chaman areas. Separate cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations under CNS Act 1997 while further investigations are under process, he added.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin met Professor, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, the Chairman of Higher Education Commission. - DNA

Combination of 7 unique features make Swat ideal

He advised tourists to bring warm clothes and sweaters while coming to Upper Swat these days in the wake of chilly weather

ISLAMABAD :Known as Switzerland of Pakistan, the beautiful valley of Swat has a combination of seven distinctive features that is hard to find together in any tourist destination of Pakistan and was all set to attract an influx of tourists and adventure sports enthusiasts during the winter season. Besides being home to primitive Gandhara civilization, the Swat's unique features including ice skiing, river rafting, adventure sports, snow-clad mountain peaks, trout-fish, and the Swat motorway has made it an ideal destination for winter tourism. These distinctive characteristics, which are second to none in any other district of the country, draw adventure sportsmen, archeologists, water rafters, mountaineers, snowfall lovers, foodies, and eco-tourists throughout the year following the construction of the Swat Motorway that opened up Malakand division for winter tourism. The 150-kilometer-long freshwater of the river Swat originating from different glaciers and lakes including Mahodand and Gabral mountains offers unique opportunities for adventure sports enthusiasts to explore in a single trip along with loved ones. Fazagut, Fatehpur, Barikot, and Chakdara are most suitable for water rafting in river Swat and if developed on modern lines could attract a large number of tourists

during winter. Bestowed with more than 50 high-altitude small and big lakes, Swat's Mahodand lake is an exceptional source of attraction for tourists enjoying its blue-waters and boats riding amid cold breezes and snowfalls. "I came from Nowshera to enjoy Swat's trout fish and explore the mesmerizing natural beauty of Kalam, especially of Mahudand lake," said Riaz Khan, a former PST teacher while talking to APP. Impressed by the beauty of Mahudand and Gabral lakes, he said its unique charm, clean air and nearby birds chanting valleys take tourists into a lap of serenity. He advised tourists to bring warm clothes and sweaters while coming to Upper Swat these days in the wake of chilly weather. Besides its famous Deodar trees and precious wildlife, the Swat's snow-clad tall mountain ranges of Falakser, Mankial and Elum peaks offer great challenges to mountaineers and trekkers to explore especially during winter. Likewise, its extensive plains and orchards that bear fruits and vegetables carried a unique comparative advantage. Attracting Buddhists, monks and archaeologists from across the world throughout the year, the Swat's archaeological treasures and ancient artifacts housed at Saidu Sharif Museum become a distinctive feature taking tourists to the glorious history of Swat.

The most celebrated monk from Thailand, Arayawango along with 20 disciples has recently visited different Buddhist sites of Swat including Saidu Sharif Museum and Stupa besides Butkhara Buddhist monastery which impressed him a lot. He said Swat was very important in terms of Buddhist history in Pakistan and must be visited by followers of Buddhism from all around the world to explore. Another striking feature of Swat is skiing sports being played at Malam Jabba every year during winter. Trout fish also attract foodies amid heavy snowfall at Kalam, Madain and other areas of the district. Malik Luqman, senior planning officer, KP tourism department told APP that a mega project costing Rs238 million was prepared for organizing different winter sports and tourism events in various districts including Swat. He said Kalam's winter gala and tour-de-cycle race would be organized in December-January in Swat while first-ever sports rafting at River Swat would be held besides an international paragliding event at Saidu Sharif. He said a youth leadership conference and skiing event at Malam Jabba were also planned. To reduce tourists' load at Kalam, Malam Jabba and Bahria, he said new tourists spots would be developed at Sola Tanar, Puchar and Jar-go valleys while walking tracks would be de-

veloped to promote ecotourism in Swat. To maintain natural beauty and avoid pollution at tourist spots in Swat, he said camping pods would be established at new tourists' destinations besides Kalash culture events in Chitral. To link new tourist destination with Swat Motorway, he said that Rs4.8 billion were being spent on development and construction of new roads while tourism police was made operational at Malakand and Hazara divisions to facilitate tourists. Luqman said the tourism budget has been swelled to Rs8.6 billion during 2022-23 while work on the world bank's assisted KP Integrated Tourism Project costing Rs17 billion was underway in the province. He said that the construction of 15 jeepable tracks was also proposed in Malakand and Hazara divisions. He said the six tourist facilitation centers were established and work on seven others started. He said that a Rs 365 million project for feasibility studies for the identification of new tourist spots was planned. To promote ecotourism in southern districts of KP, he said that a road to Sheikh Badin tourist resort located at the confluence of DI Khan and Lakki Marwat districts would be constructed with an estimated cost of Rs3 billion while a tourist wing for merged areas was being established to monitor and oversee tourism-related activities there.—APP

AIOU organizes seminar on water problems of Pak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australia is keen to collaborate with Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on water resources management in Pakistan. We want to work with the students and faculty members of this major university of Pakistan to improve the water system of Pakistan," said Dr. Imran Khalid, Head, Pakistan Water Security Initiative Project in a seminar on the topic of "Water problems of Pakistan" at the Department of Environmental Sciences, AIOU. Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Prof. Dr. Irshad Ahmed Arshad presided over the seminar. Chairperson, Department of Environmental Sciences, Dr. Sofia Khalid, hosted the event. Dr. Zahidullah and Dr.

Samia Qadeer attended seminar. Syed Shuja Haider and Farah Nadeem represented Pakistan Water Security Initiative Project. This project is being run mutually by WWF Pakistan, Water Management Institute Pakistan, Hydrology and Risk Consulting, Australia. Dr. Irshad Ahmed Arshad said that apart from cooperation for water problems and solutions in Pakistan, there is also a need to design and run awareness campaigns at the national level. While congratulating Dr. Sofia Khalid, he said that such activities will raise awareness among children about water issues and water conservation. Dr. Sofia Khalid introduced the Department of Environmental Sciences. She said that we are offering

MSc and four-year BS programs in Environmental Science very successfully, but as per the policy of Higher Education Commission, the MSc program is being discontinued whereas MPhil and P. HD programs will be offered soon. Dr. Imran Khalid said that an agreement was signed between the government of Pakistan and Australia to strengthen cooperation between the two countries on the management of urban water resources. He said that Australia is taking steps to solve the water problems of Farash Town Islamabad and James Town Rawalpindi under the 'Pakistan Water Security Initiative Project (2021-2025)'. 475 rainwater harvesting systems and water filtration plants have been installed.

NSU, ETPB sign MoU for lease of land

ISLAMABAD :National Skills University (NSU) and ETPB signed a Memorandum of Understanding for lease of land for development of a campus of NSU in Muridke, Sheikhupura. The MoU was signed in the presence of Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain and Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Mufi Abdul Shakoor, said a press release on Thursday. Senior officials of the ministry also attended the signing ceremony. Rana Tanveer Hussain said "One of the top priorities of this government is to enhance the provision of technical and vocational training, both in terms of quality and in terms of reach." He emphasized on the importance of technical and vocational training and said "Throughout the world it has played a vital role in uplifting the common man." He said that we have examples from the most developed world where technical and vocational training has played a crucial role in integrating unemployed population into society as productive members.—APP

Gwadar Port: de-silting operation to start next month

ISLAMABAD: With a view to restoring Gwadar Port's operational depth, de-silting activity is highly likely to be initiated next month. If all goes well, the entire operation will be completed within six months hopefully by June 2023. The de-silting procedure and planning have gained traction as two processes of bidding including technical proposals and financial proposals are planned to be concluded within two weeks, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday quoting Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) Project Director (Maintenance of Dredging) Mr Nadeem. After the procedural formality culminates, the successful firm will be awarded the contract for dredging work to reclaim the lost depth of all berths of Gwadar Port. On a question, Mr. Nadeem said, two firms including one local company and one Chinese company participated in the bidding process and which will be deemed qualified as per set rules and regulations selected formally. Another GPA official told Gwadar Pro, that it is the second time that bidding has had to be initiated. This time the bidding opened on November 11. Currently two companies joined the bidding. The previous bidding process opened on August 16 and soon it had to be cancelled due to some technical reasons. Last time six companies including a Chinese enterprise came forward. The total cost of dredging, he said, will be determined per cubic meter considering the scale of operation and the size of the area to be cleared from siltation. On a query, he said that around Rs. 1 billion has already been allocated for the dredging process in the current budget 2022-23. "The Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) has invited firms or contractors having sufficient experience in the relevant field, financially sound and suitably qualified in maintenance dredging of the navigation channel in accordance with prescribed tender documents" he added.—DNA

Theatre training highlights disability issues

ISLAMABAD :Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) here Thursday completed the two-week theatre training of young and amateur theatre actors and students to highlight issues related to persons with disabilities, environment, and social issues. Improving access to income-generating activities for young adults with and without disabilities in selected low-income areas of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, the workshop was organized by Pak Women, CBM, and Human and Social Development in collaboration with PNCA. The participants will also perform in a street theatre play to highlight issues of persons with disabilities and create awareness of their rights. Various sessions of the workshop guided young and budding actors and performing art lovers about the theoretical and practical steps of acting.

PNCA along with senior artists and theater experts provided institutional support to the theatre lovers of Pakistan and promotion of street theatre as well, said Waqar Azeem, Program Organizer and mentor while talking to APP. The topics and content of the workshop included an introduction to the theatre, universal principles of acting, history of theatre and art of street theatre, the relationship between acting and dancing, acrobatic and miming, Acting and overacting economy of gesture and voice, tools of acting, different limbs of body - their extremities and balance, body guster movement and effect, balance and grace exercise, voice control, intonation and effect, breathing and use of throat, imagination, evolving of script, three different schools of thoughts (realism, symbolism and absurd), other tools like light, sound, set and makeup and how to use them in street theatre, preparation of play project and presentation of play. The participants also learnt types of voice, use of throat and breathing, Melody voice, monologue, dialogue, general log, lecture, public address, recording of voice, tahtullafaz, Imagination of an actor, different schools of thought, realism and symbolism, how a story develop by an imaginary idea. Exercises for enhancing the potential of actors were also part of the sessions.—APP

Senate Body for expediting transactions completion of privatized entities

ISLAMABAD:Senate Standing Committee on Privatization here on Thursday called upon the Privatization Commission of Pakistan to expedite efforts for completing the transactions of privatized state-owned enterprises to protect and safeguard national interest. The committee, chaired by Senator Shamim Afridi, discussed the status of government entities already privatized but the transactions have not been completed and was briefed on the privatization of the Convention Center, besides current status of the Pak-China Fertilizer Company. The committee was apprised that the Privatization Commission had so far completed 178 privatization transactions and generated privatizations proceeds of Rs 7,649,114 million.—APP

IWMB teams confiscate endangered animal skin clothes

ISLAMABAD :The IWMB team on Thursday raided a clothing store in F-6 sector of the federal capital and confiscated outfits made from wild animal hides. According to the IWMB spokesperson, the team had impounded warm clothing made from the skin of wild animals, which was prohibited as per the law, including Mink, Fox, Tiger and Rabbit. The apparels included sweaters, hats, jackets, neck wear and other accessories. He added that poaching of wildlife was a punishable offense in the Federal Capital.—APP

UNOPS holds workshop for capacity building

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Office for Partnership Services (UNOPS) on Thursday organized a workshop for the capacity building of Rule of Law Departments in which focal persons of over fifteen departments discussed the need for better coordination and sharing of best practices among the departments. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest, Inspector General (IG) of National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) Khalid Mahmood said that steel strong departments along with positive behaviour could bring revolution in the society. He said that reforms and implementation of policies were difficult in Pakistan due to resistant behaviours. He said implementation of policy in other countries took no time and it was difficult to execute the plans due to cultural

attitude issues in Pakistan. The IG said a majority of the Pakistani population was comprised of youth and it was vital to train the youngsters for yielding a prosperous future for the country. Speaking on the occasion, a Resource Person and former Inspector General of Police Sajjad Afzal Afridi explained to the participants regarding the mechanism of coordination, working of donor agencies, proposal submission and welfare work of UNOPS. Explaining the projects in the pipeline, Sajjad Afzal Afridi said that the upgradation of two training facilities and refurbishment of building infrastructure to improve safety and security at outposts was in the draft projects for Frontier Constabulary. He said the draft project for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Po-

lice included the upgradation of the police training school to college level while Motorway Police's draft projects included the establishment of a female-officers inclusive driving training school for NHMP employees, furnishing of women's police hotels that were established by UNOPS and furnishing of female accommodation at various beats. He informed the participants that the draft projects of the digital forensic facility, the cyber terrorism investigation unit and cryptocurrency along with the dark web investigation unit were also in pipeline for Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Speaking on the occasion, the participants insisted on understanding cultural values and ground realities while making the proposals and plans. The

participants said that law enforcement departments could not have equal female representation without facilitating the staff members and improving the working environment. Earlier, the officials of UNOPS in their detailed presentation said that their mission was to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development. The workshop was attended by senior officials and focal person of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, Punjab Police, Frontier Constabulary, ICT Police, NHMP Police, Federal Investigation Agency, National Police Academy, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Pakistan Railway Police, Balochistan Police, Sindh Police, Gilgit-Baltistan Police, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Police.—APP

Washington's economic hegemony hits dead end

THAT Dutch Foreign Trade Minister Liesje Schreinemacher has voiced resistance to following Washington's attempts to cut off China from semiconductor technology sends a message that the united front the United States has sought to forge to maintain its hegemony in the technology sphere is shaky or even beginning to crumble. The Dutch trade minister told lawmakers on Tuesday that the Netherlands will make its own decision regarding ASML's chip gear sales to China amid trade rule talks with the US and other allies. She also told lawmakers at the parliament in the Hague, "It is important that we defend our own interests – our national safety, but also our economic interests." European Union negotiators are reported to be working on a number of contentious trade issues with Washington. Countries, most vocally France, have said the measures could damage European economies and have raised the possibility of filing a complaint with the World Trade Organization. The Netherlands is home to ASML Holding NV, which dominates the market for one-of-a-kind, cutting-edge chip-making equipment that has become a focus of the US government's attempts to limit China. However, China is the third-largest market for the Dutch company, representing 14.7 percent of its global sales, to say nothing of the great potential of the Chinese market. Currently, ASML cannot ship its advanced extreme ultraviolet lithography systems (EUV) to China because it cannot obtain an export license from the Dutch government, thanks to pressure from the US. Alan Estevez, US undersecretary of commerce for industry and security, will travel to the Netherlands this month to discuss export controls. Whatever the result of the talks, it is becoming increasingly clear that it will be difficult for Washington to persuade European countries into following its unilateralism at the cost of their own economic interests. The world is not what it used to be. It has become more democratic and pluralistic. It is unfair and unjustifiable for the US to take it for granted that countries will do its bidding when it shows scant concern for their interests. As far as the global economy is concerned, what Washington has been doing in its economic sanctions in the name of national security has seriously disrupted the globalized industry chains and supply chains, which has caused economic losses for many companies and countries. Washington's way of politicizing economic activities has become a scourge for the development of the global economy. If Washington continues to place its geopolitical objectives before everything and to pressure other countries into acting as its accomplice, an increasing number of countries, including its allies in Europe, will turn their back on it to defend their own interests and safeguard the global economic order from being derailed. Unethical and unfair, Washington's economic hegemony is reaching a dead end.

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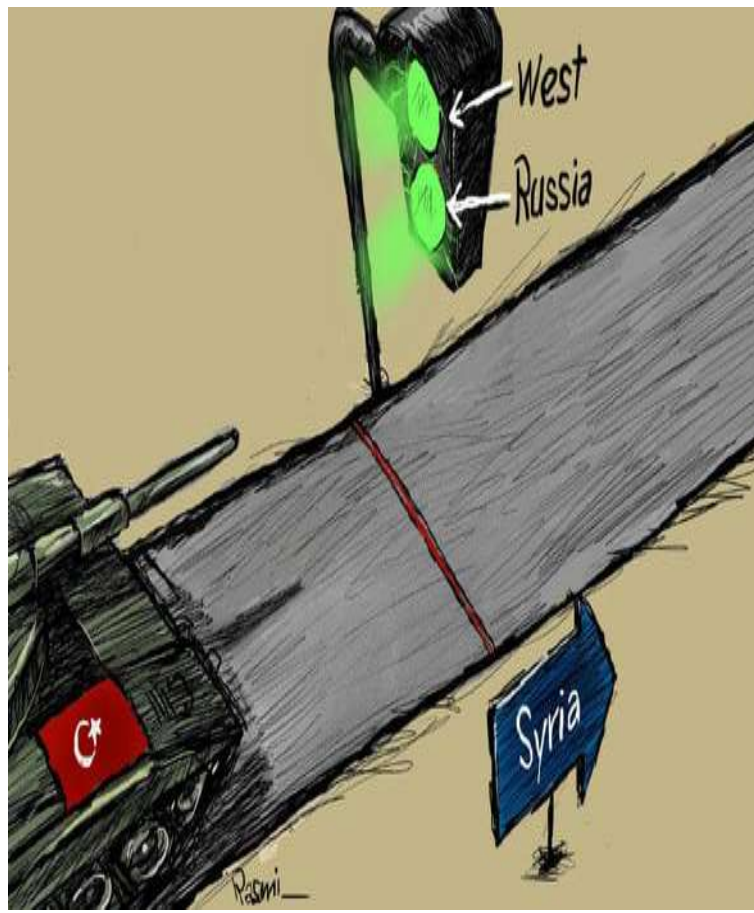
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Scotland: a crisis is brewing

ARULING by the supreme court that the Scottish government cannot call its own referendum on independence is unsurprising, but still important. When Nicola Sturgeon asked the court to adjudicate on the matter, she must have expected it to thwart her plan for a "consultative" plebiscite next October. The first minister is probably relieved to be spared the obligation to go through with that vote. Instead, she can focus on making the next UK general election a de facto referendum on independence – a proposition with no basis in constitutional law, but a mechanism for nationalists to campaign on something other than her party's record in government. The first minister conceded on Wednesday that the SNP could not "dictate the basis on which people cast their votes". But by making separation from England the central plank of her party's campaign, she hopes to win on a scale sufficient to make that demand irresistible. The supreme court case was part of that campaign from the start – a gambit to restore political momentum for the nationalist cause, where the countervailing force is the drag of a long incumbency. The SNP does not want voters to judge it by its management of the public services that come under the remit of devolved government. Ms Sturgeon is less interested in the substance of the court's arguments than the platform they provide for her to claim that UK institutions and law are set up to obstruct the will of the Scottish people. Her case rested on two propositions. First, a consultative referendum, making no claim to constitutional effect, would legally fall within the scope of devolved powers. Second, it would express a right to national self-determination under international law. There is a contradiction there, since the claim to be asserting self-determination implies defiance of repression by a colonising power, in which case the referendum's ambition would clearly be more than consultative. In any case, the court rejected both arguments. It found that the SNP's draft bill had major political ramifications for the union, regardless of any refusal from constitutional impact. It also judged that Scotland's position within the UK is not meaningfully comparable to the plight of a people blighted by foreign occupation and denied political representation, as all but the most extreme nationalists must recognise. Ms Sturgeon is not an extremist. In her response to Wednesday's judgment, she yielded to the authority of the court, making it clear that the fault, as she saw it, lay in the laws that the judges were interpreting and the absence therein of a mechanism of unilateral secession. She accepts that the rules say Scotland needs permission from Westminster to hold a referendum, but she calls the rules unfair. Ms Sturgeon intends to demonstrate such demand for separation that a Westminster government using its constitutional power of obstruction would appear to be in egregious violation of democratic principle. If unionists do not want to be caught in that position, they need something more than a legal veto over a referendum. They need the political arguments that can win one.

Time has come for UK to revisit its ties with EU

Mohamed Chebaro



The problem with the Conservative Party's leaders is that they do not want to own up to anything. From their small state and austerity plan that has harmed the country since 2010 to the referendum to leave the EU, which threw the country into a period of unprecedented political chaos, leading it to change four prime ministers since 2019 and have four finance ministers in the last year alone. From the abstract meaning of their motto of "Take Back Control" to the total lack of vision as to how they wanted to build a "Singapore on Thames," not to mention of course nearly exploding the economy with a "fairy-tale" mini-budget...

IDO not believe politics will change in the UK anytime soon, despite the shift in the public mood, which has been leaning toward believing that Brexit was the wrong step for the national interests of the country, its unity, economic prosperity and social cohesion. No one is talking here about abandoning Brexit all together and rejoining the EU, but at least some sanity might have emerged within parts of the country and the Conservative Party leadership, which has hinted that trying to recover some of the billions of pounds the UK has lost as a result of its hard Brexit might not be that bad an idea after all. Brexit-supporting Prime Minister Rishi Sunak had to appease his party when he told business leaders this week that life outside the EU was "delivering enormous benefits and opportunities." But many of those in attendance and the rest of the country question what the Conservative PM, ministers and MPs mean when they make such statements. To date, none of the Conservative advocates of Brexit have succeeded in pointing to any such benefits and opportunities, which is the elephant in the room that no one in government dares mention. Sunak's comments followed a Sunday Times report that "senior government figures" were planning to "put Britain on the path toward a Swiss-style relationship" with the EU. Switzerland has far closer ties with the bloc through bilateral agreements that allow it access to the single market and a high degree of free movement through paying into EU coffers. Previously, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, himself a Remainer, had spooked the euroskeptics in his party when he said he was eager to remove the "vast majority" of trade barriers with the EU. Hunt, who managed to rebalance the books and calm the financial markets after Liz Truss' disastrous mini-budget of cutting taxes and borrowing

money to stimulate growth, was not speaking from the void, as polls and experts have been indicating a cooling of attitudes in the UK toward the validity of Brexit. For a start, recent polls have shown that public opposition has grown to the hard form of Brexit pursued by successive Conservative governments since British voters opted by a 52-48 margin to leave the bloc in a 2016 referendum. According to polling expert John Curtice, 57 percent of people would vote to rejoin the bloc and 43 percent to stay out if a new referendum were to be held. The divorce deal struck by the UK and the EU in 2020 has brought customs checks and other border hurdles for goods, along with passport checks and other annoyances for travelers. With inflation at its highest rate for decades and amid forecasts of potentially the longest ever recession in the country, a YouGov poll last week suggested 56 percent of people in Britain now think it was wrong to leave the EU. Some 32 percent, however, are still in favor. A recent assessment by the Office for Budget Responsibility, the UK's respected spending watchdog, which stated that Brexit has had a "significant adverse impact" on trade, might have played a role in these polls, especially since it was followed by comments by the Bank of England and business leaders blaming Brexit for reducing overall trade volumes and denting trading relationships with the EU. The problem with the Conservative Party's leaders is that they do not want to own up to anything. From their small state and austerity plan that has harmed the country since 2010 to the referendum to leave the EU, which threw the country into a period of unprecedented political chaos, leading it to change four prime ministers since 2019 and have four finance ministers in the last

year alone. From the abstract meaning of their motto of "Take Back Control" to the total lack of vision as to how they wanted to build a "Singapore on Thames," not to mention of course nearly exploding the economy with a "fairy-tale" mini-budget that badly dented the hard-earned position of the UK as a key investment destination. The Conservative government and its supporters prefer to blame the current recession on global forces and say that it was "made in Russia," while people are facing the brunt of the cost-of-living crisis with weakened public services and a starved health sector due to years of governing by a party whose sole aim was to get the UK out of the EU, without a vision of what to do on the day after. The Conservatives do not want to admit that Brexit has been a factor that has "contributed to 4% productivity drop, 15% trade drop, 6% food price increase, lower wages, workforce shortages & highest inflation in G7," as the Green Party MP Caroline Lucas tweeted recently. No one, of course, could discount the impact of COVID-19 or the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but the Tory Brexit has been a major cause of Britain's recent economic woes, as confirmed by statistics released this week that show that, compared to pre-pandemic levels, the US has recorded more than 4 percent in growth and the eurozone is at 2.1 percent, while the UK's economy has shrunk by 0.4 percent. I think the country deserves a sane discussion, away from the boosterism and lying of the Boris Johnson era, that could ultimately admit that Brexit started with many lies and the shortest route to putting things right might, unfortunately, require a review of hard Brexit and the consideration of a Swiss-style arrangement or a Norwegian one with the UK's closest trading partner and neighbor, the EU.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Climate Change; Impact on Pakistan

Muhammad Faisal Yousafzai



Pakistan is dependent on Indus River because of farming and without external significant assistance it would be impossible for the Pakistan or any third world country to resolve it. Indus River is like giving life with one hand and taking it on the other hand. Even till now, due to these floods many people in Baluchistan and Sindh are out of reach to clean water and food as well as medical..

IN contemporary world climate change is a global challenge. It refers to change the atmosphere, resulting in a new weather. Here changes means "industrial revolution" which has changed the whole structure of the world. Due to these changes brought by industrial revolution we had and will face serious problems like heavy rainfalls, floods, storms, heat waves etc. if we look to the causes of climate change, we came up with two reasons one is natural causes, which includes volcanos, tectonic plate movement, earth's orbital variation etc. while the second cause is human activities. According to scientists approximately 95 percent cause of climate change is human activities, which includes deforestation, wasting of food and water and use of huge amount of fossil fuels. Due to these activities huge amount of green house gases generates and this in results create green house effect or global warming, and this global warming is the major cause of climate change. Its consequences are not local but global, it will affect all of us without any distinctions, no matter who you are and what position or chair you are setting it will destroy our beautiful earth as well as all human beings the best example is COVID-19. Till now many of us think that the sky has a limitless capacity to absorb all those gases which is created as a byproduct from industries or use of brown coal etc. however in reality it's just a thin shelf which continue to crack under the blunt hammer of our daily use of fossil fuels. Pakistan came among those top 20 countries which had and will be the most affected country by climate change. As everyone knows that Pakistan is an agricultural country where mostly means of her GDP based on agriculture sector. Due to heat waves and devastating floods of this year most of the agriculture areas had been destroyed or under water. On the other hand, Pakistan is overpopulated county its population is approximately 231,097,328 this year, and mostly belongs to middle class and very few are above the poverty line. It is said that it is impossible for the government of Pakistan to safeguard her citizen from the catastrophe caused by climate change

because the government has a deficit economy even unable to provide jobs to every graduate and there are many other issues in which government id unable to cope. Climate change doesn't only mean that the temperature will rise up, glaciers will melt but it also means increased in migration, food and water security crisis, human trafficking, drug smuggling etc. it will be like a domino effect which slowly and gradually affects every aspect of human beings. By September, one third of the country was under water, there has been more than 1,700 deaths, 150 bridges, 1 million homes, 18,000 schools were destroyed etc. Pakistan is a country who is facing crisis in educational sector now facing flood which pushed the country more behind. After Antarctica and Arctic Circle the third largest glacier is Himalayas, which is located on the head of Pakistan. The Indus River was approximately 1,500 years older and southern Pakistan came under its proximity. When Himalayan glaciers melt the water broke out into the Indus River and through Pakistan it falls into the Arabian Sea. The annual flows amount is nearly 79 billion cubic meters of water. Pakistan is dependent on Indus River because of farming and without external significant assistance it would be impossible for the Pakistan or any third world country to resolve it. Indus River is like giving life with one hand and taking it on the other hand. Even till now, due to these floods many people in Baluchistan and Sindh are out of reach to clean water and food as well as medical facilities that's to those organizations which help Pakistani government to some extent to control this scenario. Pakistan came under the umbrella of third world countries which lacks good infrastructure, medical facilities, political turmoil and had a deficit economy. Pakistani government needs financial, medical, expertise assistance but unfortunately Pakistan had and would be unable to repay those financial and other debts that's why the government of Pakistan insist for aids as well as expertise to implement the standards that are likely to be set. For wealthy state these challenges would

be colossal, however for Pakistan these floods are about the chain of disasters. According to Pakistan ex-finance minister "Pakistan flood losses estimated at 40 billion dollars". Infrastructure damages, crops destructions and water borne diseases will only worsen the existing problems like financial crisis, political unrest etc. climate change is a global issue we never tackle it in isolation. It needs collective affective measures. The third world countries had a small role in countering or finding the solution of climate change which include warn it's public so that they can evacuate easily, stop using fossil fuel, brown coal, reduce food and water wasting and most important can empower her women's because educated women prefer less Childs and that will help government to have limited population, to which government will be able to give good education, medical facilities, jobs etc. however it would not be enough because country like Pakistan contribute less than 1 percent to climate change and huge contributors are those of industrialized countries. The industrialized country would be a greater role in countering these issues which includes that the leaders of the industrialized nations shall have to replace their priorities from profit or national interest to the well being of all the humankind and for the succeeding generations. The most look for the system which is safer for the environment and to shall have to shift towards renewable energies. In this situation we are in a position where 99.9 percent told us to take those tablets, if not you shall die and, in that case, we don't have a choice we should have to take these tablets. When it comes to climate change, we still don't have any specific tablets what we have are the planes which might decrease the carbon emissions in atmosphere and most important we are having hope as well as willingness to devote ourselves to counter these non-traditional threats and safe our next generation from these disasters. In the end we will be two options either we change our life style or climate change is going to do it for us.

Briefs

High-level delegation to visit Russia

ISLAMABAD: A high-power delegation constituted by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would soon visit Russia to negotiate any possibility of long-term cooperation to acquire gas and oil, Parliamentary Secretary for Petroleum Division Hamid Hameed said Thursday. Responding to question of legislators during Question Hour, he said right now Russia had not offered to supply gas to Pakistan. He, however, said the government of Pakistan had written a letter to Russian authorities on last month, conveying interest to the Russian side to procure two to three cargoes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for the month of December 2022 and January next year at discounted price and deferred payment facility. He said the Russian side had expressed its inability to provide the same for these months. Replying to another question, Hamid Hameed said that 229 fields were producing oil and gas in the country. He said that a total of 16 new reservoirs of oil and gas were discovered during the last year. He said that some blocks for exploration of oil and gas under sea would be offered for auction next year.

Ukraine war to end at negotiation table

DNA

ANKARA: The Russia-Ukraine war will end at the negotiation table, not on the battlefield, Türkiye's foreign minister said Wednesday, highlighting the country's efforts to mediate an end to the conflict. "One way or another, this war will end on the table. We do not think it will end with military gains on the ground. Even so, there is a risk of war that could last for decades," Mevlut Cavusoglu said at a conference on Türkiye's enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy in the capital Ankara. Pointing to the high-level tripartite meeting held between Türkiye, Ukraine, and Russia at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, Cavusoglu said: "There are new realities in the new conditions, compared to March. It has become more complex. It is not that easy, but we should not lose hope." On separate two-day peace talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations held in Istanbul later in March, Cavusoglu said: "Actually, when we gathered together in Istanbul, the parties were very close to a ceasefire. But then, the magic hands touched and we saw the sides move away from the tables." Stressing the importance of Türkiye's policy of balance on the Russia-Ukraine war, he said President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is the only leader in NATO able to meet equally with his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts.

Air pollution killed 238,000 Europeans prematurely

DNA

PARIS: Fine particle air pollution led to 238,000 premature deaths in the European Union in 2020, the bloc's environmental watchdog said Thursday, a slight rise from the previous year. At the same time, the overall rate for EU countries in 2020 was 45 percent lower than in 2005, the agency said, noting that "if this rate of decline is maintained, the EU will reach [its] zero pollution action plan target before 2030."

Across the 27-nation bloc that year, "exposure to concentrations of fine particulate matter above the 2021 World Health Organization guideline level resulted in 238,000 premature deaths," the European Environment Agency said in a new report. That was slightly more than those recorded in 2019 in EU, despite a fall in emissions due to Covid curbs. Fine particulate matter, or PM2.5, is a term for fine particulates that are typically the by-product of car exhausts or coal-fired power plants.

Anwar Ibrahim gets sworn in as Malaysia's 10th PM

Ibrahim's rise to power marks a stunning comeback for a man who at the peak of his political career was suddenly sacked and jailed by the government of former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad in the 1990s

DNA

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was sworn in as the country's 10th prime minister on Thursday, following a days-long post-elections deadlock, local media reported. The swearing-in ceremony took place at Kuala Lumpur's National Palace. Ibrahim, 75, was appointed prime minister by King Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah five days after the 15th general elections, which panned out with a hung parliament, leaving it up to the monarch to choose the party with the most constituencies. Though Ibrahim-led Alliance of Hope, or Pakatan Harapan (PH), has secured most seats in parliament in the Nov. 19 general elections, it is still short of forming a

government on its own. The PH secured 82 seats, while former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin-led National Alliance or Perikatan Nasional (PN) got 73 seats. It is, nonetheless, unclear which party or alliance Ibrahim will choose to form the government, which has to face a slew of challenges lying ahead, ranging from economy to political stability. Earlier in the day, Malaysia's Council of Rulers decided to back Ibrahim, a former deputy prime minister, as the country's new premier, the Malaysiakini news website reported. On Tuesday, the king met with the two leaders and proposed a unity government, which Yassin rejected. Later that day, the monarch summoned eight other council members for a meeting to end the deadlock. Support from



the National Front, or Barisan Nasional (BN), with 30 lawmakers, is seen to be a decisive factor in the new setup.

Another bloc Sarawak Parties Alliance, or Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS), with 23 seats, had indicated it would support the Yassin-led group but was indecisive. To be the leader of the parliament, any party or alliance must secure the support of at least 112 lawmakers in a 222-seat house.

Ibrahim's rise to power marks a stunning comeback for a man who at the peak of his political career was suddenly sacked and jailed by the government of former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad in the 1990s.

Once seen as a highly-potential replacement for Mahathir, he fell out with the former "iron man" over the handling of the Southeast

Asian country's economy during the famous Asian financial crisis. Subsequently, he was convicted and jailed on corruption and sodomy charges, which were widely believed to be politically motivated. His conviction was overturned in 2004, but he was sentenced to prison again in 2015 on a similar fresh charge.

He was pardoned by the king after Mahathir reconciled with him on the heels of a massive corruption scandal involving then-Prime Minister Najib Razak in 2018. Mahathir and Ibrahim, later, joined hands and defeated Razak's party in the 2018 elections, bringing the former to the Prime Minister's Office again. However, the top job slipped from his hand again when a deal in which then-95-year-old Mahathir would hand over power to Ibrahim fell through in 2020.

Pak greatly values ties with China: Subzwari

DNA

BEIJING: Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari said that



Pakistan greatly values its close collaboration with China in multiple sectors including technology transfer, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. Addressing the opening ceremony of the Second North Bund Forum 2022 held in Shanghai, Syed Faisal Ali highlighted the importance of close bilateral cooperation in the shipping and maritime industry, adding that the country is looking to develop digital and green ports to better leverage its location and enhance its position as a transit and transshipment hub in the region. The Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai and other officials also attended the forum. With the theme of 'Green, Intelligent and Resilient Global Shipping & Aviation through Global Partnership', the Forum aims to deliberate on the promotion of international cooperation in the shipping and maritime industry and propose ways for working together to build a more resilient and reliable supply chain service network and jointly promoting the smooth operation of the international shipping industry amid the lingering pandemic impact and fluctuations in the global economic landscape.

South Korean truckers strike again

DNA

SEOUL: Thousands of unionized truck drivers in South Korea have begun a strike, demanding a permanent minimum pay system for all truckers in the industry. Truck drivers, who brought the country to a halt with another strike earlier this year, went on strike at major ports and container depots on Thursday, threatening to disrupt manufacturing and fuel supplies for industries. The truckers are demanding that the government make permanent a measure known as the Safe Freight Rate that guarantees minimum cargo rates for truck drivers to prevent dangerous driving and overwork. The union is also asking the government to support all truckers across the industries, including oil tankers. Despite the last strike in June, which caused the South Korean economy more than \$1.6 billion in lost output, the ruling People Power Party rejected all union demands other than to extend the Safe Freight Rate for another three years. The truckers union is holding 16 rallies across the country, including at a port in Ulsan that houses Hyundai Motor's main manufacturing plant, threatening to strain the global supply chain.

Lebanon fails again to elect president

DNA

BEIRUT: Lebanese lawmakers on Thursday failed for a seventh time to elect a new president as the country grapples with a deepening political and economic crisis. The voting session was attended by 110 lawmakers of the 128-member parliament. Michel Moawad, a candidate backed by the Lebanese Forces party, got 42 votes, well short of the figure needed to win the first round, while 50 lawmakers cast blank ballots. Speaker Nabih Berri set the next voting session for a week from now, on Dec. 1. A candidate needs two-thirds of the vote (86 lawmakers) in the 128-member parliament to get through the first stage, while an absolute majority is needed in subsequent rounds. Former President Michel Aoun left office on Oct. 31 after completing a six-year term, without lawmakers agreeing on a successor. Since 2019, Lebanon has been facing a crippling economic crisis that, according to the World Bank, is one of the worst the world has seen in modern times. The country has been without a fully functioning government since May, with Prime Minister Najib Mikati and his Cabinet having limited powers in their current caretaker status.

Pakistan, Greece agree to promote legal migration pathways



DNA

ATHENS: Pakistan and Greece have agreed to promote legal migration pathways, combat illegal migration and resolve the issues

related to the Pakistani expatriates in Greece. The agreement was reached in the meeting between Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Sajid Hussain Turi and Minister of Migration and Asylum of the Hellenic

Republic, Greece, Notis Mitarachi. Both sides also reaffirmed their commitment to continue working toward the resolution of issues of mutual concern. The Minister thanked the Greek government for its

support in flood relief and rehabilitation efforts in Pakistan. Sajid Hussain Turi is currently on his ten-day visit to various countries to explore employment for overseas Pakistanis and resolve their grievances.

Maduro to resume talks with opposition

BOGOTA: The Venezuelan government and political opposition will resume talks on Friday after having suspended them for a year. The announcement was made Wednesday by Colombian President Gustavo Petro, who has been a key player in achieving the approach.

"On November 25 and 26, talks between (Venezuelan President Nicolas) Maduro's government and the Venezuelan opposition will resume," Petro wrote on his Twitter account. Although the details of the meeting are still unknown, Petro announced a few days ago that the talks would include the future of political prisoners and the lifting of US sanctions for humanitarian purposes.

US President Joe Biden's administration has sent delegations to the Venezuelan capital Caracas to discuss easing Washington's sanctions, a move that would help US oil giant Chevron expand its operations in Venezuela. However, Washington said that this would only occur if the two sides made progress in political talks.

The talks, which will take place in Mexico under the mediation of Norway, will also cover Venezuela's 2024 presidential elections, which the opposition has said it does not trust as Maduro has already announced that he plans to remain in power until 2030. - APP

Sanctions will stoke more hostility, North Korea warns South

PYONGYANG: North Korea has condemned South Korea's push to impose more sanctions on Pyongyang, warning Seoul that such measures will only fuel more hostility. On Thursday, Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and vice department director of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, lashed out at the administration of South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol for seeking more independent sanctions on the North.

In a statement carried by the North's official KCNA, Kim's sister branded Yoon and his cabinet a "faithful dog" to the United States and called them a bunch of "idiots" who are parroting Washington, warning that such punitive measures and pressure against Pyongyang would add to the North's "hostility and anger." "As soon as the US talked about its 'independent sanctions' against the DPRK, South Korea parroted what the former said," Kim Yo-jong

said in the English-language statement, using an abbreviation for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "This disgusting act shows more clearly that the South Korean group is a 'faithful dog' and stooge of the US," she further said, adding, "If they think that they can escape from the present dangerous situation through 'sanctions,' they must be really idiots as they do not know how to live in peace and comfort." Kim Yo-jong



also described Seoul as a "running wild dog on a bone given by the US" and a "servant" attached to its "master." Her remarks came just two days after South Korea's Foreign Ministry said it was reviewing "independent" punitive measures against North Korea, noting that sanctions on the cyber sector were among those considered if Pyongyang pushes ahead with a nuclear test. - DNA

EU members fail to agree on price cap for Russian oil

"There are still differences on the price cap level. We need to proceed bilaterally," Reuters quoted an unnamed diplomat as saying. "The next meeting of ambassadors of EU countries will be either tomorrow evening or on Friday," diplomat added

DNA

BRUSSELS: Member states of the European Union have failed to reach an agreement on a proposed price cap for Russian sea-borne oil, planning to keep negotiating about the matter. Representatives of the bloc's 27 governments failed to agree on a Group of Seven (G7) proposal to set the price ceiling in the range of \$65-\$70 per barrel during talks in the Belgian capital of Brussels on Wednesday. They announced plans to continue talks on Thursday. "There are still differences on the price cap level. We need to pro-

ceed bilaterally," Reuters quoted an unnamed diplomat as saying on Wednesday. "The next meeting of ambassadors of EU countries will be either tomorrow evening or on Friday," the diplomat added. The European Commission proposed that the ceiling be set at \$65 per barrel. However, Poland, Lithuania, and Estonia opposed the proposal, saying such a price would be too "generous" and would leave Moscow with too high a profit as production costs are about \$20 per barrel. On the other hand, some other countries with major shipping industries like Greece and Malta argue that the cap was better to be set at around \$70.

"We're looking for ways how this can work and how one can find a common basis so that this can be implemented in an ideally pragmatic and efficient way while at the same time avoiding that this could lead to excessive disadvantages for the countries of the European Union," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Wednesday. "But for my part, I want to say that I'm pretty confident that we'll get this done soon," he stressed. The G7, including the United States, as well as the whole of the EU plus Australia, intend to impose a punitive price cap on sea-borne exports of Russian oil on December 5, as part of sanctions against Moscow

over its military operation in Ukraine that began on February 24. Around 70-85 percent of Russia's crude exports are carried by tankers rather than pipelines, and the idea of a price cap, spearheaded by Washington, is to ban shipping, insurance and re-insurance companies from handling cargoes of Russian crude oil across the world, unless it is sold at or below the price set by the G7 and its allies. Since the onset of the offensive, the United States and its European allies have imposed waves of economic sanctions against Moscow while supplying large consignments of heavy weaponry to Kiev. The Kremlin says the sanctions and the supplies will prolong the war.

Briefs

China to work with Pakistan for regional stability

BEIJING: China is willing to work with the Pakistani side to deepen cooperation in military training, joint exercises and military technology between the two militaries and contribute new strength to maintaining regional peace and stability, Chinese Defense Ministry Spokesman, Wu Qian said on Thursday. "We are willing to work with the Pakistani side to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries and maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges and visits between the two militaries, deepen cooperation in military training, joint exercises, military technology and other fields," he said during his briefing held here. He said that the Chinese side would also work with the Pakistani side to continue to push bilateral pragmatic cooperation in various fields to a new level, inject new impetus into the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries, and contribute new strength to maintaining regional peace and stability. The spokesman remarked that China and Pakistan were good friends, good partners and good brothers. "Under the strategic guidance of the leaders of the two countries, the two countries have always supported each other and forged ahead, demonstrating the 'iron core' friendship between China and Pakistan," he added. - APP

UN rights chief says 'full-fledged' crisis underway in Iran

NEW YORK: Iran is in a "full-fledged human rights crisis" as authorities clamp down on anti-regime dissidents, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Chief Volker Turk. Turk called for "independent, impartial and transparent investigative processes" into violations of human rights in Iran during a special session of the UN Human Rights Council on Thursday. The Islamic Republic has been gripped by a wave of anti-government protests sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman detained by the morality police in September allegedly for not wearing her hijab properly. Authorities have since unleashed a deadly crackdown on demonstrators, with reports of forced detentions and physical abuse being used to target the country's Kurdish minority group. In a recent CNN investigation, covert testimony revealed sexual violence against protesters, including boys, in Iran's detention centers since the start of the unrest.

Two dead as storm closes schools, cuts road to Mecca

RIYADH: At least two people died on Thursday as heavy rains hit western Saudi Arabia, including the coastal city of Jeddah, delaying flights and forcing schools to close, officials said. "Two deaths have been recorded so far, and we call on everyone not to go out unless necessary," the Mecca regional government said on its Twitter page. The Mecca region includes Jeddah, the kingdom's second-largest city of roughly four million people, and Mecca city, the holiest city in Islam where millions perform the hajj and umrah pilgrimages each year. The road connecting the two, which many pilgrims use to reach Mecca, was closed on Thursday once the rains began, state media reported, although it was later reopened, authorities said. The state-affiliated Al-Ekhabriya channel showed footage of worshippers at the Grand Mosque in Mecca circling the Kaaba - the cubic structure that is the focal point of Islam - under a heavy downpour. - Agencies

NATIONAL DAY OF BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA



ISLAMABAD: Minister Shahza Fatima Khawaja, Ambassador of Bosnia Sakib Foric, and others cutting cake to celebrate National Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A large number of guests hailing from various walks of life attended the reception. - DNA

Afghans sedating hungry children and selling organs

At a local pharmacy, we found that you can buy five tablets of the drugs being used for 10 Afghans (about 10 US cents), or price of a piece of bread

MONITORING DESK

KABUL: Afghans are giving their hungry children medicines to sedate them - others have sold their daughters and organs to survive. In the second winter since the Taliban took over and foreign funds were frozen, millions are a step away from famine. "Our children keep crying, and they don't sleep. We have no food," Abdul Wahab said. "So we go to the pharmacy, get tablets and give them to our children so that they feel drowsy." He lives just outside Herat, the country's third largest city, in a settlement of thousands of little mud houses that has grown over decades, filled with people displaced and battered by war and natural disasters. Abdul is among a group of nearly a dozen men who gathered around us. We asked, how many were giving drugs to their children to sedate them? "A lot of us, all of us," they replied.

Ghulam Hazrat felt in the pocket of his tunic and pulled out a strip of tablets. They were alprazolam - tranquilisers usually prescribed to treat anxiety disorders. Ghulam has six children, the youngest a year old. "I even give it to him," he said. Others showed us strips of escitalopram and sertraline tablets they said they were giving their children. They are usually prescribed to treat depression and anxiety. Doctors say that when given to young children who do not get adequate nutrition, drugs such as these can cause liver damage, along with a host of other problems like chronic fatigue, sleep and behaviour disorders. At a local pharmacy, we found that you can buy five tablets of the drugs being used for 10 Afghans (about 10 US cents), or the price of a piece of bread. Most families we met were sharing a few pieces of bread between them each day. One woman told us they ate dry bread in the morning, and at night they dipped it in water to make it moist.

The UN has said a humanitarian "catastrophe" is now unfolding in Afghanistan. A majority of the men in the area outside Herat work as daily wage labourers. They have been leading difficult lives for years. But when the Taliban took over last August, with no international recognition for the new de-facto government, foreign funds flowing into Afghanistan were frozen, triggering an economic collapse which left the men with no work on most days. On the rare day they do find work, they make roughly 100 Afghans, or just over \$1 (£0.83). Everywhere we went, we found people being forced to take extreme steps to save their families from hunger. Ammar (not his real name) said he had surgery to remove his kidney three months ago and showed us a nine-inch scar - stitch marks still a bit pink - running across his abdomen from the front of his body to the back. He's in his twenties, in what should have been the prime of his life. We're hiding his identity to protect him.

Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports increased by 13.1

RIYADH: The General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) released today on its official website the International Trade report for September 2022. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's overall merchandise exports increased by 30.9% in September 2022, compared to September 2021. The value of exports amounted to SAR 124.7 billion in September 2022, up from SAR 95.2 billion in September 2021. This increase originated mainly from oil exports, which rose by SAR 30.3 billion or 43.4% in the same period. Non-oil exports (excluding re-exports) increased by 9.7%, compared to September 2021, increasing to SAR 21.6 billion from SAR 19.7 billion in September 2021. Non-oil exports (including re-exports) decreased compared to August 2022 by SAR 2.4 billion or 8.8%, while declining by 0.8 billion (-3.7%) if re-exports are excluded. Merchandise imports increased by 26.9% (SAR 12.7 billion) in September 2022. The value of imports amounted to SAR 60.0 billion in September 2022 compared to SAR 47.3 billion in September 2021. Imports also decreased compared to August 2022 by SAR 3.5 billion or 5.4%. According to the International Trade report for the Third Quarter (Q3) 2022, the overall merchandise exports increased by 46.1% in Q3 2022 compared to Q3 2021. The value of exports amounted to SAR 399.7 billion in Q3 2022, up from SAR 273.6 billion in Q3 2021. This increase originated mainly from oil exports, which rose by SAR 117.1 billion or 57.3% in the same period. The share of oil exports in total exports increased from 74.6% in Q3 2021 to 80.4% in Q3 2022. Compared to Q3 2022, total merchandise exports decreased by SAR 30.8 billion or 7.1%. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ethiopia Jemal Bekar Abdula calls on FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. - DNA

FM Bilawal meets the Qatari and Ethiopian Ambassadors

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met Qatar's ambassador to Pakistan, Sheikh Saud bin Abdul Rahman bin Faisal Al Thani. FM Chairman Bilawal congratulated the Ambassador on Qatar organising the FIFA World Cup 2022. The Ambassador of Qatar invited FM Chairman

Bilawal to watch the FIFA World Cup in Qatar. FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that Pakistan values its relations with Qatar. The historic relations between the two countries are based on Islamic brotherhood, mutual trust and cooperation. Jemal Bekar, the first Resident Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan also met FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. During the meeting, FM Bilawal welcomed Ethiopia for opening its embassy in Pakistan and welcomed the renewal

of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia. The Foreign Minister welcomed the launch of direct flights in collaboration with Pakistan's national airline, PIA and Ethiopian Airlines. The Ambassador of Ethiopia thanked the Government of Pakistan, especially the Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, for providing support in opening the embassy. Ethiopia opened its embassy in Pakistan during the tenure of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

French lawmakers to vote on banning bullfighting

PARIS: French MPs are expected to vote for the first time Thursday on whether to ban bullfighting after a national debate that has pitched animal rights' defenders against fans of the traditional blood sport. Though public opinion is firmly in favour of outlawing the practice, the bill is expected to be rejected by a majority of lawmakers who are wary about stirring up the bullfighting heartlands in the south of the country. There is also a chance that the legislation, proposed by a vegan left-wing lawmaker, fails to be presented for a vote in the National Assembly at the last minute. "We need to go towards a conciliation, an exchange," President Emmanuel Macron said on Wednesday, adding that he did not expect the draft law to pass. "From where I am sitting, this is not a current priority." His government has urged members of the ruling centrist coalition not to support the text from the opposition France Unbowed party, even though many members are known to personally favour it. During a first debate on the parliament's law commission last week, a majority voted against the proposal by MP Aymeric Caron, who denounced the "barbarism" of a tradition that was imported from Spain in the 1850s. "Caron has antagonised people instead of trying to smooth it over," a lawmaker from Macron's party told AFP on condition of anonymity. - APP

Indonesian rescuers race to find dozens missing

CIANJUR: Indonesian authorities deployed heavy machinery, helicopters and thousands of personnel Thursday in a desperate effort to locate dozens trapped in rubble by an earthquake that killed 272 people, as hopes of finding survivors faded. Some have been pulled alive from the hulk of twisted metal and concrete in dramatic rescues in the town of Cianjur in West Java, including a six-year-old boy who spent two days under the wreckage without food or water. Officials said 39 people were still missing and believed trapped, including a seven-year-old girl, as rescue efforts were delayed by hammering rains and aftershocks. But the rescue of the young boy Azka alive, captured on video, gave relatives and rescuers some hope. "Once we realised Azka was alive everybody broke into tears, including me," 28-year-old local volunteer Jeksen Kolibu told AFP on Thursday. "It was very moving, it felt like a miracle." In the worst-hit district of Cugenang, scores of rescue workers drilled on Thursday through big slabs of concrete and removed roof tiles at a destroyed house where they believed a young girl was buried. - APP

Spanish PM sets sights on int'l role

MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will on Sunday become president of an international socialist grouping, a potential springboard to a major post on the world stage. A year before a general election in Spain, which polls suggest he will struggle to win, Sanchez is the only candidate to head the Socialist International (SI) - an umbrella group of 132 centre-left parties from around the world. The telegenic 50-year-old will take over the reins of the SI, which is gathering in Madrid this weekend, from former Greek prime minister George Papandreu. "While symbolic... this post could be a way (for Sanchez) to regain credit among voters by presenting himself as influential on the world stage," said Pablo Simon, political science professor at the Carlos III University "But it also could be that he plans on capitalising on this network of international contacts" which the post offers to "play a prominent role later" in a top global body, he added. - APP

China Covid: Record cases as virus surges

That equates to three Covid deaths in every million in China, compared with 3,000 per million in US and 2,400 per million in the UK, although direct comparisons between countries are difficult

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China has recorded its highest number of daily Covid cases since the pandemic began, despite stringent measures designed to eliminate the virus. Several major cities including the capital Beijing and southern trade hub Guangzhou are experiencing outbreaks. Wednesday saw 31,527 cases recorded compared with an April peak of 28,000. The numbers are still tiny for a country of 1.4 billion people and officially just over 5,200 have died since the pandemic began. That equates to three Covid deaths in every million in China, compared with 3,000 per mil-

lion in the US and 2,400 per million in the UK, although direct comparisons between countries are difficult. While China's zero-Covid policy has clearly saved lives, it has also dealt a punishing blow to the economy and ordinary people's lives. The country slightly relaxed some of those restrictions a few weeks ago. It cut quarantine for close contacts from seven days in a state facility to five days and three days at home, and stopped recording secondary contacts which allowed many more people to avoid having to quarantine. Officials have also sought to avoid enforcing blanket lockdowns of the kind endured by the largest city, Shanghai, earlier this year. But faced with a renewed surge in cases in Bei-

jing, as well as the first deaths from the virus in months, officials have already implemented some restrictions in several districts, with shops, schools and restaurants closed. The central city of Zhengzhou is also to enforce an effective lockdown for 6 million residents from Friday, officials announced. It follows violent protests at a vast industrial complex belonging to iPhone manufacturer Foxconn. The firm has apologised for a "technical error" in its payment systems. Other stories of suffering and desperation have been shared online where they have fuelled public resentment. Last week, reports that a baby in Zhengzhou died because her medical care was delayed by Covid re-

strictions prompted a huge outcry. Among some of the most severe responses to Covid this year: In January, in the tourist hub city of Xi'an, population 13 million, some residents were forced out of their homes in a midnight eviction and bussed to quarantine facilities, while disturbing claims surfaced of people unable to get crucial medical attention. In March, the lockdown announced in Shanghai was meant to last less than a week but its 25 million residents stayed home for two months. In September, residents in locked down Chengdu found themselves trapped in their apartments during an earthquake. Elsewhere, rescue workers were required to do a Covid test before they could save anyone.