



# Islamabad POST

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Sweden's steps for NATO bid positive but not enough

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EU eyes special court to probe Russian crimes

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## Briefs

### Fazl for abolishing usury

DNA

ISLAMABAD: While addressing a seminar organised in Karachi on the prohibition of usury, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman Wednesday appealed to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to implement the judgement of Federal Shariat Court regarding the abolition of usury in the country. "The Federal Shariat Court ruled to abolish usury in the country. We appeal to the prime minister to implement the verdict of the Shariat Court," Maulana Fazl said. "There should be a positive reaction to the Shariat Court's decision from the business community."

### Maryam slams Khan over tweets

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-President Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday went belligerent as she slammed PTI Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan for, what she claimed, inviting new military leadership's interference in political affairs. The PML-N leader reminded Imran Khan that he has a selective memory. "You have a selective memory but people don't. You colluded with certain elements of the establishment and they raised and fed you like their godson."

### Tarar takes charge as law minister

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday took charge of as law minister on Wednesday. The PML-N senator has assumed the responsibility as law minister at the request of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, after stepping down from the post last month citing "personal reasons". The federal government appointed Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Tarar's place, handing him an additional portfolio apart from economic affairs.

## Bilawal dares Khan to quit assemblies

### "If you want to resign, then go ahead. PPP is ready to face you", says the PPP Chairman

NAZIR SIYAL / DNA

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said Wednesday that "coward" PTI Chairman Imran Khan's party lawmakers would not quit the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab assemblies. "If you want to resign, then go ahead. The PPP is ready to face you; PPP is not afraid of 'puppets' and 'selected actors'," Bilawal said in his address to the party's 55th foundation day in Karachi. Bilawal, who holds the portfolio of foreign minister, claimed that Khan was "lying" when he said that his party's lawmakers would resign from both assemblies as he is notorious for going back on his word. "Don't you remember", he told the crowd, "that after PTI resigned from the National Assembly and the by-polls were set to take place, they moved the courts and plead that their resignations were just a political stunt". The PTI chief - who called off his long march to Islamabad last week - announced quitting assemblies across the country as he could not be part of a "corrupt system" anymore. Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervez Elahi has also backed Khan's call to quit

### Govt to fight all of Imran's adventures

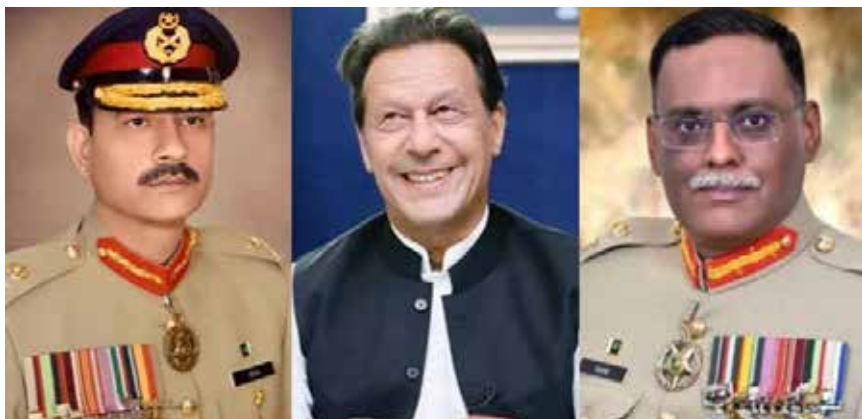
DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said the coalition government led will fight all kinds of political adventures of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan. She briefed the media after the cabinet meeting in Islamabad on Wednesday. Marriyum said that Imran Khan wants instability and division in the country. She warned Imran Khan of misusing Quaid-e-Azam's saying for his political gains. She added that Imran Khan should not compare himself with Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

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## Imran felicitates COAS, CJCS on appointment



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Wednesday felicitated Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir and Chairman Joint Chief of Army Staff Committee (CJCS) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza on assuming charge of their office. Former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa handed over the command of the Pakistan Army to his successor Gen Munir in a change of command ceremony on Tuesday, while Gen Mirza took charge as the CJCS on Sunday. Khan took to Twitter to congratulate the two military officials. "We hope the new military leadership will work to end the prevailing trust deficit that has built up in the last eight months, between the nation and the state. Strength of the state is derived from its people," the former premier wrote. He also shared a quote of Quaid-e-Azam

### COAS, JCSC chairman call on President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Newly-appointed Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Sahir Shamshad Mirza and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir called on President Arif Alvi. Both CJCS General Shamshad and Army Chief General Asim Munir separately called on President Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Wednesday. They exchanged views on national security and discussed professional matters pertaining to Army. The president congratulated the new military leadership on assuming their offices.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets with newly appointed Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir. - DNA

### Nation happy with Gen Asim appointment

### PM Shehbaz wishes the new COAS best of luck

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in his first formal meeting with newly appointed Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday said the nation is happy with his appointment. Newly appointed Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday called on PM Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister's Office. PM Shehbaz Sharif congratulated General Syed Asim Munir on assuming the post of Army Chief and said the nation is happy that he has become the army chief. The PM expressed a hope that the relationship of trust and love between the people and the army will be stronger. He said the leadership of an able officer like him (Gen Asim) will be instrumental in furthering the professional development of the institution.

### FIFA WC 2022: Tunisia beat France

AL RAYYAN: The 2022 FIFA World Cup continued Wednesday with Group D at the forefront, as Tunisia (0-2-1) defeated France (3-0-0) at Education City Stadium in Al Rayyan, Qatar. Simultaneously, Australia took down Denmark in another Group D match. Wahbi Khazri was the hero for Jalel Kadri's side here, turning home what proved the only goal of the game just before the hour mark. Nevertheless, in the end Khazri's strike meant very little for Tunisia, as Australia kept hold of second place in Group D by edging a 1-0 victory of their own over Denmark. - APP

## PML-N scrambles to save Punjab Assembly from dissolution

### The party has directed its PA members to reach Lahore

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Following the PTI chairman's announcement regarding Punjab Assembly dissolution at the conclusion of his long march in Rawalpindi, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has directed its PA members to reach Lahore and keep in contact with the party. After a sudden announcement by PTI Chief Imran Khan that his party did not want to become part of this corrupt system and he would order to dissolve his party's governments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, the PDM parties which are ruling in the Centre have become active to stave off the Punjab Assembly's dissolution. According to sources, the PML-N has directed all its Punjab Assembly members to reach Lahore and asked them to keep in touch with the party. On Tuesday, former president and PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari held a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at PM House. Both the leaders discussed current political scenario with special focus on Punjab.

Continued on Page 06

### Kh Asif claims he is in contact with PTI leaders

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif while claiming of being in contact with the some members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said that some people from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa doesn't want the assemblies to be dissolved. Speaking exclusively to a private television channel Wednesday, he said that a strategy can be devised after former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan's decision on dissolving assemblies. The minister said the PTI is expected to make final decision within a day or two and what prediction he can make before that,

Continued on Page 06

## Blast hits seminary in Afghanistan killing 16

### Not clear who is behind the blast: govt sources

NEWS DESK

KABUL: At least 16 people were killed and 24 others wounded on Wednesday by a blast at a madrassa in Afghanistan's northern city of Aybak, a doctor at a local hospital said. "A blast took place around 12:45pm inside Jahdia Madrassa in the centre of city. Lots of boys are studying at this madrassa (religious school)," Emdadullah Muhajir, spokesperson for Samangan's provincial gov-

ernment said. It was not immediately clear who was behind the blast. Muhajir said an investigation had begun.

Interior ministry spokesperson Abdul Nafi Takor confirmed the blast but put the death toll so far at 10 with more injured. "Our detective and security forces are working to identify the perpetrators of this unforgivable crime and bring them to justice," Takor said. The Taliban say they are focused on securing the war-torn nation since taking over the country last year, however several attacks, including at mosques, have taken place in recent months, some of which have been claimed by the Islamic State, also known as Dai'sh.

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UNDP and Japan govt to work together for economic recovery - Page 03

US-Pak effort to elevate higher education sector - Page 04

For Canadian universities, Palestinian is 'toxic other' - Page 05

Illness strikes England team on eve of Test match with Pak - Page 06

EU eyes special court to probe Russian war crimes - Page 07

Govt determined to make economy interest-free: Dar - Page 08

## NATO seeks to shore up Russia's neighbours

### Meanwhile, Ukraine's General Staff said earlier that its troops had repelled six Russian attacks in 24 hours

NEWS DESK

KYIV: Russia said its forces had edged forward in eastern Ukraine on Wednesday and Kyiv said Moscow was "planning something" in the south, while NATO sought to shore up other countries that fear destabilisation from Moscow. Ukraine's General Staff said earlier that its troops had repelled six Russian attacks in 24 hours in the eastern Donbas region, while Russian artillery had relentlessly shelled across the Dnipro River, including at Kherson city, in the south. Winter weather has hampered fighting on the ground, and Zelenskyy has told Ukrainians to expect a major Russian barrage this week on Ukraine's stricken electricity infrastructure, which Moscow has pounded roughly weekly since early October. "These are President (Vladimir) Putin's new targets. He's hitting them hard," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said after NATO talks in Bucharest. Putin had focused his "fire and ire" on Ukraine's civilians by bombing more than a third of its energy system supplying power and water, but the strategy will not work, Blinken said, adding that NATO was also concerned by China's ties with Moscow. The NATO allies offered on Wednesday to help nearby Moldova, Georgia and Bosnia, all under pressure from Russia, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said. "If there is one lesson from Ukraine it is that we need to support them now," Stoltenberg told a news conference, while Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu told Reuters "the beast also wants to take control of the Western Balkans". Ukraine's president said

## Macron aims to show European unity

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: French President Emmanuel Macron is on a state visit to Washington. This week's visit should mark the end of a quarrel between the two countries, and could also underscore a certain Franco-German entente. French President Emmanuel Macron's trip to Washington this week may not just be a show of Franco-American unity, said an Elysee spokesman in a pre-trip briefing with reporters. "This is an important visit for us, the focus of which will not be on leadership but partnership," said the spokesman last week. "We will also advocate for Franco-German projects and European interests." Macron's trip will be the first official state visit under US President Joe Biden since



Continued on Page 06

Russian forces were attacking Ukrainian government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces which make up the eastern Donbas, as well as Kharkiv in the northeast, where Ukraine pushed them back in September. "The situation at the front is difficult," Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. "Despite extremely large losses, the occupiers are still trying to advance" in the east and "they are planning something in the south," he said, without elaborating. A teenager was killed when Russia shelled a hospital in the northern Sumy region and another person was killed and one wounded in Russia's Kherson shelling, other officials said. Russia said later that its forces had taken full control of three settlements in the Donetsk region - Andriivka, Belogorovka and Pershye Travnya - and destroyed a warehouse in the southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region containing U.S.-made HIMARS shells. Reuters could not independently verify the latest battlefield reports. NATO ministers began a two-day meeting in Bucharest on Tuesday with pledges both to help Ukrainians cope with what the defence alliance's chief said was Moscow using winter weather as "a weapon of war" and to help sustain Kyiv's military campaign. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the outcome showed NATO was "absolutely not interested in a political and diplomatic solution in Ukraine". Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Ukrainians needed fast and lasting help, and he was looking to the global South as well as the West to join "this common struggle".

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# Importance of leadership among youth stressed

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Youth being the most vital asset of the nation, with Pakistan having more than 60 per cent of its population under 30 years of age – potentially an important demographic dividend – needs to be engaged positively and prepared to take up the challenges of upcoming era, empathetically and systematically. The views were expressed by speakers at a ceremony organized by Youth Impact, a not-for-profit social development organization, at a local hotel, to showcase and acknowledge 75 peacebuilding projects undertaken by youth leaders it trained from across Pakistan this year. The program was addressed, among other notables, by Khalid Rahman, chairman, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Saad Tariq Siddiqui, chairman, Alpine Club of Pakistan, Tauseeq Haider, famous TV Anchor, Abdul Samad Khan, CEO, Youth Impact, and Mathew Singer, director, public affairs section, US embassy. To prepare Pakistan's youth to volunteer for critical social leadership and peacebuilding roles, Youth Impact

had launched a campaign through 'Camp Himalayas', a program to train more than 400 young social leaders, who embarked on a journey of community service by executing multiple tasks of social development, inclusivity and nation-building in their local districts. In total, nine wilderness-based outdoor leadership camps were conducted in Kaghan valley and Margalla hills following which these youth volunteers delivered a total of 372 peacebuilding seminars and 75 peacebuilding projects in their own communities, with a total impact count of 23,488 community members engaged. These projects were largely delivered in the remote areas of Balochistan, South Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as in lower income localities of Karachi. Speakers at the ceremony lauded their efforts of giving back to the society and underscored the importance of voluntarism among our youth through multiple community welfare initiatives. They lauded the efforts of the young individuals, who chose to bring about social change and development by projecting the values of unity, respect,

diversity and tolerance. The speakers also stressed the need of more such platforms, that pave the energies of our youth into the right direction by providing them a constructive and productive programme design for larger benefit of society. Abdul Samad Khan – CEO and Founder of Youth Impact, having transformed more than 26000 individuals through various programmes – pledged to gear up for the bigger challenges with an objective of training more than 1.2 million youth in the next ten years. The event also marked the 10th anniversary of "Markhor", along with launching its 10th edition. Where young individuals would undergo the largest wilderness-based annual youth leadership moot of Pakistan, near Khanpur, starting from November 30th and concluding on Dec 04, 2022. It aims to develop interpersonal and social skills in youth through extensive experiential learning. The programme attracts not only national but also international applicants, who join this venture to equip themselves with real life skills. A total of 714 individuals have so far benefited from this programme.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA, Lt. General Inam Haider Malik presenting a souvenir to US Ambassador Donald Blome upon his visit. – DNA

## Chairman NDMA meets US ambassador Donald Blome

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik met U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome here on Wednesday and acknowledged U.S.-led support for flood victims. The chairman (National Disaster Management Authority) NDMA also shared NDMA's vision of transforming the response approach from reactive to proactive, a news release said. The chairman NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority) highlighted the need for a futuristic technology-driven framework that can be the interface of integrated emergency response with all stakeholders, humanitarian agencies and international donors besides taking initiatives like the 'Disaster Risk Atlas' of the country. He shed light on the work of the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) to become commissioned, enabled and globally connected hub of climate research exchange and interaction of emergency responders for disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation in Pakistan. The chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik (National Disaster Management Authority) hinted at need of global commitment for 'Climate Millennium Goals' in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to secure shared-future. He sought learning from FEMA, US leading emergency management organization and interagency cooperative framework for NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority) & FEMA. The ambassador Donald Blome highlighted United States US) ongoing efforts with the support of diverse partners to minimize damages in flood affected areas and underscored the strong collaboration at the front of climate-induced disaster management.

## Ahsan: Govt providing underprivileged class access to education

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal said here Wednesday that the government was committed to providing the underprivileged class access to education. Addressing the International Summit on Higher Education and Workforce Development the minister said that the access to higher education was one of the keys to growth and development. The Summit was organized under the auspices Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA) Project. The HESSA project is providing technical assistance to 16 Pakistani universities distributed across all provinces in improving their institutional and technical capacities in delivering market-relevant education and research, with an overarching goal of enhancing the employability potential of graduating students. The summit was a timely

initiative within the context of Pakistan's development priorities as US support for Pakistan's Higher Education System has a long history which ranges from primary and basic education to establishing Centers of Excellence to strengthening overall higher education systems, said the Minister. Ahsan Iqbal said that youth in Pakistan are not only concerned about their future education, but also about their livelihoods, their mental health, and well-being. The Planning Ministry has already developed a Mental Health Psychosocial Support Handbook. Therefore, mainstreaming this group and its energy into the socioeconomic development process will be critical to the overall socio-economic development of Pakistan, he added. It is noted that Pakistan's estimated youth unemployment is between 8.5 to 10 percent, with 80 percent youth workforce having a

low level of education and poor skills base primarily due to the gaps in quality, access, and relevance of the skills vis-à-vis what is needed in the market. We as a nation face key challenges as to how to equip our young population with the knowledge and skills required to support the national development agenda and priorities. On the other hand, it will be the biggest missed opportunity if we fail to harness the potential and capacities of our youth in the right direction, he remarked. The International Summit is the first among a series of policy dialogues, symposiums, seminars, and experts' consultations on issues related to higher education for advancing sustainable development. The summit was attended by US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome, Senator of Utah State, Dr. Keith Grover, Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC). – APP

## Swiss envoy calls on CM

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi met with Ambassador of Switzerland George Steiner at his office on Wednesday in which matters pertaining to mutual relations and enhancement of bilateral trade came under discussion. It was agreed to increase cooperation in hydroelectricity projects, dairy farming, climatic changes and tourism sectors. The Swiss Ambassador gave assurance to provide assistance to the Punjab government in hydroelectricity projects. CM Parvez Elahi while talking with the Swiss Ambassador said that the Punjab government had formulated a plan to establish hydel projects on the Chenab River. The destruction being caused due to flood could be prevented due to hydel projects. – APP

## CFRD donates RMB 740,000 for flood relief

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President FPCCI & Incharge Capital Office, Mirza Abdul Rehman, Chairman Coordination FPCCI (Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry), Mr. Qurban Ali, Former Vice President FPCCI thanked the China Foundation for Rural Development (CFRD) for providing RMB 740,000 US\$ 106,628 for flood relief assistance to FPCCI for relief activities in Gilgit Baltistan. In a ceremony held at FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad President

FPCCI (Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry) appreciated the role of China Foundation for Rural Development (CFRD), which is a public foundation and working to eliminate human poverty and alleviate social suffering. The CFRD humanitarian relief program for poverty reduction in 24 countries and regions, with a total investment of over 200 million yuan benefiting about 900,000 beneficiaries. The CFRD have long-term Programs in Pakistan. The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry has formed a Flood Relief Committee to take part in the rehabilitation of flood affected in different parts of the country. In this connection the

sub-committee for Federal Areas, consisting on Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Mirza Abdul Rehman and Mr. Qurban Ali made tremendous efforts and was able to get a US\$ 106,628 grant from China Foundation for Rural Development for humanitarian relief for the flood-affected peoples of Gilgit Baltistan. The President said that FPCCI (Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry) will ensure successful implementation of food and other relief goods distribution project, with the support CFRD to help effects of the devastating floods. The Chinese government and people of China have made a substantive contribution to Pakistan's relief and rehabilitation efforts he added.

## RCCI urge youth to promote research culture

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has emphasized that as no nation in the world could progress without focusing on research, the youth should promote a culture of research in all walks of life. RCCI Acting President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh who was invited as a Chief Guest on 7th Multidisciplinary Student Research International Conference at University of Wah, said that information and digital technologies were the future technologies in which the new generation of Pakistan should acquire special expertise to enable them to serve the country to cope with the challenges of modern era. RCCI Former Vice President Mr. Taltat Mahmood Awan along with Mr. Abdul Rauf, Executive Committee member were also present.

Pakistan is very lucky to have 60% youth in the national population. Youth is our future and its our collective responsibility to provide them an environment where they can seek business opportunities over job opportunities, he added. With the motive to encourage

students to become job creators instead of job seekers, RCCI aimed to provide opportunities to our youth to participate in interactive sessions, training workshops, to learn about success stories, innovative ideas which enhance their knowledge about entre-

preneurship. We at RCCI has a close liaison with different Universities, he said. He also congratulated the organizing team of 7th Multi-disciplinary Student Research International Conferences-2022 and assured RCCI support and assistance in this regard.



## Over 50 mln in Pakistan are zinc deficient

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is facing serious challenges of malnutrition and food insecurity. Climate change and recent flooding have created further threats to deteriorate the situation. Malnutrition cost Pakistan 7.6 billion USD every year due to the lost labor, health care expenses, and lower productivity of human capital. This was said by the experts addressing to the media workshop "addressing zinc deficiency through biofortification of wheat" at a local hotel in Islamabad. The workshop was organized by HarvestPlus and AGAHE, a civil society organization. The workshop was attended by a large number of agriculture scientists, health professionals, UN agencies, civil society representatives, and representatives of print and electronic media. Dr. Imtiaz Hussain, Member Plant Science Division at Pakistan Agriculture Research Council said that wheat constitutes over 70% of the diet of common Pakistanis. Biofortification of Wheat is the most suitable, cost effective, and sustainable strategy for addressing Zinc deficiency. The government of Pakistan has included biofortification as a part of its strategies to address malnutrition in the country. He said that with the support of HarvestPlus, federal and provincial wheat programs have developed three wheat varieties which are Zincol 2016, Akbar 2019, and Nawab 2021. Millions of farmers are cultivating these

varieties due to their characteristics of better yield, resistance against diseases, and high zinc nutrition. There are more wheat varieties in the pipeline, which may help in addressing the widespread zinc deficiency in Pakistan. Mr. Munawar Hussain, Advisor at HarvestPlus Pakistan said that a warming climate is a direct nutritional threat to the billions of smallholder farmers who rely on staple food crops for much of their diet. He said that as per the world bank report, the rising temperature may cause 3-17% depletion of protein and nutrient content of crops especially iron and zinc. The crops may lose 8-10% yield with the rising temperature. He added that Biofortification increases the level of micronutrients in many crops that are likely to lose nutritional value due to rising CO2 and temperature levels. He said it is encouraging that zinc biofortified wheat varieties are now becoming popular in Pakistan. The zinc wheat grain harvested in 2022 reached to more than 7 million people and it is further growing. Mr. Mubarak Ali Sarwar, CEO AGAHE said earlier while sharing the objectives of the workshop that the role of the media is important in raising awareness among the population about issues like Zinc deficiency. He requested the media to play their due role in raising awareness among farmers and other value chain actors about the significance of the biofortification of wheat in addressing zinc deficiency. Dr. Muhammad Imtiaz, HarvestPlus scaling and commercialization lead said that HarvestPlus is a part of the global CGIAR system and helping the

Research Institutions of Pakistan for the last fifteen years to develop test and release high zinc wheat varieties with objective is to eliminate "hidden hunger" among the most malnourished populations in the country. He emphasized that Government should continue mainstreaming biofortification in the food system and continue developing climate resilient nutrient dense crop varieties. He added that increasing production, awareness, and supply of biofortified zinc wheat and other nutrient dense crops can help to address the challenges of malnutrition. He further stressed the need of building the capacity of wheat value chain actors in the production, processing, and marketing of biofortified seeds, grains, and food products. Dr. Baseer Khan Achakzai, Director Programs and Regulations at the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, expressed his support for mainstreaming biofortification in public policies. He added that we are raising awareness among farmers and wheat value chain actors about significance of biofortified zinc wheat varieties to increase availability of biofortified zinc grain and foods. Mr. Badur Uzaman, Program Policy Officer, SUN secretariate at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives said that federal and provincial governments have developed multisectoral nutrition strategies. The biofortification of crops is an important strategy recognized by federal and provincial governments to address malnutrition.

## NAVY seizes huge cache of drugs

KARACHI: Two Pakistan Navy Ships in collaboration with PN air unit seized approximately 5800 Kg of drugs at North Arabian Sea. Pakistan Navy continues to demonstrate our National resolve to deter, dissuade, discourage and thwart any illicit activities along the strategically important water ways in Arabian Sea. In a recent development, successful counter narcotics operation was conducted by two Pakistan Navy Ships in Arabian Sea in which a large cache of drugs has been apprehended.

While conducting Maritime Security Operations in North Arabian Sea, Naval Ships located and effectively intercepted two suspicious dhows. Upon scrutiny of these boats, large quantity of drugs that valued approximately Rs. 8.6 Billion in international market was seized. Both apprehended dhows have been handed over to Law Enforcement Agencies for further legal proceedings as per the law of land. The successful operation by Pakistan Navy to seize huge quantity of narcotics reaffirms the resolve and commitment of PN to fulfill national and international obligations for maintaining good order at sea. Pakistan Navy is vigilant to counter any illegal activity and safeguard its maritime borders. – DNA

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### November

Nov 01 / Algeria	National Day
Nov 04 / Italy	Armed Forces Day
Nov 07 / Russian Federation	Socialist Revolution
Nov 09 / Cambodia	National Day
Nov 11 / Poland	Independence Day
Nov 14 / Jordan	Birthday of King Hussein
Nov 15 / Belgium	Kings Day
Nov 15 / Brazil	Republic Day
Nov 15 / Northern Cyprus	National Day
Nov 18 / Morocco	Independence Day
Nov 21 / Bangladesh	Armed Forces Day
Nov 22 / Lebanon	Independence Day
Nov 25 / Suriname	National Day
Nov 28 / Mauritania	National Day
Nov 28 / Albania	Flags Day

## Hotels & Restaurants

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

## Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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## Emergency

Rescue (Police).....	15
Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....	1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Rawalpindi Police.....	9270601-20
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<b>Enquiry</b>	
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## Hospitals

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DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
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## Islamabad Metropolitan

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

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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## Local governance in merged districts

# UNDP and Japan govt to work together for economic recovery

### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan and the Government of Japan have signed an agreement to launch a project of US\$3.9 million "for the stabilization and economic recovery through social cohesion, local governance, and livelihood opportunities" for communities in Kurram and Orakzai districts. The agreement was signed by H.E. Mitsuhiro Wada, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Mr. Knut Ostby, Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan. With generous support from the Government of Japan, the two-year project will assist more than 200,000 individuals, with a particular focus on youth and women. The project will use innovative approaches to engage youth in policy dialogues and sports/cultural events for social cohesion and trust building. Employment opportunities will be provided to 1,300 youth through digital skills, incubation, and skills training. Community organizations will engage in the planning process and rehabilitate 50 community physical infrastructure schemes. Thirty-five offices will be constructed for village councils to strengthen



local governance. Two common facility centres for women entrepreneurs will be operationalized. The project is aligned with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's development agenda and aims to build trust between communities and local government and promote sustainable livelihoods. "The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is strongly committed to the sustainable development of the merged districts.

We appreciate the continued support provided by the Government of Japan for improving the conditions for the people of the merged districts," said Muhammad Qaisar Khan, Additional Secretary, the Planning and Development Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. While speaking at the ceremony Ms. Samar Ihsan, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs, said, "Government of Pakistan is committed

to working with UNDP and the Government of Japan. The entire tribal belt has been severely affected by the two decades of insecurity and its after-effects. Stabilization and economic recovery of merged districts are important for durable peace and prosperity." At the signing ceremony, H.E. Mitsuhiro Wada, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in his speech, men-

tioned, "This project will not only support recovery and income generation but also enhance social cohesion and local governance to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes. Japan and UNDP have a long-standing partnership, and I greatly appreciate UNDP's tireless effort and dedication to achieving sustainable and inclusive development in Pakistan. Speaking on occasion, Mr. Knut Ostby, Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan, stated, "We are grateful to the Government of Japan for their longstanding partnership with UNDP. With their generous support, we were able to expand and strengthen the efforts of the Government of Pakistan, which are critical for achieving stability and sustainable development in the merged districts and bringing it at par with the rest of the country." The signing ceremony was held in Islamabad and was attended by senior officials from the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad, the Economic Affairs Division, Planning and Development Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the past five years, the Government of Japan has made a substantial contribution of more than US\$24 million through partnering with UNDP in key areas of social cohesion, livelihoods, youth empowerment, climate change adaptation, electoral and legislative processes, and the rule of law and justice in Pakistan.

## 15 dengue patients admitted to allied hospitals

RAWALPINDI: As many as 15 patients were admitted to three hospitals in the city, out of which 11 tested positive while the remaining results were being processed. District Coordinator of Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Wednesday informed that 11 patients were admitted to the Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH), three to the

District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) and one to the Holy Family Hospital. He added that out of the total diagnosed with dengue positives, five belonged to Rawalpindi. Dr Sajjad informed around two more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 4,747. The health official said that the

district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had registered six FIRs, sealed four premises, issued Challans to 14, notices to 712, and a fine of Rs 709,500 imposed on violations of anti-dengue SOPs in various areas of the district during the last week. During indoor surveillance, Dr Sajjad informed that 1,306 anti-dengue teams checked 20,395 houses in

the last 24 hours and found dengue larvae at seven homes. Similarly, he added that 575 teams, during outdoor surveillance, inspected 7,247 spots and detected no larvae at any place. Dr Sajjad added that dengue cases were decreasing with turning weather cool which was not suitable for the survival of the dengue parasite.—APP

## FACE music Mela to begin from Dec 2 at PNCA

ISLAMABAD: Introducing Pakistan's first Jazz stage, FACE Music Mela, starting here from December 2 at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), is all set to mesmerize music and fun lovers. The two-day festival is being organized by Foundation of Arts, Culture and Education (FACE), an organization that aims to strengthen, empower and educate people through Arts and Cultural Interactions ensuring Sustainable and Peaceful Communities.

"The event is among the biggest music festivals in Pakistan where, for the first time ever, we'll also introduce a Jazz stage featuring artists from Poland, Austria, Hungary, and the United States. It is an opportunity for cultural dialogue between various countries and Pakistan", said the organizers.

The festival focuses on celebrating diversity and humanity through the common language of music. The music industry cannot survive on television shows alone; it needs an unbroken chain of live music concerts and festivals to ensure a steady revenue stream for musicians, composers, writers, recording engineers, managers, promoters, publishers, sponsors as well as an equitable transparent system of royalty distribution and state regulation.

"The countless musicians of Pakistan that have been spreading the positive vibrations across the land due to their incessant struggles are now waking up and taking initiative in laying the foundations of an industry", the organizers said while talking to APP.

FACE Foundation is an organization whose mission is to strengthen, empower and educate communities through the universal language of music, arts and cultural interaction. It primarily focuses on international exchanges and culture to promote mutual understanding among nations. FACE plays an important role in ensuring education at all levels to empower men and women to create stronger, more humane, creative and sustainable communities. It is specifically dedicated to promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

FACE is a platform that encourages artistes and artisans to create relevant and socially viable works in their communities, while providing avenues to engage and connect with wider audiences and build revenue streams. Through publicly accessible programmes and collaborative multimedia productions, FACE provides a platform for the generation and exchange of ideas leading to positive social change.—APP

## GB's beautiful cultural heritage attract visitors

ISLAMABAD: Besides other regions of the country, the rich and beautiful cultural heritage of Gilgit Baltistan is serving as a source of attraction for visitors at the ongoing Annual Folk Festival of Pakistan, Lok Mela. The pavilion of Gilgit Baltistan has a contingent of over 35 persons, including master artisans, folk artists, folk musicians and officials. Among creative craftspeople, Sultana Iqbal, 45 is a renowned woman artisan from Hunza. She learnt the art of typical and distinguished cross-stitch embroidery from her mother at the age of ten. The sophisticated and complex from the traditional embroidery in Pakistan is contribution of the rich culture of northern part of Pakistan specially Hunza Valley. Sultana Iqbal not only kept this art alive, but also transferred it to other girls in the region. She has been participating in various festival of Artisans-at-work arranged from time to time by various organizations in Pakistan and abroad. Thus she became the symbol for the preservation and continuation of the most valuable examples of Pakistani heritage. In recognition of her services, Sultana Iqbal was granted President's Medal for Pride of Performance by the government. Historically, Gilgit-Baltistan has been at the crossroads of various civilizations for centuries. It has a unique location and serves as a confluence for some of the world's highest mountain ranges- the Pamirs, the Karakoram and the Hindukush. It has also been a place of cultural crosscurrents. Living in historical oblivion and geographical isolation from the rest of the world, the people have clung to a farming life, raising cattle, tending orchards and harvesting crops. Gilgit-Baltistan is home to a number of diversified cultural entities, ethnic groups and various backgrounds. This multitude of culture is because of the strategic location of Gilgit. In view of the multi-cultural and multi-lingual aspects, people also have a beautiful mix of lifestyles and attitudes presenting a pluralistic society living together with peace and harmony for centuries. The region harbors diverse and endangered mountain cultural traditions. Historically, these areas have been aloof from the rest of the world and their life has been revolving around livestock and agriculture, said a news release.—APP

## Industrial area police arrests outlaws

ISLAMABAD: The Industrial Area police, during the last five months, arrested 264 outlaws involved in a series of criminal activities, and recovered looted items worth Rs 27.34 million from them. According to details, Inspector General of Police Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan assigned tasks to the zonal SPs and SHOs to arrest those involved in heinous crime. Following his directives, the 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 gold ornaments, vehicles, motorbikes, mobile phones and other items worth Rs 27.34 million from them.—APP

## SMEDA to organize training

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) will organize a one-day training programme on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) registration procedure and benefits for profitable business growth on December 01 (Thursday). The workshop will be held at Pakistan Gloves Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PGMEA), Sialkot. The session will be organized by SMEDA under National Business Development Programme (NBDDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to a source in the authority. The training programme will provide information about IP laws, the importance of registration of IP rights for industry and the advantages of IP rights registration. The programme would also highlight IP rights like trademarks, copyrights, industrial design and patents in Pakistan and intellectual property infringement matters.—APP

## Planning Ministry organize seminar

ISLAMABAD: Young Development Fellows (YDFs) of Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives on Wednesday organized a seminar to spread awareness among women regarding pro-women legislation. The seminar was held at in Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) as part of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence on behalf of the Planning Commission, said a press release. The penalists from Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), and FJWU gave their presentations to students to familiarize them with the relevant legislature and platforms. Acting Vice Chancellor, FJWU, Dr Azra Yasmeen, welcomed the penalists and collaborated with the team from the Planning Commission to arrange the seminar.

Gender Advisor, NCSW, Dr Shaheen Arif explained pro-women constitutional guarantees, and legislature that was ensured by the government of Pakistan. HoD Law Department, FJWU, Dr Nadia Khadem illuminated students on important laws that were put in place to protect women from the violation of their property rights, cyber space, and personal lives. Additional Director Cyber Crime Wing, FIA, Dr Ayaz Khan, had an illuminating session with the student in which they were advised on how they could save themselves on social media.—APP

## PWDs seek CRPD's vibrant role for socioeconomic uplift

ISLAMABAD: Persons with disabilities (PWD) have urged the Council on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to play a vibrant role for their socioeconomic uplifting and social inclusion as talented amongst them are waiting and the right opportunity. Talking to APP here Wednesday, the Chief Executive Officer of the non-profit welfare organization 'Saaya' Asim Zafar said that the government reconstituted the CRPD and mandated it to ensure different welfare works including health facilities, employment, making the offices and markets accessible for disabled persons. He said buildings and offices have built ramps on the directions of CRPD to fulfill the formality and ignored the relevant height that made entries dangerous for persons with disabilities. "Execution of such programs could be successful if disabled persons are made part of it", he added. Asim said that correct data on disabled persons was not available and it was important as government constitutes policy and allocates the budget based on the available data. He said to avail the data on disabled persons, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) included a questionnaire on "Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement" which concluded that around 14 percent of persons have disabilities in the country.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Wife of Egyptian Defence Attache and others witnessing photo exhibition held in connection with the UAE National Day. — DNA



## Briefs

Rs 431.45  
mIn for  
gasification  
of SEZs

ISLAMABAD :The two state-owned companies, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) are currently in process of executing at least three strategic projects to supply gas to two Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and an industrial park in their respective areas to boost industrial production. For this purpose, the government has allocated funds amounting to Rs 431.45 million in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23) to advance three ongoing projects one each in Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab, according to an official document available with APP. The SSGC is laying a pipeline to supply 10 MMCFD (Metric Million Cubic Feet per Day) Re-gasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) to Bostan Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Balochistan Province with an allocation of Rs 100 million for the current fiscal year, and a dedicated line to provide 13 MMCFD RLNG to Bin Qasim Industrial Park, located in Karachi city of Sindh province, with Rs 74.71 million funds. —APP

Three bids  
to smuggle  
wheat flour  
foiled

RAWALPINDI :The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Wednesday foiled three bids to smuggle wheat flour and seized 350 bags. According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Naseerabad police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up three drivers namely Abdullah, Saleem Khan and Toqeer for carrying 350 wheat flour bags. He informed that the accused were trying to illegally ship out wheat and flour bags out of Rawalpindi division. He said the Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids. —APP

All internet  
services  
restored across  
country: PTA

ISLAMABAD :Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Wednesday said that all internet services had been restored, hours after disruption was reported across the country. "Faults in the terrestrial segment of SEAMEWE-5 have been repaired at 2 AM PST. Internet services are operational as per normal routine", said a PTA official in a tweet. SEAMEWE-5, also known as South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe 5, is an optical fiber submarine communications cable system that carries telecom links between Singapore and France. The 20,000 kilometer long underground cable system was commissioned in 2016. At least seven submarine internet cable systems are currently connecting to Pakistan. Meanwhile, the spokesperson of Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd (PTCL) said the cut in International Submarine Cable AAE-1 has been repaired and PTCL services fully restored across the country.

NA Speaker,  
Deputy  
grieved over  
Quetta blast

ISLAMABAD :National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf and his Deputy Zahid Akram Durrani on Wednesday strongly condemned the killing of several innocent people in Quetta due to a suicide bomb blast. In separate condolence messages, Speaker and Deputy Speaker deeply regretted the losses of lives and sympathized with the bereaved families. They prayed for early recovery of the wounded and prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant courage to the aggrieved families to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity. —APP

US-Pak effort to elevate  
higher education sector

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of Pakistan HEC, said that HEC will continue working with U.S. government to build a cadre of experts to improve graduate employability

DNA

ISLAMABAD : United States Ambassador Donald Blome joined officials from the University of Utah and the Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, to inaugurate the International Summit on Higher Education and Workforce Development today. The summit was organized by the U.S.-funded Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA) and focuses on the role of higher education in the 21st century, highlighting the fluid nature of learning and employment, and explores how universities can reposition themselves in this ever-changing landscape. Ambassador Donald Blome celebrated the 75 years of partnership between the U.S. and Pakistan and said, "In a country where more than 60 percent of the population is below the age of 30, we must continue to help youth achieve their full potential." Minister Iqbal remarked that the Government of Pakistan is open to improving the higher education system and is looking into various options to capitalize on the abundant youth potential in the country.



He appreciated Pakistan's 75-year partnership with the U.S. government and celebrated the support provided by the U.S. government to academia through specialized investment in higher education. He further added that academic institu-

tions and the public and private sectors should join hands to accelerate this development. Mr. Iqbal tasked Pakistani higher education officials to improve higher education. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission of

Pakistan (HEC), said that HEC will continue working with the U.S. government to build a cadre of experts to improve graduate employability. Senator Keith Grover, Utah State Senator from the United States noted, "it is the ultimate goal of an institute

to provide necessary skills for youth so they can positively contribute to the workforce both locally and globally." HESSA is supported by the United States through USAID, and is implemented in collaboration with 16 Pakistani public universities.

Shauzab lashes Fazal for  
slanderous, absurd remarks

DNA



ISLAMABAD : Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Women's Wing President Kanwal Shauzab lambasted Fazal Rehman for using inappropriate, absurd, shameful and slanderous language against PTI's women, questioning the silence of the Supreme Court (SC) and other state institutions over his filth-filled speeches. Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, Kanwal Shauz-

ab said that Fazal Rehman was known for speaking such filth and mudslinging against women for taking part in politics but no action has been taken against him hitherto.

She said that Islam gave great status to women that emphasized greatly on their sanctity and respect but this person hidden himself in the cloak of religion used such filth. "We are followers of a religion that gave tremendous rights to women either they are mothers, daughters sisters and wife," she added. She said that Fazal Rehman even issued a fatwa against Benazir in 1993 but later become part her government but he was power hungry person. Kanwal Shauzab stated that he used such improper language against PTI's women because the PTI rendered

him political orphan, as he could not win election even from his own constituency. Therefore, she added that he vent his frustration by foul talk because he could not even secure the slot of the President. PTI leader went on to say that she could not call him as Maulana who was the engine of the PMD train, who used religious for his political motives. She said that Maryam Aurangzeb, Hina Rabbani and Shazia Mari sat around this man but they did not dare to condemn his absurd remarks against women. Kanwal Shauzab stated that Article 14 of the Constitution gave protection of the dignity and honor of every individual but the state was completely asleep, as no institution was speaking against the violation of the constitution and law.

She said that people were stripped and killed in this country but no organization of the state was taking action. She raised question as to why PEMRA allow airing such vile and filth-filled speeches of Fazal. "I express my sympathy with the women of Fazlur Rahman's house, as how they are tolerating such a dirty person," she added. On one hand, she said that PTI Chairman Imran Khan enjoyed such a respectable status who built three state-of-the-art cancer hospitals after his mother's name that every mother of Pakistan yearned and wished to have a son like him. PTI leader said that every sister wished to have a brother who would become a source of respect and honor for the entire nation.

China continues to  
support Pakistan's  
health system

DNA

BEIJING : "After the 14-day aid in Pakistan, we are ready to continue giving full play to our professional strengths and enhance exchanges with Pakistan and contribute to the reconstruction of Pakistan's health system", said Mr. Huang Wenxin, head of China (Guangxi) Medical Expert Team for Aiding Pakistan in Flood Relief. The team has concluded its work in Pakistan for post-flood medical treatment and infectious disease prevention. During the trip, the expert team, consisting of experts on gastroenterology, infectious diseases, respiratory medicine, dermatology, general surgery, nursing, monitoring, analysis and prevention of infectious diseases, drinking water sanitation, mosquito vector monitoring and transmission, environmental elimination, and laboratory testing, visited Islamabad, Karachi, and the badly-hit Khaipur District in Sindh Province. In Gambat Relief Camp, the team donated medical supplies to Khaipur, including antibiotics and antiviral drugs for respiratory tract infections and infectious diarrhea, dermatological topical medication for infection, anti-allergy medicine, anti-diarrhetic medicine, mosquito repellent medicine, antimalarial medicine, malaria detection kits, protective clothing, medical masks, etc. Experts in the team together with local doctors provided free medical care to the flood affectees. "We also checked the water source and impact of mosquitoes and flies in the camp, and discussed with the health officials of Heilbul County on how to strengthen health education for the flood victims and promote a healthy lifestyle", Mr. Huang Wenxin told China Economic Net (CEN). "I'm deeply impressed by the patients saying thanks to us, the hospitable local doctors, and the full support from local health officials and security personnel", Mr. Huang Wenxin recalled.

ANF seizes over 2,255 kg  
drugs, 1430 intoxicated  
tablets; arrests 10

RAWALPINDI :Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting 10 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country seized over 2,255 kg drugs, 20 heroin-filled capsules, 1430 intoxicated tablets and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that ANF in an operation at Islamabad International Airport recovered 20 heroin-filled capsules from the possession of a passenger going to Jeddah while 986 grams Ice drug from the possession of another passenger going to Muscat. ANF also recovered 500 intoxicated tablets from a parcel booked for London at International Mail Office, Rawalpindi. The spokesman said that ANF in another raid at a private courier company office recovered 1400 grams Ice drug from a parcel booked for Canada. Over 69 kg charras and over 20 kg opium was seized from a vehicle intercepted near Sheikhpura Toll Plaza. An accused resident of Peshawar was also rounded up during the operation. —APP

Book on transformative  
realism launched

MARC SAXER

ISLAMABAD :The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Pakistan organized a Book Launch Ceremony for Marc Saxer's book titled 'Transformative Realism'. Marc Saxer, the author, said that the book was written in the German context with the aim to address the looming economic crisis. He said that while the mitigation of looming challenges like climate change, democracy, and financial meltdown required a robust transformation of our political systems from head to toe, transformative realism was a far cry on both, global and national levels.

Saxer added that the book also dwelled on what was the new geopolitical order, what was the way forward for countries, and what was the comparative advantage that the states had with respect to the world. He said that there was a need for social re-engineering of the society and its structure. Transformative alliances could be guaranteed only if deliberately brought with adequate resources to break through status quo alliances and it was vital to create platforms where all of the above could come forth as one, he said. Dr Mujeeb Afzal, Assistant Professor at School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR), Quaid-i-Azam University, commented that modern societies were complex and it

was the system's inability that produced problems that it was not able to solve. Hence the way that these societies were creating and consuming things created crisis and instability. The resistance to change was due to a combination of status quo forces, which interpreted resistance in their view of moralism. The Technocrats were not able to provide any solution and hence change was only possible through restructuring the social order as there was a dire need to break the inertia, he added. Dr Afzal said that capitalism had faced many challenges but had proven to be powerful enough as it had invented and reinvented itself many a times. Hence, its potential to reinvent itself in the current crisis, could not be underestimated at any

cost, he added. Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz, President IRS complimented Saxer for being an avid writer on democratization and transformation in both developed and developing societies. He said that the book made it easier for his readers to understand the multifarious challenges confronting societies across the globe to become better democracies. He commented that the book was less about the crisis crippling the society. It was not about the what and why of change but was mostly focused about 'how' to bring about change. Ambassador Riyaz said that Saxer in his book, advocated ideas that gave academics and scholars ways to re-orienting their democratic struggle with renewed hope.

## DC assures to resolve issues of business community

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD :Irfan Nawaz Memon, Deputy Commissioner, Islamabad said that the business community is the key stakeholder in the economic development of the country and assured that he would take all possible measures to resolve their key issues. He said that a Committee would be formed to address the issues of the business community including encroachments in markets, board tax and professional tax. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). Irfan Nawaz Memon said that due to the consistent water boring in Islamabad, the water tables have gone very low and water shortage could develop into a serious crisis in the federal capital in future. He stressed that the business community should raise its voice against this issue for its optimum solution. He said that the business community should cooperate in curbing frauds in cooperative housing societies. He said that construction of buildings over Nullahs in Islamabad is a serious issue and stressed that the business community should cooperate in addressing this issue. He said that the business community should arrange fire alarms, fire extinguishers and water tanks in commercial and industrial buildings to cope with fire incidents and he was ready to facilitate them in such efforts. He assured that he was ready to work with ICCI in addressing the other major issues of the business community. Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry highlighted the various issues of the business community that needed the attention of DC Islamabad for redress. He

said that instead of issuing notices to the business community for meeting tough firefighting requirements, these requirements should be revised in consultation with them to facilitate them in this issue. He said that 2 underground parking lots in Jinnah Super Market should be operationalized and shifting of courts from F-8 Markaz should be expedited to address the concerns of the business community. He said that encroachments from markets should be removed in consultation with stakeholders and pushcarts set up under Ahsas Program should be removed from markets to a separate location. He said that the professional tax belonged to the local govern-

ment and stressed that it should be suspended till the completion of election of local government in Islamabad. He said that board tax should be charged according to the gazette notification of 2014 and double the rate of contractors should be revised. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Mian Shaukat Masud, Tahir Ayub, Babar Chaudhry, Zahid Qureshi, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Ahmed Khan, Khalid Chaudhry, Saif ur Rehman Khan and representatives market associations also highlighted various issues for the attention of DC Islamabad and stressed for their early redress.

NEPRA  
concludes  
public  
hearing into  
KE's FCA

ISLAMABAD : National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Wednesday concluded a public hearing on the monthly fuel adjustment (FCA) for October and 1st quarterly adjustment (July-September) for the current fiscal year 2022-23 of K-Electric. The hearing was presided over by NEPRA Chairman engineer Tauseef H Farooqi while member Sindh engineer Rafique Ahmed Shaikh and member Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa engineer Maqsood Anwar Khan were also present. The K-Electric has sought Rs 1.88 per unit and Rs 7.88 per unit decrease in power tariff for October and the first quarter respectively under monthly fuel adjustment and quarterly adjustment mechanisms.

However, the NEPRA calculated Rs 2.15 per unit decrease in FCA for the said period. The FCA would be applicable for only one month. However, it would not be applicable to domestic consumers using up to 300 units, agri consumers and electrical vehicle charging stations. The K-electric officials told that the average cost of KE own power plants remained at Rs 32.96 per unit while the cost of electricity purchased through the Central Power Purchasing Agency stood at Rs 12.1 per unit. The authority would announce its decision after reviewing statistics. —APP

CPO visits  
Rwp cricket  
stadium

RAWALPINDI :City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari here on Wednesday visited Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium and reviewed the security arrangements finalized for Pak-England practice session and cricket match. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations, SP Rawal, SP Security and other senior police officers were present on the occasion. The CPO was briefed about the security arrangements. The CPO while reviewing the arrangements also visited the entry gates, parking, adjoining areas, markets and different other important places. He directed the senior officers to personally check the duty points and brief the personnel on duty.

Implementation of the proposed Standard Operating Procedures for the security should be ensured at all costs, he said adding, traffic flow in the traffic circle should also be ensured for the convenience of the citizens. He said, 3000 cops had been deployed to ensure best security arrangements for the match. Foolproof security arrangements were being ensured for the practice session and the cricket match, the CPO said. —APP

IRSA  
releases 79,500  
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD :Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 79,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 47,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1509.34 feet and was 111.34 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 22,800 cusecs while outflow was recorded as 42,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1136.85 feet, which was 86.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 9,500 cusecs and 22,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded at 48,300, 39,700, 30,700 and 12,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 9,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, whereas 2,000 cusecs was released from River Chenab at Marala. —APP



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## NATO should stop fueling Ukraine conflict

For anyone wishing for an early end of the nearly 10-month Russia-Ukraine conflict, the message from the two-day NATO foreign ministers' meeting that ended in Bucharest, Romania, on Wednesday was not very encouraging. This is because the world's largest security alliance, rather than exploring the possibilities to realize a negotiated settlement of the crisis by trying to create conditions for peace talks at an early date, seems to be intent on prolonging the hostilities despite the sufferings in Ukraine and the fact the conflict-induced global food and energy crises are pushing more people around the world into extreme poverty and hunger. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Tuesday pledged to drum up support for Ukraine aimed at ensuring the defeat of Russia, "because we know that the only way to achieve an outcome of this war which ensures that Ukraine prevails as a sovereign independent nation is to strengthen its position on the battlefield". He also said Moscow cannot stop the alliance's expansion to include Ukraine. Given that NATO's continuous eastward expansion has been at least partly responsible for the ongoing conflict, Stoltenberg's remarks only serve to make a settlement at the negotiation table even more difficult. Moreover, NATO's confirmation at the meeting that deliveries of more sophisticated missile systems such as Patriot missiles are being considered risks escalating the war into a direct military conflict between NATO and Russia. Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of the Russian Security Council, said on Tuesday on his Telegram channel: "If, as Stoltenberg hinted, NATO supplies ... Patriot complexes along with NATO personnel, they will immediately become a legitimate target of our armed forces." Instead of prolonging and escalating the conflict by supplying Ukraine with weapons, the US, NATO and the European Union should conduct comprehensive dialogue with Russia with the aim of not only bringing an end to the conflict in Ukraine but also resolving their differences with Russia so that a stable security architecture can be established in Europe. All parties concerned should work to realize those goals no matter how dim the prospects are. Continuing on their present course risks turning a Cold War vendetta that is long past its sell-by date into an even broader and more catastrophic hot war. Most pressingly, peaceful settlement of the crisis as soon as possible is the only way to end the sufferings of people in Ukraine, and others around the world who have been impacted by the spillover effects of the hostilities. The conflict has devastated Ukraine's infrastructure and economy, and forced around 6 million people to flee Ukraine in one of the fastest-growing refugee crises in recent history. Even Stoltenberg admitted, "the price we pay is in money, while the price Ukrainians pay is a price paid in blood." That should be on his conscience, and all those who are intent on prolonging the conflict.



## 'Buy America' strategy: a wake-up call for Europe

In a slick General Motors advert aired during last year's Super Bowl, the actor and comedian Will Ferrell took patriotic umbrage at Norway's ability to sell more electric vehicles per capita than the US. "Norway's beating us at EVs!", Ferrell lamented, before promoting GM's latest battery technology to the watching millions. Almost two years on, the angst is being felt on the other side of the Atlantic. Following on from President Joe Biden's "Buy America" rules for infrastructure, his Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) will deliver, from January, almost \$370bn worth of subsidies and tax breaks to US-based companies involved in the transition to a low-carbon economy. Around \$50bn will come in the form of tax credits to persuade Americans to buy electric vehicles made in North America (Canada and Mexico were included in the deal after initially being left out). Mr Biden has hailed this preferential treatment as a means to turbocharge America's drive to net zero, create good clean energy jobs throughout the US, and give substance to his "made in the USA" rhetoric. The view from Paris, Berlin and Brussels is considerably less sanguine. As a growing number of companies seek to flee prohibitive European energy costs, there is a fear that the lure of huge American subsidies will accelerate an industrial exodus. The French president, Emmanuel Macron, suggested last month that if the US was following China down a protectionist path, Europe could not afford to be left behind, pining for a golden age of free trade. During a state visit this week to Washington, Mr Macron will seek to win concessions for European manufacturers, allowing them to compete on a more level playing field with US-based manufacturers. He will also raise European frustrations over the huge mark-up on the price of American gas being sold into the EU. But major changes to the flagship IRA are unlikely, and in any case the direction of travel is clear. As Ukrainians confront Russian attempts to freeze them into submission this winter, this transatlantic controversy must not be allowed to fracture western unity at a critical time. But the drift of Mr Biden's policies should represent a wake-up call for European leaders. For better and for worse, the era in which free trade has been an unchallenged strategic goal in the west is over. The downsides of that consensus were exposed by populist revolts in post-industrial regions of the west, Covid-related supply-chain failures, national security concerns and the global energy crisis. The challenge for Europe is to maintain its commitment to openness and international trade, while at the same time developing a concept of European economic sovereignty that is adequate to changing times. The EU internal market commissioner, Thierry Breton, has described Mr Biden's subsidies as an example of "determination and audacity" as the world transitions to clean energy. Europe must now decide whether to respond in kind.

## For Canadian universities, Palestinian is 'toxic other'

M Muhannad Ayyash

The extensive report, prepared by Dania Majid, shows the prevalence of anti-Palestinian racism across a number of institutions in Canada. Particularly important is how Palestinian narratives are erased and excluded. These are narratives that were developed and advanced by Palestinian scholars, artists, activists, political leaders, communities, and civil society organisations, and which allow us to make sense of the violence, oppression, expulsion, displacement.

Nearly every university in Canada has a statement or document that states its commitment to anti-racism. As social institutions that proclaim to advance knowledge and promote a more equitable, inclusive, free, and democratic society, universities have publicly positioned themselves over the last few years as active participants in the fight against racism. Sadly, when you examine university policy or speak with racialised faculty, students, and staff, you quickly realise that most universities exhibit a shallow understanding and practice of anti-racism. Universities are anti-racist in the same way that multinational corporations are anti-racist: they advance, entrench, expand, and benefit from structural racism while claiming to be anti-racist, which judging by their actions, simply means, being "tolerant" of people of colour. Thus, not only are universities failing to address the problem of racism in society writ large, they can't even properly address it on campuses across Canada, where

structural racism remains the norm, as Black and Indigenous scholars have been teaching us for decades. Anti-Palestinian racism is another example of this. In a report published in April, The Arab Canadian Lawyers Association defined anti-Palestinian racism as "a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanises Palestinians or their narratives." The extensive report, prepared by Dania Majid, shows the prevalence of anti-Palestinian racism across a number of institutions in Canada. Particularly important is how Palestinian narratives are erased and excluded. These are narratives that were developed and advanced by Palestinian scholars, artists, activists, political leaders, communities, and civil society organisations, and which allow us to make sense of the violence, oppression, expulsion, displacement, and dispossession that Palestinians have endured for decades, as well as the Palestinian aspirations for liberation and freedom. Critical to underscore here, as I previously argued in an academic journal article, is a salient feature of anti-Palestinian racism in academe: the expulsion of the Palestinian critique of Zionism and Israel. This is a critique - which is also adopted by non-Palestinians - that is based in, and emerges from, the Palestinian experience of the Zionist project, and one that incisively and convincingly shows, since the 1910s, what the Zionist project was/is/and can only be: a racist settler colonial project that violently expels Indigenous Palestinians from their lands, erasing their history, presence, aspirations, and identity. Much like Israel expels Palestinians from their lands, academic institutions in Canada - a settler colony that is a staunch ally and supporter of Israel's settler colonial project - actively expel the Palestinian critique from their halls of academe. A report recently released by Independent Jewish Voices documents this experience of Palestinians and their allies on Canadian university campuses. The 100-page report has been authored by Sheryl Nestel and Rowan Gaudet, who collected approximately 80 testimonies from Palestinian, Jewish, and other racialised academics and students describing the experiences of repression, silencing, harassment, intimidation, and marginalisation that they face on Canadian campuses. The stories in the report are what the expulsion of the Palestinian critique looks like in practice. The most prominent way in which this expulsion is accomplished is by casting the Palestinian critique as anti-Semitic and violent. For decades, Israel and its supporters have been redefining anti-Semitism to include the Palestinian critique of Zionism and Israel, most recently in their promotion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism. Instead of being framed for what it actually is - a call for decolonial liberation and freedom - the Palestinian critique is associated with anti-Semitism, rendering the Palestinian what I call the "toxic other": the "other" that only brings toxicity to academe because of the racist, spurious, and outrageous claim that Palestinians hold a naturally bigoted and violent disposition towards Jews.

The prevalence of this approach - laughable from a substantive standpoint yet harmful and violent in its effects - is evident in the report, which states: "Unsubstantiated allegations of antisemitic intent and support for terrorism are commonly levelled against pro-Palestine academics and activists. Significantly, Palestinians, Muslims, and non-Arab racialised participants appear to have borne the brunt of direct attacks on their scholarship and activism. The emotional impact of harassment and suppression was felt most acutely by the Palestinian students and faculty interviewed. Jewish activists were not immune to attack and were often characterised by opponents as 'kapos' or 'self-hating Jews.'" The report concludes that the result of all this repression, erasure, and expulsion is a "chilling effect" in Canada that discourages open and honest discussion of Palestinian liberation. And while Palestinians and their supporters are experiencing this structural racism, one might wonder: what are Canadian universities doing as this anti-Palestinian racism problem goes unaddressed and unchecked? We need not try to imagine where Canadian universities stand on this question, and we need not pay attention to what they say, but rather what they do. Take this recent example as the real indicator of where we are. In August of this year, multiple Canadian university presidents went on a junket to Israel. Not much is known about this trip. It was never announced before it took place, and Canadian universities that participated have remained quiet about the trip to this day. Canadian universities that are thought to have attended are neither confirming nor denying their participation. We don't even know how many university presidents and/or senior members of the administrations actually went, but Israeli institutions have announced that Concordia University, Dalhousie University, University of Manitoba, McGill University, University of Ottawa, Simon Fraser University, University of Waterloo, Western University, York University, and the Chief Operations Officer at the U15 group of Canadian research-intensive universities are among the participants. We know that they were hosted by Israeli institutions and lobby groups, and surely given the propagandist narratives of the Israeli state on their visit - eg, Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East; Israel is the only guarantor of security for all Jews everywhere; the West needs to work with Israel to help it survive hostile and anti-Semitic Arabs; look at the wonderful research being undertaken by such a small country that is under siege from backwards and violent Arabs; Israel can be an asset for research in Canada; and the rest of it. These Canadian universities, some of which already have established strong relationships and ties to Israeli institutions, are proclaiming to be anti-racist on the one hand, and acting in concert with a racist apartheid regime on the other. In other words, they are complicit with apartheid and settler colonialism while

telling us that they are anti-racist and committed to decolonisation. A group of scholars in Canada are requesting answers to some basic questions: Why didn't Canadian universities announce this trip? Why would Canadian universities work with lobby groups that have interfered in the academic affairs of Canadian universities? And why did these university presidents choose to ignore the call to boycott Israeli academic institutions that has been clearly communicated by Palestinian academics, students, and indeed across many sectors of Palestinian civil society? Despite the efforts of a group of committed scholars, university presidents from the above-named universities, as far for the course, are simply ignoring these questions, just as they have ignored and continue to ignore the experiences of anti-Palestinian racism that many faculty, students, and staff are facing on their campuses. And this should not come as a surprise. The fact of the matter is that Canadian universities are part of the settler colonial structure that eliminates and expels Indigenous peoples in the settler colony of Canada and in the settler colony of Israel. Little can be expected from these universities, as all we ever receive are shallow and vague commitments that amount to nothing more than what European liberal thought and institutions have always offered: the crumbs of inclusion and equity, what is otherwise known as liberal tolerance. The logic of liberal tolerance is simple. It says, "I will not inflict violence on you directly or harshly, only softly, calmly, and quietly, and you must accept this as the price you pay for entry into my halls." The term "liberal tolerance" have perhaps disappeared from university policies and documents, but it is still the logic that guides and shapes university actions. The actions, in this case, are clear: Canadian universities are not interested in naming, let alone addressing, anti-Palestinian racism; and not only that, Canadian universities directly engage in anti-Palestinian racism when they consider Palestinian demands for freedom and liberation through boycotts as not only unworthy of their consideration, but as essentially violent and bigoted demands. But despite all the efforts to marginalise and toxify the Palestinian "other", scholars and students who are committed to real anti-racism and decolonisation see right through the mirage and call out the university's claim of being anti-racist for the chimaera that it is, not just in the case of anti-Palestinian racism but in other forms of racism, as well. As university administrators build ties across settler colonies, and cement the university within systems of apartheid and settler colonialism, academics and students are building their own ties and cementing their position as the true carriers of the anti-racist and decolonial project. We don't boast multimillion-dollar partnerships and contracts, but we do boast something that these university senior administrations do not have. It is something more substantive, real, ever-lasting, and worthy of our commitment and effort: an honest pursuit of truth and justice. *Courtesy: Al Jazeera*

## A nexus of circular debt

Mohammad Armughan

Idle power plants in Pakistan may export electricity to big consumers in neighboring countries during the off-peak season and long-term purchase agreements need to be revised to reduce capacity payments. All the generation projects which are under "take or pay" contracts need to be converted into "take and pay" contracts. Government may contract all future IPPs in hybrid merchant market, which means, not providing any guaranteed profitability and return to these IPPs to be derived by their cost of production.

The poor financial performance of Pakistan's energy sector has remained a nagging problem. For one and half a decade, Pakistan's energy sector has been creating an immense cash deficit named as "Circular Debt". A commodity of daily consumption is beset by inconsistent pricing reforms, low-cost recovery, unbudgeted subsidies, poor revenue collection, corruption, energy theft and transmission and distribution (T&D) losses. Ultimately, leading to financial underperformance and creating indebtedness in energy sector. Circular debt is a vicious cycle where entities in the energy sector supply chain owes money to other institutions. It is a payment deficiency at the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA). The CPPA does not receive the outstanding payment from power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) due to a shortfall in receivables by the state-owned DISCOs and private Karachi Electric (KE) company. Resultantly, CPPA does not make payments to state-owned power Generation Companies (GENCOs), Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and National Transmission & Dispatch Company (NTDC). In response, GENCOs and IPPs fail to clear their dues to fuel suppliers. Subsequently, fuel suppliers default on their payments to refineries and international fuel suppliers. Over the time, circular debt has been piling up and has become a major stumbling block for Pakistan's economy. According to National Electric Pow-

er Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), Pakistan's circular debt is around Rs2.253 trillion, total receivables of DISCOs are Rs1.498 trillion and T&D losses are Rs0.520 trillion as of 30th June 2022. Moreover, T&D losses from past several years show amateurish infrastructure and management system of DISCOs. In 2018, government started an anti-theft campaign to minimize losses. The government also launched Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project in Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) and Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) to solve the problem of system losses. Unfortunately, this did not prove to be a permanent solution. Moreover, the government increased power tariffs by 11 per cent, which also didn't solve the problem because an increase in the cost of electricity supply was timely passed on consumers. In 2019, the government issued Rs400 billion Sukuk bonds against mortgaging DISCOs and GENCOs assets for paying IPPs and Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) receivables. It is essential to mention that Rs0.43/KWh is charged to consumers for interest payments of these loans. Initially, it will provide a sigh of relief, but it will be cumbersome when the bonds mature. Ultimately, leading to further circular debt where government will opt for more loans. Again, the problem is not solved but

brushed under the carpet. In the same year, government notified average unified consumer tariffs of Rs11.95 per unit instead of a national average unified tariff of Rs15.53 for various categories in 10 DISCOs. In July 2019, the government held back industrial support but in February 2020 it approved again. Moreover, the government increased prices for all consumers except domestic consumers below 300 units and imposed two additional charges to cover the deficit. But nothing worked, as payables are rising day by day. Earlier, approximately Rs500 billions of circular debt accrues every year. But now, dollar exchange rate and increased fuel prices contribute exponentially to circular debt. Recently, increasing electricity tariffs up to 0.95 per unit has aggravated consumers' problem. Political governments are reluctant to increase tariffs but are helpless before International Monetary Fund (IMF). As the energy sector relies on subsidies, equity payments, and credit guarantees to maintain its operations, this leads to continuous deficit financing. Therefore, robust policy recommendations are needed to mitigate the nexus of circular debt. A simple and direct payment system is required in which the billed amount of government agency is directly debited from the agency's account to the relevant DISCO. And only bill recovery practice can be out-

sourced from private parties where the recovery rate is low. Moreover, to overcome T&D losses, one possible way could be to invest in DISCOs infrastructure. IPPs may shift to hydropower and indigenous coal resources and invest in solar power and wind projects to develop other renewable sources. Idle power plants in Pakistan may export electricity to big consumers in neighboring countries during the off-peak season and long-term purchase agreements need to be revised to reduce capacity payments. All the generation projects which are under "take or pay" contracts need to be converted into "take and pay" contracts. Government may contract all future IPPs in hybrid merchant market, which means, not providing any guaranteed profitability and return to these IPPs to be derived by their cost of production. Lastly, NEPRA may ensure consensus, cohesiveness, and continuation about decision-making, policy alignment and policy implementation among all the stakeholders. Since financial capital is the backbone of a country. In case of negligence, it may doom the power sector by severely impacting Pakistan's economy. *-The author is a Research Associate at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad, and can be reached via Email: armughan@pide.org.pk*



## Briefs

## Bilawal dares Khan to quit assemblies

FROM PAGE 01  
The assembly and said that if the PTI chief asks him to dissolve the house, he would do so without waiting for a minute. However, the PML-N — along with the coalition parties — is mulling thwarting the move and the party's senior leaders have stressed that they would go to "any length" to keep it from dissolving. Taking a jibe at Khan for cutting his long march short, Bilawal said: "He fled from Pindi. The coward beat a hasty retreat just like he did at the time of no-confidence motion." Bilawal told Khan that if he decides to resign from the assemblies, then the PPP and its "jijalas" were ready to face his party. "We're not afraid of you," he vowed. At the outset of his address, Bilawal thanked the people of Karachi for coming out in huge numbers as the party had decided to hold the founding day at different districts instead of a central one due to floods. Bilawal paid glaring tributes to his mother, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and his maternal grandfather, ex-premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, for their services to the country. He added that a "jijala" would be elected Karachi's mayor when the local body elections — scheduled to be held in January 2023 — take place. "A 'jijala' sitting here in this crowd will become the next mayor," he said, stressing that the PPP does not promote politics of hatred and anarchy.

## Govt to fight all of Imran's adventures

FROM PAGE 01  
She said the one who announced the overthrow of the federal government went on to overthrow his own provincial governments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The federal information minister said former Prime Minister Imran Khan will have to account for corruption including Toshakhana and foreign funding. Information Minister Maryam said Imran Khan's thinking is not democratic and he is not only incompetent but an unsuccessful and corrupt person. She said the former Imrani regime from 2018 to 2022 was the darkest period in the history of Pakistan and the current reason for the inflation is the mismanagement of the last 4 years. She confirmed that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif did not accept the resignation of Federal Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar. She said there are ample reserves of wheat for the current year so, despite the floods, there is no threat of a wheat crisis in the country.

## Kh Asif claims he is in contact with PTI leaders

FROM PAGE 01  
adding that he wouldn't tell media if they have any strategy. Khawaja Asif went on to say that several people from KP and Punjab doesn't want assemblies to be dissolved. It is pertinent to mention here that former PM Imran Khan had announced to dissolve assemblies in Punjab and KP and will soon give date in this regard.

## Imran felicitates COAS, CJCS on promotions

FORM PAGE 01  
Muhammad Ali Jinnah regarding the role and "duty" of armed forces. "Do not forget that the armed forces are the servants of the people and you do not make national policy; it is we, the civilians, who decide these issues and it is your duty to carry out these tasks with which you are entrusted," the quote written in an image tweeted by Khan read.

## Illness strikes England team on eve of Test match with Pak

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Former England Test captain Joe Root on Wednesday dismissed the possibility of his team teammates falling ill due to food poisoning ahead of the first Test match in Rawalpindi, saying "it is just I think one of those things that we, unfortunately, picked up as a group". "I don't think it's food poisoning or Covid or anything like that," said Root as he responded to a query at a press talk in Rawalpindi today. England's cricketers, including skipper Ben Stokes, have fallen ill on the eve of the first Test, despite the touring party bringing their own chef. "As far as I'm aware, a few guys are not feeling 100 per cent," Root told the news conference. However, Root clarified there was no connection between food and illness. "The thing is we have been carrying a chef away for a couple of years. If you look at the international teams, especially England, they all have their own chefs. We optimise ourselves and we see it from a nutrition point of view as well," he commented in response to a question. When asked about the current state of health of other players, Root said: "It's hard to say as I have not seen anyone this morning. Guys are doing everything they can. They worked really hard for the games... so I guess time will tell." A ceremony on Wednesday for the two captains to unveil the series trophy was postponed to give Stokes time to recover. "Several play-



ers and staff members, including England captain Ben Stokes, are feeling unwell and have been advised to stay at the hotel to rest up," said the England and Wales Cricket Board in a statement. Meanwhile, in a tweet today, the Pakistan Cricket Board said that it was in discussion with the ECB regarding the commencement of the first Test match as some England players were "down with a viral infection". "The PCB continues to monitor the situation, is in contact with the ECB and will

provide further updates in due course," it added. About half of the playing squad of 16 has been hit, according to the BBC, with only five taking part in an optional training session with around 14 members of the travelling party — including coaches and backup staff — advised staying at the team hotel. Joe Root, Zak Crawley, Harry Brook, Ollie Pope and Keaton Jennings were the players at training on Wednesday, while head coach Brendon McCullum was also in attendance. All of the squad had trained on Tuesday.

The illness could force England to change the team for the Test which had been announced on Tuesday. Lancashire all-rounder Liam Livingstone is due to make his Test debut on Thursday, while opener Ben Duckett was recalled for his first Test in six years. England are on their first Test tour of Pakistan in 17 years, following their T20 side playing seven matches in the country two months ago, taking the series 4-3. Problems with food and players becoming ill during the T20 series led to the decision to bring a chef, Omar Meziame, who also worked with the England men's football team at the 2018 World Cup in Russia and at Euro 2020. England and Pakistan will contest a three-Test series with the first match starting tomorrow (Dec 1-5), the second in Multan from Dec 9-13 and the third in Karachi from Dec 17-21. Here are the squads for the Test series: England: Ben Stokes (c), Ben Foakes (wicket-keeper), Joe Root, James Anderson, Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Will Jacks, Keaton Jennings, Jack Leach, Liam Livingstone, Jamie Overton, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Mark Wood, Rehan Ahmed. Pakistan: Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan (vice-captain and wicket-keeper), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Azhar Ali, Faheem Ashraf, Haris Rauf, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Naseem Shah, Nauman Ali, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Shan Masood and Zahid Mehmood

## NATO seeks to shore up Russia's neighbours

FROM PAGE 01

Kuleba also demanded Russia withdraw its forces from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, where Moscow announced it had put the Ukrainian chief engineer in charge. Ukraine has said the engineer is a hostage. Washington pledged \$53 million to buy power grid equipment, and U.S. President Joe Biden said providing more military assistance is a priority. Republicans, who take control of Congress' House of Representatives in January, have talked about pausing the funding, which has exceeded \$18 billion. In Kyiv, snow fell and temperatures were expected to remain below freezing as millions in and around the capital struggled to heat their homes after attacks on infrastructure that Kyiv and its allies say are aimed at harming civilians, a war crime. Workers have raced to repair the damage even as they anticipate more; electricity supplies crept back up towards three quarters of needs, national grid operator Ukrenergo said, a full week after the worst Russian barrage so far. Moscow, which has declared large parts of eastern and southern Ukraine annexed, says Ukrainians can end their suffering by accepting demands it has not spelled out. Ukraine says it will fight on until Russia withdraws completely.

## Macron aims to show European unity

FROM PAGE 01

Biden took office in 2021. And that kind of visit comes with a certain amount of glamor. The French and US national anthems will be played. Army personnel will, according to tradition, fire off 21 cannon shots. And military chiefs will salute both heads of state. "Macron's trip will close the unpleasant chapter of the so-called AUKUS deal — even though that doesn't mean the episode will be completely forgotten," Yves Boyer, a specialist in trans-Atlantic relations and professor emeritus at Paris-based Ecole Polytechnique, told DW. Through AUKUS, sealed in September 2021, the US and the United Kingdom agreed to help Australia develop and deploy nuclear submarines. The deal brought an existing submarine contract between Australia and France's shipbuilder Naval Group to an abrupt halt — an unpleasant surprise for the French government.

## PML-N scrambles to save Punjab Assembly from...

FORM PAGE 01

They pondered over ways to counter the strategy of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan to prevent the dissolution of Punjab Assembly and considered various options to defeat his strategy aimed at calling for early elections. Both the leaders discussed various options including bringing a no-confidence motion and imposition of governor's rule in Punjab. Former president Zardari assured complete support to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) in the Punjab Assembly. In its parliamentary party meeting chaired by Opposition leader in Punjab Assembly Hamza Shehbaz a couple of days ago, the PMLN discussed different options to bar the PTI-PML-LQ alliance (which is ruling the province) from dissolving the assembly. The meeting considered different options including tabling a no-trust motion against Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, imposition of governor's rule, the governor seeking a vote of confidence from the CM, and requesting the apex court to take up Hamza's review petition on the Punjab CM election case, etc.

## Belgium's Golden Generation set for deciding ride against Croatia

DOHA: The 2018 World Cup semifinal tie between Belgium and France left a bitter taste in the mouths of the fabled "Golden Generation" of Belgium as they felt they had been denied their well-deserved opportunity to battle for the ultimate prize in the final with the eventual runners-up Croatia. Fast-forward four years and Belgium will get the chance to show what might have been against the Croats in a Group F encounter on Thursday that may lack the prestige of the tournament's showpiece finale but remains an acutely important game for both sides. Croatia are top, level on four points with Morocco and a point clear of Belgium with three, while bottom side Canada's hopes have already been extinguished. Belgium, ranked

second in the world, must win to guarantee their place in the last 16, while 2018 runners-up Croatia need only a point to ensure they will remain in Qatar beyond the group stage. Roberto Martinez's side have been among the most disappointing of the favorites so far, with a narrow win over Canada and a humbling 2-0 defeat by Morocco leading to questions about whether this generation of Belgian gold has lost its luster. This was seemingly the view of playmaker Kevin De Bruyne, who was quoted in an interview with the Guardian dismissing his side's chances at the tournament because "we're too old." They are certainly not the oldest squad at the tournament, that honor goes to Iran, but there are con-

cerns about the fitness and form of some key stalwarts. Eden Hazard's lack of playing time at Real Madrid this season, where he has started only one LaLiga game, has left him searching for match sharpness, while striker Romelu Lukaku, who came on in the 81st minute against Morocco, is another who is not up to speed. Martinez pointed more to psychological aspects than physical in his post-mortem following their defeat to Morocco. "We have to stay together now and become stronger. I know this group, we will be ready for Croatia," he said. "We haven't been the best Belgium at this World Cup yet. Today I thought we played with the fear of losing. Without the ball, we still work for each

other but when we have the ball, we don't stand out, we are not ourselves. We have to work on that." Croatia's tournament also began with a lifeless performance against Morocco, although the goalless draw provided a platform for them to kick on against Canada. They looked far sharper in Sunday's 4-1 win, with Andrej Kramaric's double strike dispelling doubts about whether they lack a cutting edge up front. A draw would see them over the line but coach Zlatko Dalic ruled out playing for such a scenario. "We must not accept the option of having only one point to end the match with Belgium," he said. "There are no easy games (at the World Cup). Belgium need a win but we will also aim for a win." —DNA

## Labuschagne hits 154 against West Indies

PERTH: Marnus Labuschagne cracked a masterful unbeaten 154 while Usman Khawaja and Steve Smith hit 50s as a dominant Australia took control of the opening Test against the West Indies at Perth Stadium on Wednesday. The hosts reached an ominous 293-2 at stumps on day one following captain Pat Cummins' decision to bat in hot and dry conditions. The total was built off the back of a 142-run stand between Labuschagne and Khawaja, who came together after David Warner was out for five, then an unbeaten 142 with Smith. A focused Labuschagne, who survived chances on 75 and 137, brought up his eighth century in his 29th Test and with the in-form Smith unbeaten on 59 the omens are not good for the visitors, who have failed to win a Test in Australia for 25 years. "When you finish the day at around 300 for 2, you feel good. It was nice to build partnerships throughout the day," said Labuschagne. "Scoring a Test hundred any time is amazing, so to be able to do it in the first Test of the summer can hopefully set you up for this game, and also the summer. "It was all about the process, build your whole game around it and don't worry about anything else," he added. The West Indies bowled with plenty of discipline in front of just 10,929 spectators, but the chances were few and far between. After getting the early wicket of Warner for five, they had to toil for hours in the heat to bag another, with Khawaja compiling 65 before edging Kyle Mayers to wicket-keeper Joshua Da Silva just before lunch. "We bowled well in spurts, but we didn't get the breaks," said West Indies coach Phil Simmons. "We'll look to get a couple of wickets early tomorrow and try and peg them back that way. Even if they get 450 we're still in it because I think the wicket looks like it can get better." Labuschagne and Khawaja came together after Warner fell to young pacer Jayden Seales, and hardly put a foot wrong. They had to work hard in the opening session of the first Test between the sides for nearly seven years, reaching 72-1 at lunch. But they accelerated after the break with Labuschagne bringing up his 50 with a three off Jason Holder. —DNA

## Victory or nothing for incapacitated Germany

DOHA: Disjointed Germany will have their backs against the wall to avoid the literal interpretation of the adage. "The bigger they are, the harder they fall" when they face up against a stubborn Costa Rica in their final World Cup Group E match on Thursday and know they must bag their first win of the tournament, preferably by a large margin, to have any chances of surviving to see another day. The Germans are bottom of the group having gained only one point from their two matches so far, raising the specter of another first-round exit following their early elimination in Russia four years ago. Even victory over the Costa Ricans may not be enough, and Germany will be looking to Spain to inflict defeat on Japan to open the door to the next round. Spain top the group on four points ahead of Japan and Costa Rica, both on three. Four-time world champions Germany will be hoping to score a bagful of goals against Costa Rica, who had just one shot on target in their two matches. A win over Costa Rica coupled with a victory for Spain will see Germany advance but a draw between Luis Enrique's side and the Japanese, or even a win for Japan, would bring goal difference into play. Scoring has not been a strong point for Hansi Flick's team but center forward Niclas Füllkrug's excellent run for club and country in recent months has improved their prospects. The 29-year-old, an unlikely addition to the squad prior to the tournament, snatched a late equalizer against Spain after coming on as a substitute to keep their hopes alive going into the final group match. The burly striker is now a serious option to lead the line on Thursday with many German pundits and fans demanding he starts. However, assistant coach Marcus Sorg dampened expectations over Füllkrug, saying he was "not a cure-all" for the team's problems. —DNA

## Rashford stars as England sink Wales to set up Senegal clash

AL-RAYYAN: England booked a FIFA World Cup 2022 last 16 clash against Senegal as Marcus Rashford and Phil Foden inspired a 3-0 win against Wales that sent their neighbours crashing out of the tournament on Tuesday. Gareth Southgate's side sealed first place in Group B thanks to key contributions from Rashford and Foden after they were restored to the team by the England boss. Foden showed why there has been such a clamour for him to start as he won the free-kick that Rashford converted to break the deadlock early in the second half at the Ahmad bin Ali Stadium in Doha. Foden doubled England's lead just seconds later to

effectively ended the one-sided 'Battle of Britain' and Rashford struck again to ensure Wales' first World Cup since 1958 ended in disappointment. With Foden and Rashford providing the cutting edge so lacking in their previous match — a dour goalless draw against the United States — England won for just the second time in their last nine games. A spluttering first half showed the Three Lions still have room for improvement as they chase a first major trophy since the 1966 World Cup. But the ruthless way they demolished Wales after the break provided encouragement ahead of Sunday's showdown with Group A runners-up Senegal. While

England fans regard Germany and Scotland as their main rivals, Wales have never hidden how much they enjoy getting one over on their hated neighbours. The Wales squad were famously filmed celebrating England's embarrassing Euro 2016 exit against Iceland, while Welsh striker Kieffer Moore recently said he would love to knock the English out of the World Cup. With those slights in mind, condemning Wales to elimination was a welcome bonus for England. But more importantly they eased the angst that had mounted since they were booted off after the lethargic United States stalemate that followed their 6-2 rout of Iran in the group opener. Rashford, one of four changes

by Southgate, had a golden opportunity to give England an early lead when he surged onto Harry Kane's pass, but he took too long to shoot and Danny Ward raced off his line to save. Unable to lay a glove on England, Wales barely made it out of their own half as Southgate's men monopolised possession for long spells without producing the breakthrough. When England increased their tempo and passed with more urgency, they immediately scythed through the Wales defence, but Foden's shot whistled wide. Criticised for his performance in the defeat against Iran, Wales captain Gareth Bale was anonymous again and the former Real Madrid star, possibly injured, was substituted at half-time. —APP

## World Test c'ship final a target for Pakistan

RAWALPINDI: Skipper Babar Azam vowed Pakistan will target a place in the World Test Championship final by winning the series against England starting in Rawalpindi on Thursday. Pakistan are placed fifth in the nine-team World Test Championship (WTC) and can have a shot at next year's final at The Oval in England if they win the three-Test series 2-0. They also have a two-match home series against New Zealand to follow next month. "We are excited about that prospect of playing the WTC final," said Azam on Wednesday. "This is an important series. We have a golden chance to achieve that if we win four of the five Tests to come," said Babar, whose side has 56 points from nine Tests in the WTC. They have won four, lost three and drawn the other two. Australia leads the table with 84 points and are currently playing a two-Test series at home against the West Indies. New Zealand won the inaugural WTC by beating India last year. Under Babar, Pakistan have done well in white ball cricket, playing in the finals of the Asia Cup and Twenty20 World Cup this year. Babar said his players have prepared well for the series. "We got around a week to prepare for the series so that was great and has given us some edge and momentum. The best thing was that domestic first-class matches were on so some of the players were already play-



ing red-ball cricket." Babar refused to admit Pakistan — missing pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi with a knee injury — is short on experience in bowling. "Our bowling is good and will give a tough time to England," vowed Babar. "Naseem (Shah) has been bowling well and whatever England have been doing I have that confidence and the belief that they will give their best to give us wins." Naseem is the only fast bowler in the squad to have played Test cricket (13 Tests) while the other three pacemen Haris Rauf, Mohammad Wasim and Mohammad Ali are uncapped at longer format. He, however, admitted England have more experience in bowling. "Yes, England have that edge in fast bowling because they have James Anderson who is very experienced and give them an edge in that department," said Babar of the England spearhead who has 667 wickets in 175 Tests. Babar hoped England would be at their full strength after a virus swept through their camp, leaving 13-14 squad members (six to seven players) sick. "Yes, it's sad to know that but I am sure they will recover and we face a full-strength England team in the Test." —Agencies



## Briefs

## Chinese astronauts arrive at space station

BEIJING: Three Chinese astronauts on the Shenzhou-15 spacecraft arrived on Wednesday at the China space station for the first time in China's space history, increasing the manpower at the in-orbit space lab to six. "The three astronauts aboard China's #Shenzhou XV spaceship entered the China Space Station and met with another astronaut trio on Wednesday, a historic gathering that added the manpower at the in-orbit space lab to six for the first time," Chinese Space Station tweeted. China late Tuesday successfully launched the manned spaceship Shenzhou-15 at 11:08 p.m. (1508GMT) with three astronauts onboard for its historic mission to meet with their colleagues on the space station. "The spaceship conducted a fast automated rendezvous and docked with the front port of the space station's Tianhe module at 5:42 a.m. Wednesday (Beijing Time)," said the space agency. Among the three astronauts, also known as taikonauts, are Fei Junlong, the mission commander, Deng Qingming, and Zhang Lu. "They will stay in space for six months. The main objectives of the mission include verifying the space station's ability to support crew rotation and achieving the first in-orbit crew shift with the Shenzhou-14 members," Global Times quoted Ji Qiming, spokesperson for the China Manned Space Agency, as saying on Monday.—DNA

## Russia, China carry out joint air patrol in Asia-Pacific

MOSCOW: Russia and China carried out a joint military patrol in the Asia Pacific, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Wednesday. "The Aerospace of Russia, the People's Liberation Army Air Force of China carried out another joint air patrol in the Asia-Pacific region," said a ministry statement. The air group of Tu-95s strategic bombers and Xian H-6 jet bombers flew over the waters of the Japanese and East China Seas, the ministry said without specifying when the patrol took place or how many planes were involved. "The duration of the flight of the Russian strategic missile carriers was about eight hours. The Su-30sm and Su-35s aircraft of the Russian Aerospace Forces provided fighter escort for the air group," it said. For the first time during a joint air patrol, Russian aircraft landed at an airfield in the People's Republic of China and Chinese aircraft landed at an airfield on the territory of the Russian Federation, the ministry noted. At certain stages of the route, strategic missile carriers were accompanied by fighters of foreign states, it added.—DNA

## UK union announces ambulance strike

LONDON: Britain's government on Wednesday rejected union pay demands after ambulance workers joined nurses in voting to go on strike. "Our economic circumstances mean unions' demands are not affordable," Health Secretary Steve Barclay said, after the Union union confirmed the ambulance service faced its biggest strike in 30 years. Paramedics, ambulance technicians and emergency call handlers will walk out for 24 hours before Christmas, Unison announced late Tuesday after its members held a strike ballot. The strike will affect London and four other regions of England as the ambulance service joins nurses across most of Britain in striking over government pay offers, which fall well short of double-digit inflation. The Royal College of Nursing is holding the first strike in its 106-year history on December 15 and 20. Unison general secretary Christina McAnea said it was a "tough call" for the ambulance workers to also strike.—APP

## EU eyes special court to probe Russian war crimes

But commission officials said legal barriers meant it was more likely only cash proceeds generated from management of those frozen assets could be taken, not assets themselves

## NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday floated the idea of a "specialised court" to put Russia's top officials on trial over the war in Ukraine. "While continuing to support the International Criminal Court, we are proposing to set up a specialised court backed by the United Nations to investigate and prosecute Russia's crime of aggression," she said in a video statement. Ukraine has long been pushing for such a specialised tribunal, with its president, Volodymyr Zelensky, saying Russia must be brought to justice for its "atrocities". But the initiative faces formidable legal and political obstacles. The problem Ukraine and its Western allies butt up against is that the International Criminal Court (ICC) does not have jurisdiction over Russia's "crimes of aggression" - its invasion and war in Ukraine - because Moscow is not a signatory to the court's treaty. That tribunal can therefore only judge specific cases of war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Ukraine, but even then Russian President Vladimir Putin and his prime minister and foreign minister enjoy immunity from prosecution while in office. The only way the ICC can be called in to judge Russia's war is through a decision by the UN Security Council - something that is impossible because Russia, with its



permanent seat on the council, would veto it. To get around that, von der Leyen is proposing to have a court set up in an EU country that could tackle Russia specifically on the crime of aggression, while leaving war crimes and crimes against humanity to the ICC. The Netherlands, which already hosts the ICC in The Hague, has indicated its willingness to establish the mooted new court on its territory. "It is our task, as the international community, to make sure that we do justice," Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke

Hoekstra told journalists in Romania, as he attended a NATO meeting. He said that should be done "through the ICC - but also through other measures". A proposal text circulated by von der Leyen's European Commission noted that 14 EU member states had already opened investigations into acts carried out in Ukraine "based either on personal or universal jurisdiction". It said that, where it came to crimes of aggression, "an alternative investigation mechanism could be considered"

where EU countries' interests or citizens were affected. Commission officials said that path would run alongside the ICC - to which "the EU will continue to give its full support" - and would need UN support. That would involve a procedural gambit where the proposal would be submitted to the UN Security Council - where Russia is sure to shoot it down - and then to the wider UN General Assembly of all UN member states, where it stands a chance of passing. The officials said there had been initial contact with the United States on the idea, but no indication as yet whether Washington would back the initiative. The United States, like Russia, is not party to the ICC. Von der Leyen has said the aim was to confiscate the assets seized so far - which the commission says amounts to around 19 billion euros (\$20 billion) in the EU. But commission officials said legal barriers meant it was more likely only cash proceeds generated from management of those frozen assets could be taken, not the assets themselves. After any future peace agreement to end the war in Ukraine, "eventually, the assets themselves would need to be returned to the owners," one official said. There, again, for that option to be realised, there would need to be support from the international community, "but we believe that it is doable," the official said.

## Pak looking forward to cooperating with China on banana cultivation

BEIJING: Pakistan looking forward to cooperating with China on banana cultivation, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. "In China, banana has been cultivated since 2,000 years ago. China's contribution to the international banana market is around 4.5%. However, Pakistan's contribution is less than 0.5%. We are far behind. I think China and Pakistan can cooperate through collaborative research. We can progress and get benefit from each other," Noshervan Haider, CEO, Sprouts Biotech Laboratories, said in an interview with CEN. Up till today, Sino-Pak cooperation on banana is still very limited. Lack of high-quality seeds, advanced cultivation technology and logistic facility remains a large obstacle to boosting banana production and exports in Pakistan, for which Pakistani researchers and farmers are looking forward to getting support from China. "The main problem we have here is the choice of good



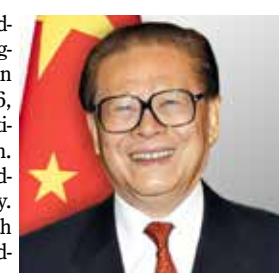
seeds. And, the rate of fertilizers is very high here. We lack good seeds. Nowadays we have a kind of seeds here known as tissue culture seed, which is also imported from China. We should choose good seeds. China is helping us in this already. But if we receive more help then we can achieve better results," Imran Shah, a farmer from NQ Farms said. When it comes to planting technology, research on

tissue culture of banana is being carried out in some labs in Pakistan. "The production of tissue culture banana is three times higher than that of our conventional banana. Conventional banana harvests in 16 to 18 months while our tissue culture banana fruits in the seventh month. Tissue culture banana is disease free and harsh weather tolerant. The production of plants produced in our lab lasts throughout the year. People

get a lot of benefit from it," Noshervan Haider, CEO, Sprouts Biotech Laboratories told CEN. However, as Noshervan Haider sees it, in most areas of Pakistan, the growing of banana is not as per proper method, which makes banana production not as high as it should be. Pakistani researchers long for Chinese technologies that may help Pakistan further improve local banana yield.—Agencies

## Former Chinese president Jiang Zemin dies at 96

BEIJING: Former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin died in Shanghai on Wednesday, state-run media said. Jiang Zemin, 96, died from leukemia and multiple organ failure at 12:13 p.m. local time (0413GMT), according to Xinhua News Agency. The announcement of his death was made in a joint "letter" addressed to Chinese people by various government organizations, including the Communist Party of China (CPC), the news agency said. He was at the forefront of Chinese politics for 15 years, serving as president from 1993 to 2003 and as general secretary of the CPC from 1989 to 2002. He was also the chairman of the Central Military Commission from 1989 to 2004. In 1985, he served as mayor of Shanghai and deputy secretary of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee. At the First Plenary Session of the 13th CPC Central Committee in 1987, he was elected to the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and served as secretary of the CPC's Shanghai Municipal Committee. "During the serious political turmoil in China in the spring and summer of 1989, Comrade Jiang Zemin supported and implemented the correct decision of the Party Central Committee to oppose unrest, defend the socialist state power and safeguard the fundamental interests of the people," state broadcaster CCTV reported. "Comrade Jiang Zemin was an outstanding leader enjoying high prestige acknowledged by the whole Party, the entire military and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, a great Marxist, a great proletarian revolutionary, statesman, military strategist and diplomat, a long-tested communist fighter, and an outstanding leader of the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics," the joint letter, which was quoted by the news agency, stated. "He was the core of the CPC's third generation of central collective leadership and the principal founder of the Theory of Three Represents," it added.—APP



## Belgium starts trial over 2016 suicide bombings

BRUSSELS: Belgium launched its biggest-ever criminal trial on Wednesday, the landmark prosecution of alleged jihadists accused of directing or aiding 2016 suicide bombings in Brussels' metro and airport that killed 32 people. The prime French suspect in the dock confirmed his identity as proceedings began: "Abdeslam Salah, 33, electrical mechanic." Salah is already notorious after being convicted in a separate trial in France for his role in 2015 attacks in Paris that killed 130 people. Only one of the nine defendants present, 30-year-old Osama Krayem, refused to stand as they were presented to the high-security court, a purpose-built space in the disused former headquarters of the NATO alliance. A 10th suspect, 33-year-old Oussama Atar, is believed to have been killed in Syria. Wednesday's hearing kicked off jury selection from a huge pool of more than 1,000 citizens. The court was to choose 12 jurors and 24 potential replacements who will need to attend near daily sessions of a months-long process leading into next year. On December 5, the main evidential hearings will begin.—Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yezhan Kistafin meets Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ayaz Sadiq at Ministry of Economic Affairs. — DNA

## Half of world's democracies in decline: Report

STOCKHOLM Half the world's democratic countries are experiencing an erosion of democracy, intensified by war in Ukraine and economic crisis, an international think tank said in a report on Wednesday. "We're seeing extraordinarily severe headwinds for democracy now, intensified by the political fallout from the economic crisis that started with the pandemic and the economic consequences of the war in Ukraine", International IDEA secretary-general Kevin Casas-Zamora told AFP. "It might be that the credibility of elections is challenged. It might be that the rule of law is under assault. It might be that civic space is being constrained", he explained. The number of democracies with the most severe democratic erosion - a group dubbed "backsliding" countries which has included the

United States since last year - increased from six to seven in 2022 with the addition of El Salvador to the list. The others are Brazil, Hungary, India, Mauritius and Poland. Casas-Zamora singled out the US as particularly worrying. "I'm very concerned by what we're seeing in the United States", he said. The country faces political polarisation, institutional dysfunction and threats to civil liberties, according to the report. "It's quite clear by now that the fever didn't break with the election of a new administration," he said, pointing to "the runaway levels of polarisation (and) the attempts to undermine the credibility of electoral results without any evidence of fraud". Casas-Zamora noted the US had also taken a "visible step backwards" in sexual and reproductive rights, "which is very exceptional because most

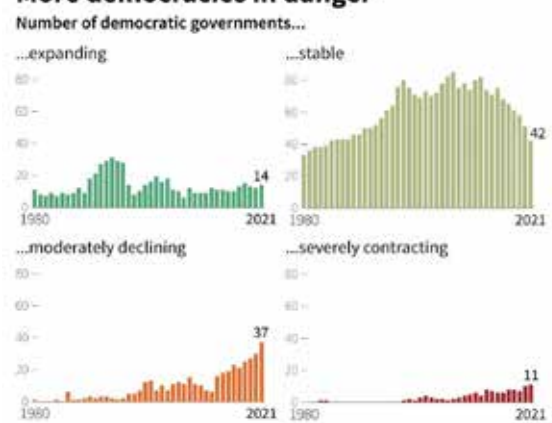
countries, pretty much all other countries, are going forward in terms of expanding sexual and reproductive rights". "The US is moving backwards", he said. Of the 173 countries covered by International IDEA's report, 104 were democracies and 52 of those were in decline. Meanwhile, the number of countries moving toward au-

thoritarianism, 27, was more than double the number moving toward democracy, at 13. Almost half of all authoritarian regimes became even more repressive in 2022, with Afghanistan, Belarus, Cambodia, Comoros and Nicaragua singled out as experiencing a "broad decline". In Asia, where only 54 percent of people live in a

democracy, authoritarianism is solidifying, the report said, while Africa, despite a myriad of challenges, remains "resilient" in the face of instability. A decade after the Arab Spring, the Middle East continues to be "the most authoritarian region in the world". It has only three democracies - Iraq, Israel and Lebanon. In Europe, almost half of all democracies, or 17 countries, suffered democratic erosion in the last five years. "Democracies are struggling to effectively bring balance to environments marked by instability and anxiety, and populists continue to gain ground around the world as democratic innovation and growth stagnate or decline", the report said. It noted there were "troubling patterns" even in countries that were performing at middle to high levels of democratic standards. In

the past five years, progress has stalled across all of the indices IDEA studies, with some scores "the same as they were in 1990", it said. "Democratic systems have really wobbled over the past couple of decades and it quite clearly has become a burning issue in our age", Casas-Zamora said. There were, however, some signs of progress. IDEA noted that people were coming together to push their governments to meet 21st-century demands, ranging from creating community-based child care in Asia to reproductive freedoms in Latin America, and youth climate protests around the globe. "But also in places like Iran, where people have gone out to demand freedom and equality and dignity," Casas-Zamora said. "So there are a few bright spots but the overall trend is very bleak." — Agencies

## More democracies in danger



## US House to vote to avert potential rail strike

WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives plans to take a vote Wednesday on a measure to avert a potential rail strike as early as Dec. 9, after President Joe Biden earlier warned of "catastrophic" consequences for the economy. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Tuesday that Biden asked Congress to act on the subject of rail strike and the House of Representatives will vote to impose a tentative contract deal struck in September. Following her meeting with Biden on Tuesday, Pelosi said: "I don't like going against the ability of unions to strike. But weighing the equities, we must avoid a strike. Jobs will be lost. Even union jobs will be lost." Earlier, Biden urged Congress to act, saying up to 765,000 Americans could lose their jobs in the first two weeks alone. Biden said: "Congress, I think, has to act to prevent it. It's not an easy call, but I think we have to do it. The economy is at risk." The rail strike could cost the US economy as much as \$2 billion per day, according to the Association of American Railroads.—DNA

## Businesswomen express condolence of SM Munir

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Founder President Samina Fazil, President Rizwana Asif, Senior Vice President Sonia Salim, Vice President Sahrish Ahsan, Former Presidents Naima Ansari, Mrs. Mumtaz Akhtar, Farida Rashid Alia Ikram, Samina Akhtar, Sajida Anwar, Members Executive Body has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of renowned industrialist SM Munir and extended heartfelt condolences to his family saying that SM Munir as Chairman Trade Development Authority. Former President of Pakistan Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and United Business Group as Patron-in-Chief rendered valuable services for the country's business community, these services will always be remembered. He said that the services of the late SM Munir for the country and the nation will never be forgotten, especially for the development of women, his role to include them in the national stream is unforgettable. The late SM Munir was a patriotic industrialist and He was the owner of a philanthropic personality and his services in the industrial sector and welfare works will always be remembered.

## Firearm fatality rates in US rose 45.5%

WASHINGTON: From a low in 2004, US fatality rates from firearms soared 45.5% as of 2021, according to a study. "Firearm fatality rates in the United States have reached a 28-year high," researchers wrote in a paper published by the JAMA Network Open medical journal on Tuesday. "Firearm homicides were highest among Black non-Hispanic males, and firearm suicide rates were highest among White non-Hispanic men ages 70 years and older," said the study. The cross-sectional study analyzed firearm fatalities in the US from 1990 to 2021 using data from the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The researchers counted more than 1.1 million gun deaths over 32 years, including 952,984 among males (85.8%) and 157,165 among females (14.2%), 286,075 among Black non-Hispanic individuals (25.8%), 115,616 among Hispanic individuals (10.4%), and 672,132 among White non-Hispanic individuals (60.5%). The research revealed marked disparities in gun death rates between men and women and by racial and ethnic group, saying these disparities have deepened in recent years. Research APP



## Briefs

**Over 100 mn people forcibly displaced in 2022: UNDP**

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Humanitarian aid alone cannot overcome record levels of internal displacement globally, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) said in a new report, while calling for urgent action to support people uprooted by climate, conflict and crisis. For the first time ever, the number of people forced to flee their homes surpassed 100 million this year. Most, 59.1 million, are displaced within their own countries, often for years or even decades. These internally displaced persons (IDPs) struggle to cover their basic needs, find decent work, or have a stable source of income, among other challenges. UNDP described their plight as an "invisible crisis" because it rarely makes the news. As climate change could force more than 216 million to move elsewhere within their homelands by mid-century, the report advocates for longer-term development solutions to reverse internal displacement. "More efforts are needed to end the marginalization of IDPs who must be able to exercise their full rights as citizens including through access to vital services such as healthcare, education, social protection and job opportunities," UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said in a statement. "In tandem with critical humanitarian assistance, this stronger development-focused approach will be vital to set the conditions for pathways to lasting peace, stability and recovery." The report - Turning the tide on internal displacement: A development approach to solutions - calls for placing this "invisible crisis" on the international agenda.

**ECP decides to hold LG polls in Punjab in April next year**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has decided to hold local government elections in Punjab in the last week of April. An ECP meeting presided over by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja was held in Islamabad on Wednesday. The meeting was told that the local bodies' term in Punjab was expired on Jan 1, 2022 and the commission was going to start demarcations of constituencies for the third time. The commission was asked to hold consultation with the representatives of provincial government for conducting the LG polls. The Punjab government representative told the meeting that the draft rules would be put forward before the provincial cabinet during its next meeting. After the approval of the rules, their copies would be provided to the commission, he added.

**Cabinet members briefed about wheat stocks**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet on Wednesday was briefed about the wheat stock in the country. A meeting of federal cabinet was held in Islamabad under the chair of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The meeting discussed overall political and economic situation of the country. A briefing on the current stock of wheat and its demand in the country was given to the cabinet members as the cabinet would determine the support price of the commodity. The cabinet members conditionally accepted the agenda for old buildings in Washington DC owned by Pakistan. The cabinet also endorsed the decisions of the legislative committee. However, the meeting deferred the matter pertaining to revival of cancelled licences for petroleum exploration.



ISLAMABAD: Minister Shaza Khawaja, Ambassador of UAE Hamad Alzaabi, CEO Centaurus Sardar Yasir Ilyas and others cutting ribbon to inaugurate photo exhibition in connection with the UAE National Day celebrations.-DNA

## Govt determined to make economy interest-free: Dar

Minister informed the participants that a special wing would be set up at SBP for the promotion of an interest-free system. "I would notify the wing in a week's time," he added

KARACHI, NOV 30 (DNA) - Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar has said the government is determined to promote Islamic finance and eliminate the interest-based system in the country. He was addressing a conference titled "Hurmat-e Sood" in Karachi on Wednesday. Finance Minister said that the country is needed at five years to move towards an 'interest-free' banking system under Islamic law. The minister informed the participants that a special wing would be set up at the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for the promotion of an interest-free

system. "I would notify the wing in a week's time," he added. The finance minister lauded the Federal Shariah Court (FSC) decision, saying that the "A base has been already been established, as Islamic banking, in terms of overall assets and deposits, enjoys a market share of 20% and 21%, respectively," said Dar, while adding that further progress needs to be made in this regard. Ishaq Dar said that significant progress is required in non-banking sectors including mutual funds, insurance and capital markets on Islamic terms. Dar said that attempts are made



worldwide to improve financial inclusion. "In this regard, we made considerable progress during our previous stint and approximately 30% of the population became

part of the banking sector," he said adding that steps are being taken that every individual is included in the financial system. The finance minister observed that the country is facing twin deficits i.e. current account and budget deficit. "There is a need to impose a fiscal discipline. We need to increase our incomes while rationalising our expenses in order to the budget deficit," he added. He also assured that resolutions of the seminar would be shared with the Prime Minister. Earlier this month, Dar announced that the government had reached an understanding

with the SBP and National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) to repeal their appeals against the FSC order to implement Islamic banking system in Pakistan by 2027. On April 28, 2022, the FSC had ruled that elimination of interest from the economic system was a religious and legal responsibility, ordering the government to end the interest-based banking system by the end of 2027. The decision was made on petitions against Riba (usury) after the Supreme Court referred the case back to the court in 2002 following appeals against the decision of the FSC.

## 4 martyred as bomber targets police polio truck

DNA

QUETTA: At least four people were martyred and 23 others injured Wednesday when a suicide bomber targeted a Balochistan Constabulary truck near Quetta. Senior police official DIG Quetta Azhar Mehesar told reporters the blast targeted a police team preparing to escort polio vaccinators in the city of Quetta and that those killed "include a policeman, a woman and a child". Another injured later died in the hospital. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing. The 23 injured included 19 security personnel and four civilians. Three vehicles including the BC truck were destroyed in the blast, the police officer said. The suicide bomber was driving a rickshaw when he rammed the three-wheeler into the truck of the BC personnel at Baleli checkpoint near Quetta city. The DIG Quetta confirmed that it was a suicide blast and 20-25kg explosives were used in the explosion. After the blast the BC truck fell into a ditch. According to police, three vehicles were destroyed in the terrorist attack. One of deceased was identified as ASI Ibrahim while the other two were a woman and an eight-month-old baby, Imran. Manzoor Ahmed, Sikandar Khan, Muhammad Nawaz, Gul Jan, Abdul Haq and Muhammad Hanif were among the injured policemen. Other persons including Zafar Khan, Nauman, Nadia and Adil were also among the wounded. The officer said the injured were being treated in Civil hospital, adding the policemen were being transported to deploy with the polio teams at the time of the incident. President Dr Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, interior minister Rana Sanaullah and Balochistan chief Minister Abdul Qudus Bizenjo condemned the terrorist attack and expressed sympathies with the bereaved families.

## President, PM condemn attack

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday strongly condemned the suicide attack at a police van deputed on the security of an anti-polio team and said such nefarious designs would not be allowed to harm the country's commitment to eliminate the disease. In their separate statements on the terrorist incident in Quetta's Baleli area, the president and the prime minister expressed their resolve to continue efforts till the complete end of polio. President Alvi paid tribute to the efforts of health workers and police personnel for saving the children of the country from the crippling disease. He prayed for the forgiveness of the souls of the deceased and for the early recovery of the wounded. PM Shehbaz Sharif said polio workers across the country were fulfilling their responsibilities without caring about their lives. He stressed that eliminating polio virus from the country was amongst the top priorities of the government and vowed not to rest until polio was completely eradicated. He asserted that 'evil elements' would fail to harm the anti-polio campaign in the country. At least four people were martyred and 23 others injured Wednesday when a suicide bomber targeted a Balochistan Constabulary truck near Quetta. Senior police official DIG Quetta Azhar Mehesar told reporters the blast targeted a police team preparing to escort polio vaccinators in the city of Quetta and that those killed "include a policeman, a woman and a child". Another injured later died in the hospital. - DNA

## Turkey says Sweden's steps for NATO bid positive, not enough

ISTANBUL: Turkey said on Wednesday Sweden's new government was more determined to address Ankara's security concerns in return for NATO membership but called for "concrete steps". Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu met with his Swedish and Finnish counterparts on the sidelines of a NATO gathering in Bucharest on Tuesday. Ankara has accused the two Nordic nations - especially Stockholm - of providing a safe haven for outlawed Kurdish groups it deems "terrorists" and held back on ratifying their NATO bids despite an agreement in Madrid in June. "The statements (coming out of Sweden) are good, the determination is good but we need to see concrete steps," Cavusoglu told reporters in Bucharest. "We told them we haven't seen concrete steps on these issues" including the extradition of criminals and freezing of terror assets, he said. Sweden's Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom spoke optimistically about Tuesday's meeting. "And I have to say that I felt after this meeting that yes, there is progress in line," he said. "We are moving forward with the implementation of a trilateral memorandum which was signed in Madrid." US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also sounded upbeat, saying he was confident that Sweden and Finland would "soon" join NATO. Turkey, Sweden and Finland are engaging directly as well as with NATO to make sure that Turkey's concerns are fully addressed, including concerns about its security," he said. "That process has been moving, moving forward. And I'm very confident and again, based on what I've heard these last couple of days, that Finland Sweden will soon be formally new members of the alliance." Finland and Sweden dropped decades of military non-alignment and scrambled to become NATO members in May, after Russia invaded Ukraine. The decision requires a consensus within the US-led defence alliance, but only Turkey and Hungary are yet to give consent to their membership.-Agencies

## 20,000 scholarships for unemployed graduates

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, has announced that the government has decided to provide 20,000 scholarships to unemployed graduates of the country. He made the announcement while addressing an International summit on higher education and workforce development in Islamabad. "The govt has decided to provide 20000 scholarships to unemployed graduates," he said, adding that the federal government was committed to providing the underprivileged class access to education. Ahsan Iqbal further announced that scholarships will also be awarded to the students of far-flung areas of the country under Youth Development Initiatives (YDI), recently launched by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The summit was attended by US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome, Senator of Utah State, Dr. Keith Grover, chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) and others. Earlier, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) announced fully funded scholarships for studies in China for the session 2023-24. The Higher Education Commission has set December 15, 2022, deadline to apply for scholarships in Chinese universities. HEC has invited applications from Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistani students to study and conduct research in various fields at the best universities in China.

## CAA brings new queue system at airports

DNA

KARACHI: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Wednesday introduced new queue system at Karachi and other major airports of Pakistan. As per details, the civil aviation authority has introduced the new zigzag and snake lanes at Karachi, Peshawar, Lahore and Islamabad airports. This new upgradation will facilitate the passengers to easily go through the boarding and immigration process. The passengers also appreciated measures taken by CAA to make the immigration, check-in and boarding process easy and efficient. Earlier, the Civil Aviation Authority revised travel advisory for domestic and international flights. "Wearing face masks on-board domestic and international flights no longer mandatory, but still preferable," The Civil Aviation Authority said in a post shared on its official Twitter handle.

## Petrol price remain unchanged

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday announced that the prices of petrol and diesel would remain unchanged for the next fortnight. In a televised address, he said: "The government has decided to maintain the price of high speed diesel (HSD) [...] there will be no change. As for petrol, there will be no change and it will remain unchanged from Dec 1 to 15." The minister said that the price of kerosene oil, which was used by lower income groups in villages, would be slashed by Rs10. "As light diesel oil (LDO), [...] has also been decided to reduce the price by Rs7.5 per litre." The minister said that the deadline for filing tax returns, which was today, had been extended by 15 days to Dec 15. He urged the nation to take advantage of this opportunity and file their tax returns at the earliest. The government had previously kept the prices of all petroleum products unchanged on Oct 15, Oct 30 and Nov 15. The current prices for petrol are Rs224.80 per litre and Rs235.30 per litre for HSD.

## Pakistan, EU agree to deepen cooperation

BRUSSELS: Pakistan and European Union have agreed to continue working together to further deepen and broaden bilateral cooperation. This came into, during the 8th round of Pakistan-European Union Political Dialogue which held in Brussels. The dialogue covered a broad range of subjects in the context of Pakistan-EU relations, as well as regional and global developments. Both sides underlined the importance they attached to their multifaceted partnership. The Acting Foreign Secretary Jauhar Saleem and Enrique Mora, Deputy Secretary General of European External Action Service led their respective sides. Both sides noted the special significance of this round of Political Dialogue, marking the 60th anniversary of Pakistan-EU relations. Expressing satisfaction on the positive trajectory of the relations, they agreed to continue working together to further deepen and broaden bilateral cooperation. Acting Foreign Secretary appreciated the timely and invaluable humanitarian assistance and support provided by the European Union for the victims of the massive climate induced



floods in Pakistan. He underscored that as a key trade and development partner, EU's continued support would be pivotal in helping Pakistan effectively carry out rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, and to build back the damaged infrastructure in a climate resilient manner. The two sides acknowledged that EU's GSP Plus scheme has been a successful template of trade for development and mu-

tually beneficial trade cooperation. Sharing Pakistan's position on the proposal for the new GSP Plus scheme, the Acting Foreign Secretary expressed the hope that mutual objectives, including sustainable development, poverty alleviation and employment generation will be appropriately prioritized in the new Scheme. He also conveyed Pakistan's keenness to diversify the scope of trade, investment and development cooperation between Pakistan and the EU. Both sides agreed to explore opportunities of cooperation under EU's flagship programmes like Global Gateway and Horizon Europe. The two sides also welcomed the recent launch of a comprehensive dialogue on migration and mobility. The dialogue will provide an institutionalised platform for legal pathways for migration to Europe, seek talent partnerships, and enable effective implementation of the Pakistan - EU readmission agreement. The Acting Foreign Secretary apprised the Deputy Secretary General of the dire human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). - DNA