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Sanctions on Russia will work, Lithuania PM Simonyte says

Detailed News On Page-08

Russia slams Poland's OSCE chairmanship

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Suarez refuses to apologise for Ghana handball

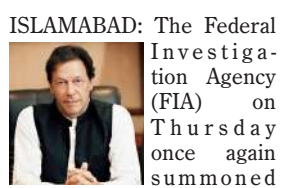
Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

FIA again summons Imran Khan

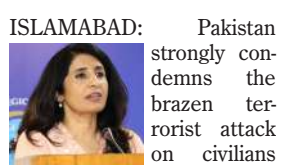
DNA



ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Thursday once again summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan to probe him in American cipher case. Earlier, an FIA officer reached Mr Khan's residence at Lahore with the summons. The FIA team comprising senior officers has started investigation on the directions of the Interior Ministry. The agency had issued Mr Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi the notices to appear before it on Nov 7 and Nov 3 respectively, but Imran could not make it due to injuries in his leg.

Pakistan condemns terror attack

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the brazen terrorist attack on civilians in a madrasa in Samangan, Afghanistan which has resulted in loss of precious lives and injuries to others, a statement from foreign office said. The Government and people of Pakistan extend their sympathies and condolences. "We stand in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and the bereaved families in this moment of grief", it added.

Sherry listed in influential women

DNA



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman on Thursday made it to the list of 25 influential women in the world in Financial Times list. According to media reports, the list of 25 most influential women has been released by the Financial Times, in which the name of Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman has also been included. Influential women belonging to various fields of 2022 have been included due to outstanding services in their fields in the list.

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Pervaiz Elahi says We are at Khan's beck and call

There will not be a moment's delay when Imran says to dissolve the PA



ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi reiterated on Thursday that there would be no delay in dissolving the Punjab Assembly (PA) once PTI chief Imran gave the call. The statement came after Elahi called on Imran at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore. Former defence minister Pervaiz Khattak, and Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q) leaders Moonis Elahi and Hussain Elahi were also present. Elahi is in power in Punjab due to the support of PTI, whose chairman has announced plans to "quit the corrupt system and leave all the assemblies".

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PTI 'willing' to talk on next elections

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is reportedly willing to negotiate with the incumbent federal government regarding the next electoral framework despite the party's decision to dissolve the Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa assemblies. A senior leader of the PTI told a news outlet that the PTI was willing to talk with the federal government regarding the next election. However, he claimed that the primary issue was the "worsening economic

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Rise in terror alarming; won't get out of control

Sanaullah: TTP's activities should also be a concern for Afghanistan

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Thursday that while the rise in terror incidents was alarming, it would not get "out of control". "It is not worrying [...]" Don't think that this is going out of control or that some group will become out of reach," he said while addressing a press conference in Islamabad. At the same time, the minister raised alarm over the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claiming responsibility for the suicide attack in Quetta, which claimed four lives, including that of a policeman. That the TTP claiming responsibility for the attack was both "alarming and condemnable," he said, adding that the TTP's activities posed a danger to regional peace and should also be a cause of concern for neighbouring Afghanistan. Sanaullah also regretted that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan did not attend a recent security meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He emphasised the need for provincial governments, security agencies and authorities, particularly KP and Balochistan,

Continued on Page 06

Khar updates PM Shehbaz on Afghan visit

DNA

ISLAMABAD Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday and apprised him about her recent visit to Afghanistan. Khar, who paid a day-long official visit to Kabul on Tuesday, informed the prime minister about the outcome of her meetings with the interim Afghan leadership. Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan desired a peaceful Afghanistan and vowed to extend every possible support to the Afghan brethren. He called upon the international community to play its role in improving the situation in Afghanistan as the war-torn country faced the challenges of economy and security.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. DNA

PM visits Chinese embassy

The Premier also meets Chief of Air Staff

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has visited the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad today to condole the death of former Chinese President Jiang Zemin. The Prime Minister met the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E Nong Rong and expressed his deep grief on the death of the former Chinese President. Late Jiang Zemin will always be remembered as a great leader, Prime Minister said. He played a very important role in strengthening Pakistan-China relations, he added. Shehbaz Sharif said that Late President Jiang Zemin's role in China's development was pivotal. The Prime Minister also penned his comments in the condolence book. Separately, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday.

The professional matters, pertaining to the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), came under discussion, the PM Office said. Also on Thursday, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. The Prime Minister congratulated General Sahir Shamshad Mirza for assuming charge of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. Matters pertaining to professional affairs of the armed forces were discussed in the meeting.

Snap polls not in interest of anyone, says Asif Zardari

PDM decides to file no confidence motion in Punjab and KP assemblies

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari has insisted that holding early general elections in the country is neither good for the PTI nor democracy. In an interview with a private news channel on Thursday, the former president said that the PDM, a group of over a dozen of the government allies, has decided to file a motion of no confidence in the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies. The PPP leader also said that they would contest elections if PTI succeeds in dissolving the Punjab and KP assemblies. "We shall see how many MPAs can the PTI get elected." He added that they would continue to play the role of the opposition if the assemblies are not dissolved. The statement from the PPP co-chairman comes at a time when several PTI lawmakers in Punjab, according to sources, have advised the

Continued on Page 06

Tactics to delay elections will fall flat: Rashid

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) leader Sheikh Rashid said on Thursday whenever PTI Chairman Imran Khan would dissolve the assemblies, no member would be going against his decision. In his message on Twitter, the former interior minister claimed that after the assemblies would be dissolved, the politics of PDM and PML-N would be finished. He asked the rulers to think about finalising the date of elections, otherwise delaying tactics would cost them dearly. Mr Rashid further said the oil prices in the world were decreasing whereas the situation was opposite in Pakistan. – DNA

China to loosen curbs after week of protests

Anger over China's zero-Covid policy – which involves mass lockdowns, constant testing and quarantines even for people who are not infected – has sparked protests in major cities

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China's top Covid official and multiple cities have signalled a possible relaxing of the country's strict zero-tolerance approach to the virus, after nationwide protests calling for an end to lockdowns and greater political freedom. Anger over China's zero-Covid policy – which involves mass lockdowns, constant testing and quarantines even for people who are not infected – has sparked protests in major cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. But while authorities have called for a "crackdown" in the wake of the demonstrations, they have also begun hinting that a relaxation of the headline virus strategy could be in

the works. Speaking at the National Health Commission on Wednesday, Vice Premier Sun Chunlan said that the Omicron variant was weakening and vaccination rates were improving, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency. Sun – a central figure behind Beijing's pandemic response – said this "new situation" required "new tasks". She made no mention of the zero-Covid policy in her latest remarks, suggesting an approach that has disrupted the economy and daily life might soon be relaxed. The comments came as the Chinese capital said it would scale back daily testing requirements – a tedious mainstay of life under zero-Covid. The elderly, those who work from

home, students and teachers in on-line education, and others who do not leave home frequently are now exempt from daily tests, Xu Hejian, a spokesman for the Beijing Municipal Government, said on Wednesday. However, Beijing residents still require a negative Covid test taken within 48 hours to enter public places such as cafes, restaurants and shopping malls. A report by the state-owned Southern Metropolis Daily said on Thursday that local officials in Beijing and Guangzhou were planning to allow some positive Covid cases to quarantine at home instead of at state-run facilities. The report was later deleted, and AFP requests for confirmation from local authorities in those cities went unanswered.

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A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE BY MURREE SPARKLETTS

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SAY NO TO INVISIBLE CORRUPTION.

Ethiopia keen to sign accord with Pak on climate action: Envoy

The ambassador briefed Romina Khurshid on the Green Legacy Initiative which was a brainchild of Ethiopia's Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ali Ahmed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula on Thursday said Ethiopia was keen to help the government of Pakistan in addressing the climate related issues which had caused great economic and human loss to the country in the form of floods in the recent past.

"We are ready to exchange knowledge, ideas and initiatives with the government of Pakistan by signing agreements on climate action," he said during a meeting with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister and Minister of State, Romina Khurshid Alam here at the Prime Minister's Office.

The ambassador briefed Romina Khurshid on the Green Legacy Initiative

which was a brainchild of Ethiopia's Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ali Ahmed. He said the initiative had brought green revolution in the country through attitudinal, behaviour and cultural change. Under the Green Legacy Initiative, Ethiopia had planted some 25 billion seedlings in last four years to address climate issues out of which 500 million are avocados, mangoes and papaya, he added.

H.E. Jemal Beker said the climate change was not a myth but a reality and Pakistan needed to build a resilient economy by addressing its climate related issues. "I have visited the flood affected areas in Sindh where I met with flood affected people and distributed relief items among them." "Sharing their pain in such trying times is very important for me," he remarked. The ambassador also requested Romina Khurshid, who is also Convener National Parliamentary Task Force on

SDGs, to play a role in getting scholarships for the Ethiopian students in the prestigious universities of Pakistan. To this end, the Convener National Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs assured the ambassador of her full support in joint climate actions and getting scholarships for Ethiopian students in the Pakistani varsities. The ambassador also informed Romina Khurshid about the business opportunities for Pakistani businessmen in Ethiopia and invited her to be part of the Pakistani business delegation flying to Ethiopia by the start of next year. Romina Khurshid said she would be organizing a conference for promoting connectivity between the African region and Pakistan. She invited H.E. Jemal Beker to the conference as well. Both officials agreed to promote the mutual and collective interests of the two brotherly countries.



LAHORE: Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan Georg Steiner called on Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman. – DNA

Swiss envoy discusses trade issues with Punjab governor

LAHORE: Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan Georg Steiner called on Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman at the Governor's House and discussed matters of mutual interest including enhancing bilateral trade, here on Thursday. Senior Political Adviser to Swiss Ambassador Osama Kaiser Khan was also present. Governor Balighur Rehman said Pakistan values its relations with Switzerland and cooperation in socioeconomic development. He said people and the government of Pakistan were grateful to the government of Switzerland for helping the flood victims. The governor said that rehabilitation of the flood victims was an ongoing process, adding that he was also working on psychological effects on the flood victims. He said, as chancellor of the universities, he has mobilised the vice-chancellors of the universities and the students in this regard. Governor Balighur Rehman said Swiss products were preferred in Pakistan due to their quality. He said Pakistani businessmen should increase foreign direct investment. He said Swiss businessmen should exchange technology and good practices in Pakistan. The governor said there were vast opportunities for Swiss investors to invest in Pakistan. He said that expediting the visa process for Pakistani businessmen to Switzerland would further boost bilateral trade. – DNA

KP assembly would be dissolved when Imran Khan indicates: CM

ABBOTTABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mehmood Khan Friday paid a one-day visit to Mansehra and Abbottabad districts, where he inaugurated projects worth billions of rupees and also laid foundation stones for several development projects. Addressing the inauguration ceremonies in Abbottabad and Mansehra districts, the Chief Minister clarified that the provincial government is taking steps for the equal development of all districts and is working on cheap electricity production projects so that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province plays a key role in the country's development and to ensure the supply of cheap electricity to the people of the province. He said that the Provincial Power Transmis-

sion and Dispatch Company is being established through which cheap electricity will be provided to the people of the province. The chief minister also announced the establishment of Tanawal Tehsil in Mansehra district and clarified that 10 percent of the revenue from the Jabori and Balakot hydropower projects will be spent on the development of the area. Mahmood Khan said that locals will be recruited for non-technical posts in the said projects. He said that Jabori and Balakot hydropower projects will usher in a new era of development and prosperity in Mansehra district. He clarified that the present provincial government is working to promote agriculture in the southern districts, the Cheshma Right Bank Lift Canal project worth billions

of rupees has been approved, with the completion of which millions of acres of land can be made cultivable. The Chief Minister said that the provincial government has made plans keeping in mind the needs of the next 30 years and the journey of development will continue despite the financial difficulties. While criticizing the federal government the chief minister made it clear that the imported federal cabinet has no plan for the country's development, it is just busy looting the national treasury and ending corruption cases on itself. This group will default the country, but the Pakistani people will not let them succeed in their nefarious intentions, adding he said. Addressing the party workers in Abbottabad district. m– APP

PTA conducts QoS survey

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has carried out independent Quality of Service (QoS) surveys in nine cities of Punjab and Sindh and 13 motorways and highways. A survey was also conducted, jointly with Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs), in eight cities of Gilgit Baltistan. These surveys were undertaken to measure the performance and quality of CMOs services being provided to their customers, said a news release on Thursday. The results revealed that CMOs are compliant with respect to data speeds to a great extent, while network latency and webpage loading time was found below the threshold. Similarly, some of the Voice KPIs have also been found below the licensed threshold in few areas. Necessary instructions have been issued to the operators for taking corrective measures to ensure improvement in service quality up to the KPIs. In accordance with Next Generation Mobile Service (NGMS) licenses and Cellular Mobile Network Quality of Service (QoS) Regulations 2021, mobile network coverage, QoS KPIs of Voice, SMS and Mobile Broadband were checked using state-of-the-art automated QoS Monitoring & Benchmarking Tool. The drive test teams selected survey routes to cover main roads, service roads and the majority of sectors/colonies in surveyed areas. Based upon setting KPIs against the threshold defined in the respective licenses and QoS regulations. – APP

ADB team visits WSSCM, reviews progress on projects

PESHAWAR: A team of Asian Development Bank led by Umar Ali Shah visited Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) offices on Thursday. On the occasion they reviewed progress of the ongoing development projects under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP) and met with the project's stakeholders in Mardan City. Member of KP Provincial Assembly Zahir Shah Toru, Chairman Board of Directors Professor Retired Dr. Fazale Qadir, BOD members Mu-

hammad Ayub Khan, Javed Hussain, Engineer Ikram Shah, Chief Executive Officer Engineer Amir Khan, General Manager Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar and others were also present. Talking to the delegation, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) WSSCM Engineer Amir Khan said that under the KPCIP project a modern Scientific Sanitary Landfill Site, Sewerage treatment plant and green urban spaces will be established in Mardan. The sanitary landfill site has been framed for the efficient

management of municipal waste while the sewerage treatment plant will cater the issues related to waste water management. Under this project the municipal waste will be collected from every household within Mardan city and will be reused for other environment friendly purposes and utilization. He said through the Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) project the domestic sewerage connections of six urban union councils will be connected with STP for treatment and reuse for irrigation purposes. – APP

Govt making efforts to empower tribal youth through education

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Embarking upon a mission to empower tribal youth with an ornament of quality higher education, the Federal and Provincial governments have accelerated efforts to strengthen education infrastructure, establish new colleges, universities and libraries besides increasing stipends for male and female students of merged districts to bring them at par with the students of settled districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Following the decades-long neglect in terms of educational facilities, the tribal districts have now been witnessing substantial growth in education sector where presently about Rs 20 billion development projects were in progress under the accelerated implementation program (AIP 2019-

23), which upon completion would change the destiny of tribesmen. The gigantic projects include establishing 12 new colleges, rehabilitation, provision of missing facilities to existing colleges, commencement of BS programme, scholarships to students, solarization of colleges and educational institutes, recruitment of teaching faculty and provision of transport facility to facilitate students especially girls in erstwhile Fata. Muhammad Islam Khan, Senior Planning Officer, Higher Education Department told APP that under three years' AIP, a joint venture of the Federal and KP Governments started after KP-Fata merger, work on different mega projects amounting to Rs20 billion were underway in all seven merged tribal districts. Besides construction of 12 new colleges, he said five government degree

colleges for girls were being established in merged areas, adding classes in newly established government degree colleges for boys at Bara and Landi Kotal in Khyber tribal district and government boys degree college at Penk in former Frontier Region of Tank has also been started. Out of these 12 new colleges, he said that four colleges were being established in Bajaur, two in Khyber, one each in Kurram and Bakakhel (former FR Bannu), three each in North Waziristan and South Waziristan. "Today is the age of information technology, science and quality higher education vital for sustainable economic progress and development to achieve educational goals," he said adding the universities and teaching faculty, including lecturers, assistant professors and others, play an important role in imparting knowledge to tribal youth. For a knowledgeable based society.

UNICEF delegation visits CPWB

LAHORE: A UNICEF Pakistan delegation met Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) Chairperson Sarah Ahmed in her office on Thursday. Chief of Child Protection Programme Daniela Lushini, Consultant UNICEF Suzanne and Child Protection Officer UNICEF Zahida Manzoor were part of the delegation. According to a press release, issued here, the UNICEF delegation congratulated Sarah Ahmed on receiving the Global Collaborative Award in Italy. The visiting delegation discussed Child Protection Case Management System with the CPWB chairperson. Sarah Ahmed said the system developed by UNICEF Pakistan would be used in Child Protection and Welfare Bureau offices. – APP



LONDON: President RCCI Saqib Rafiq presenting conference memento Moazzam Ahmad Khan, High Commissioner of Pakistan to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at Pakistan High Commission London. – DNA

Alvi visits Ordnance Factory Wah

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday visited Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF), Wah and urged the management to focus on Research and Development (R&D), bring innovation and modernization. The president also called for adopting the best practices to further improve its efficiency and productivity. "The defense

production sector has immense potential for growth which can be fully realized by continuously improving the capacity of its human resource and adopting emerging and critical technologies powered by Artificial Intelligence, virtual reality and robotics", he remarked. The president underlined the need to employ modern marketing techniques and improve the efficiency of supply chain to consolidate Pakistan's position in existing markets and increasing footprint in new and non-traditional markets by promoting Pakistani defense products which were of high quality, effective and dependable in any

given situation, and were at the same time very cost-effective. He appreciated the POF for its pivotal role in moving toward self-sufficiency and in meeting the growing demand of our defense sector and civilian security agencies. He also lauded the POF for capturing foreign markets by improving its efficiency, adopting quality financial management practices and digitalizing its processes to transform POF into a self-sustainable and progressive defense industrial complex. President Alvi visited different parts of POF where he was given an overview of the production and manufacturing processes. – APP



Request for Proposal Email Services for EOBI

Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) is an autonomous organization working under the Human Resource Division of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources, Government of Pakistan. EOBI has been using Gmail suit for communications since long. Now that Gmail is discontinued, EOBI invites proposals from reputed firms to provide email services.

Bidding will be conducted under **Public Procurement Rules 2004, Open Competitive Bidding, Rule 36(b), Single Stage Two envelope procedure**, and is open to all bidders who meet the following eligibility/qualification criteria:

- The Bidder is a registered firm under the Companies Act 2017 as well as registered with Federal and Provincial Tax Authorities. The company should be operating in Pakistan for at least three fiscal years. (**Proof required**).
- The bidder should have an annual income of Rs. 500 million during the last five fiscal years. (**Audited accounts showing the income must be enclosed**)
- The bidder should provide the following services:
 - Enterprise-grade SPAM protection
 - Anti-virus protection
 - SSL certificate
 - Dedicated email server
 - Email account Administration
 - Storage space management
 - Performance Dashboard (for monitoring)
- The Bidder is not in litigation with EOBI or with any other company or Undertaking of Federal and/or Provincial Governments and has not made any false representation in the forms, statements and attachments submitted to EOBI and has not been black listed by any Government or its organizations. (**Affidavit required**).
- The bidder should provide the project plan. (**Plan should be attached with technical proposal**).

AVAILABILITY OF BID DOCUMENTS:

Bid documents shall be available from the date of publication of RFP in the newspapers and on websites of PPRA and EOBI from the below mentioned address on production of Rs. 2000/- Pay Order/ Demand draft (non-refundable) drawn on any commercial bank, made in the name of EMPLOYEES' OLD-AGE BENEFITS INSTITUTION, HEAD OFFICE, KARACHI.

BID OPENING, VALIDITY, & BID SECURITY:

Interested Bidders may submit their proposals (Technical & Financial Proposal) placed in main envelope with the validity of 120 days. Bid Security **Rs. 200,000/-** in shape of Pay Order/Demand draft on the name of Employees Old-age Benefit Institution from scheduled bank of Pakistan enclosed in Technical envelope, shall be addressed to **Director (General Administration), EOBI Head Office, 190/B, Block-2 PECHS, Karachi at or before 1100 Hours on 23rd December, 2022**. The Bids will be opened on same day at 1130 Hours at Board room of EOBI Head Office Karachi. Bids received after the above deadline will not be accepted.

BID REJECTION:

Incomplete, incomplete, and/or bids without Bid Security shall be instantly rejected. Bids without proof of eligibility conditions stated above shall also be rejected.

PRE BID MEETING & CONTACT FOR TECHNICAL INFO:

A pre bid meeting is scheduled on **12th December, 2022** at 11:00 AM in the Board Room of EOBI Head Office, at 8th floor. Interested bidders may attend the meeting to seek clarifications, if any. For technical information, please contact Mr. Najeeb Ullah Khan Assistant Director in IT Department Head Office through email at najeeb.khan@eoibi.gov.pk (021-99225378). For administrative queries about the procurement process, please contact Mr. Muhammad Naeem Shoukat, Director, at the following address:

Director (General Administration Department)
EOBI Head Office, 190/B/1, PECHS Block # 2,
Near Blue Ribbon Bakery, Off Sharah-e-Faisal, Karachi, Tel Nos: 021-99225405

PID K No. 1545/22

National Days and Armed Forces Days

December

Dec 01 / Romania

National Day

Dec 02 / UAE

National Day

Nov 07 / Russian Federation

Socialist Revolution

Dec 02 / Laos Republic

National Day

Dec 05 / Thailand

National Day

Dec 06 / Finland

Independence Day

Dec 07 / India

Armed Forces Flag Day

Dec 09/ Tanzania

National Day

Dec 11/ Oman

Armed Forces Day

Dec 12 / Kenya

Independence Day

Dec 12 / Turkmenistan

Neutrality Day

Dec 16 / Bahrain

National Day

Dec 16 / Kazakhstan

Independence Day

Dec 18 / Qatar

National Day

Dec 18 / Niger

National Day

Dec 23 / Philippines

Armed Forces Day

Dec 23/ Japan

National Day

Hotels & Restaurants

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Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

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Rescue (Police).....15

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& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police....9266044

Motorway Police..9270601-20

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RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International.4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5474480



ISLAMABAD: PTI senior leader Kanwal Shuzad and other women activists holding a demonstration in order to seek justice for Senator Azam Khan Swati, on Thursday. DNA

US, UN to help support flood affected Pak farmers

The United States remains firmly committed to partnering with the people of Pakistan to strengthen Pakistan’s economy and agricultural sector and to support the people of Pakistan in recovering from the 2022 flooding

DNA

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador Donald Blome announced today that the United States, in partnership with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), delivered \$8 million of assistance to Pakistani farmers affected by the devastating 2022 floods. This effort is part of the \$97 million of U.S. flood-related assistance to Pakistan this year, which focused on humanitarian needs, food security, and disaster preparedness and capacity-building efforts. Ambassador Blome announced the United States’ continuing assistance at an event alongside farmers from flood-affected areas. In his remarks, Ambassador Blome highlighted the long history of the United States and Pakistan advancing economic growth and solving development challenges together and highlighted opportunities for future partnership: “As the Green Revolution improved lives in the past, a “Green Alliance” between the United States and Pakistan will help us jointly strengthen climate resilience, develop clean energy alternatives, and foster economic growth. Through the U.S.-FAO partnership on flood response, the United States provided wheat seed and fertilizer to approximately 90,000 households in flood-affected areas of Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. This effort focused on women-headed households because women and girls are disproportionately vulnerable to natural calamities and gender-based violence. The United States remains firmly committed to partnering with the people of Pakistan to strengthen Pakistan’s economy and agricultural sector and to support the people of Pakistan in recovering from the 2022 flooding.

Chinese firms optimistic about Pakelectric motorcycle industry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese enterprises are optimistic about Pakistan’s electric motorcycle industry, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Thursday. Driven by market demand and favorable national policies, a growing number of Chinese electric vehicle companies have come to Pakistan to invest and start their business, and local companies have also started manufacturing electric motorcycle products. The report stated that industry insiders are confident that electric vehicles in Pakistan will enter a phase of rapid development in the near future. According to Muhammad Yousuf Shaikh, founder and chairman of Pakistan China Motorcycle Industry Council (PCMIC), Pakistan has produced more than 2.5 million motorcycles annually in recent years, but most of them are older models. The electric motorcycle industry will bring changes to Pakistan’s motorcycle industry, he added. In the spirit of sharing the significant breakthroughs of China’s new energy, Jialing Industrial Co., Ltd, China established a branch in Pakistan last month to focus on the introduction of new energy pure electric motorcycles instead of traditional fuels. Yao Zhen, the responsible person for Jialing Pakistan told China Economic Net in a recent interview that Pakistan is a country where motorcycles are the main means of transport. Rising global oil prices have led to a sharp increase in gasoline prices in Pakistan, making it imperative for consumers to switch to new energy markets. The price of a pure electric motorcycle is higher than that of a conventional petrol motorcycle. “However, in the long run, electric motorcycles save much more fuel cost than petrol motorcycles,” Yao added. Currently, power shortages, incomplete charging facilities, and insufficient production of electric vehicle parts in Pakistan are major challenges facing Jialing in building a local plant. “We plan to establish a production line of new energy motorcycles in Pakistan and gradually localize the manufacturing of parts, which requires the local power department to ensure a stable industrial power supply for manufacturers,” said Yao. Despite the above constraints, Pakistan’s electric vehicle policy 2020-2025 has offered great advantages for enterprises planning to invest in electric vehicles in Pakistan, including 1% of import duty on special parts for electric vehicles, 0 CKD sales tax and 1% sales tax on locally manufactured and locally sold vehicles.

Railways retrieve 18 kanals of land

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has retrieved some 18 kanals of land worth millions of rupees from the illegal occupants in Peshawar Division during an anti-encroachment operation against the land grabbers. “The operation is launched on the direction of Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique which was supervised by the Divisional Superintendent Peshawar Division,” an official in the Ministry of Railways told a state run news agency on Thursday. He said that the land was retrieved from the area of Peshawar’s Truck Stand, Hayatabad, Karkhano Market and Dalazak Road with the help of the local administration. The official said that Pakistan Railways had also sealed around 135 shops in different areas of the Peshawar Division due to non-payment of rent to the department. To a question, he said that the Pakistan Railways’ major portion of around 9,986 acres of land worth billions of rupees were found under illegal occupation of private, individual and different government departments across the country. “Around 3,287 acres were occupied in Punjab, 832 acres under encroachment in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, 5,180 acres in Sindh and 687 acres land occupied in Balochistan,” he added. However, he said Pakistan Railways has retrieved as many as 955 acres of its land worth Rs 19,603 million during various anti-encroachment operations across the country in last five years. – APP

Rotary meeting held on prosperity through power

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Rotary Club of Islamabad Metropolitan arranged a special talk on “Prosperity through power – How CSR can help people in need” at a local hotel. Mr Tauseef Farooqi Chairman NEPRA was the guest speaker. Barrister Adnan Saboor Rohaila, District Governor Rotary District 3272 also graced the occasion. Mr. Imran Ghaznavi President RC Islamabad Metropolitan welcomed the guest speaker and the district governor, Mr Ghaznavi emphasized on the importance of CSR and how it can contribute in wellbeing of people in need. Muhammad Arif, Director Vocational Services introduced the guest speaker. “Pakistan is indeed fortunate to have Mr. Farooqi to spearhead NEPRA, and successfully bring in regulations to balance the market in the naturally monopolistic sector of electricity,” said Arif. Mr. Tauseef Farooqi spoke at length about his vision for electricity and energy in Pakistan, his specific targets, and some of his initiatives. The five initiatives he mentioned were: Power with Prosperity, Power with Safety, Power with Security, Power with Unity, and Power with female empowerment. All these highly commendable initiatives would improve the lives of previously under-served Pakistanis. Power with Prosperity, in particular, emphasized the welfare of communities as it directs power licensees towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Under the purview of this initiative, electricity was provided for the first time to several villages in Pakistan’s 75 years of existence. A total of 32 billion rupees was directed towards CSR through 900 projects and 32400 jobs created. The impact is estimated to be 3 crore 20 lac people indirectly and directly benefited. Mr. Farooqi also spoke of the near future which would include micro-grids (where the private sector would invest) and an EV revolution. The Question/Answer session was very enthusiastic, given the nature of this very pertinent area of energy, power and electricity, and the Chairman’s bold reforms and vision. The District Governor Rtn. Adnan Saboor Rohaila took the podium. He noted that RCIM was leading all other Rotary Clubs of the District in terms of DG visits, meetings attended, thanks to the generosity of President Rtn. Imran Ghaznavi. He appreciated the Guest of the evening by noting that he has been blessed with all three of the traits of successful people: talent, hard work, and luck. He also noted that we may need to temper our enthusiasm for CSR and be aware of its many misuses, e.g. in tax evasion, marketing ploys, and fake claims. As Rotarians, the spirit to give must be genuine. While concluding the talk President Imran Ghaznavi stressed upon energy conservation. Pakistan being energy deficient country, we can only cope up with challenges by changing our habits specially while using gas and other petroleum products. “There is a serious need for initiating advocacy programs on energy conservation across the country especially among school going children and our female population,” said Mr Ghaznavi. Vote of thanks was presented by Dr Azra Yasmin, Secretary of the club.

Ministry asked to raise awareness about AIDS prevention

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday urged the Ministry of Health to focus on raising awareness about AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) through testing, prevention, and treatment to effectively fight the scourge. Shehbaz Sharif, in a tweet, expressed concern over the increasing incidence of HIV and AIDS among children and adolescents, terming it as “deeply worrying”. He also emphasized removing the taboos attached to AIDS to ensure its end. “On World Aids Day today, let us all vow to end the stigma attached to HIV,” he said.

Finance Ministry agrees to IT minister’s suggestion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Finance has agreed to a proposal of Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque with regard to evolving an effective mechanism and making payment against the Google App services. In a statement here on Thursday, the Minister said, after the agreement, the payment would be made to Google as per the schedule and all its Application services to remain intact. Syed Amin Ul Haque said that the State Bank of Pakistan had been directed to delay the implementation of the Direct Carrier Billing (DCB) policy for one month. The minister said the Telecom operators had been given a one-month time to implement payment procedures and within a month, the Ministry of IT, Finance and State Bank would formulate a plan of action in mutual consultation in that regard. Amin said that on request of the Telecom operators for assistance, a letter was written to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to make the payments and formulate a time frame. The minister expressed gratitude to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Bajwa for the timely decision on the issue.

MoCC notifies new protected areas

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Climate Change has notified some 68 new protected areas till January 2020 throughout the country extending over an area of 36,111,52409 square kilometers, Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change Ms Naz Baloch told the National Assembly on Thursday. Replying to the question of Ms Nasiba Channa during question hour, she said the ‘Protected Areas Initiative’ has been launched under the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Plantation Programme (TBTP) whereas the project duration is from 2019 to 2023. She said that the initiative aimed to improve flora and fauna, improve governance and promote economic tourism in protected areas. The total cost of TBTP is Rs125,1843 billion out of which Rs 15,592,96 billion is allocated for conservation of wildlife, she added. The Parliamentary Secretary said as many as 1.8 billion plants have been so far planted under TBTP. Pakistan Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (PSLEP) is a Global Environment Fund (GEF) funded project and is being executed by an NGO namely snow Leopard Foundation Pakistan (SLF) in collaboration with the Ministry and snow leopard range Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, she told. Naz Baloch further told that the total cost of PSLEP project was USD 4.64 million and duration was five years, from 2018 to 2023. In an other written reply, Minister for Climate Change Ms Sherry Rehman said that Pakistan was categorized one of the three countries that was continuously remained in the top 10 lists of most impacted countries over the past decade. – APP

Briefs

CPI inflation
decelerates
to 23.8%

ISLAMABAD: The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based monthly inflation decelerated to 23.8 percent on a year-on-year (YoY) basis during the month of November 2022, from 26.6 percent during October 2020, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, it increased to 0.8% in November 2022 as compared to an increase of 4.7 percent in the previous month (October) and an increase of 3.0 percent in the corresponding month of last year i.e. November 2021. On a year-on-year basis, the top few food commodities that witnessed an increase in prices in November as compared to the corresponding month of last year included onions (284.87%), gram whole (63.49%), tea (62.18%), pulse gram (56.19%), 'besan' [gram flour] (56.1%), butter (53.05%), pulse mash (47.76%), pulse moong (46.29%), mustard oil (44.69%), wheat (43.4%), cooking oil (41.88%), desert preparation (40.1%), rice (39.75%), pulse masoor (38.73%). The non-food commodities that witnessed an increase during the period on a YoY basis included motor fuel (52.02%), stationery (44.57%), washing soap, detergents, matchbox (43.42%), transport services (33.43%), motor vehicle accessories (31.48%) and construction input items (30.02%). Meanwhile, on an MoM basis, the food commodities that witnessed a decline in prices included sugar (9.9%), condiments and spices (9.78%) and gur (3.64%), whereas the non-food items that witnessed decrease in prices in November 2022 against November 2021 included liquefied hydrocarbons (0.03%). – APP

Investing
in rural
women vital

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Thursday said that investment in rural women, a major chunk of total population, could play key role in economic growth, eliminate abject poverty and abolish hunger in Pakistan. Speaking at a seminar on "Role of Rural Women in National Development", he said that majority of women were living in rural areas and their contribution towards national development was extremely marginal, said a press release. He said if we fully utilize this untapped vast potential successfully in a planned manner, Pakistan can make strides in every sphere of life that will help ameliorate a lot to improve socio-economic complexion of women folk across the country. He urged the government to make sure that all public sector entities engaged for rural uplift to deliver otherwise same task be entrusted to private sector with full government support which will bring revolution. Younis said that one of the most efficient and effective strategic actions to address these issues include empowering rural women, as the efforts and talents of rural women are crucial to countering hunger and poverty. He said rural women make up a quarter of the world population and close to half of the world's agricultural workforce, whereas in some developing contexts a large majority of farmers are women. Meher Kashif Younis said yet globally including Pakistan rural women are paid 25 percent less than men for doing the same work. – APP

Newly-
appointed IHC
judges take
oath of office

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Three newly-appointed permanent judges of Islamabad High Court (IHC) took oath of office on Thursday at a ceremony held in Islamabad. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq administered the oath to Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Saman Rifaat Imtiaz. The ceremony was attended by a large number of high court judges, lawyers and journalists. President, Parliamentary Committee and Judicial Commission had approved the permanent status of the three judges, after which the Ministry for Law and Justice issued a notification of their permanent appointment.

Population control

Provinces should set up
separate ministriesMinister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb
says Pakistan has become the fifth-largest country in the world

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday suggested that provinces should set up separate ministries to control the growing population. In her speech at the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Population Council, she said the National Emergency Plan will be given soon to address the growing population issue. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif had called a meeting of the National Task Force next week, she said adding that provinces had representation in the task force. "This year, the population of the world has reached 8 billion and that of Pakistan has reached 23 million," said the minister. Pakistan's population, she said, had increased from 30 million to 230 million in 75 years, and by 2030, the population of Pakistan was expected to be 263 million and in 2050, it is expected to reach the figure of 338 million. In terms of population, she said, Pakistan had become the fifth-largest country in the world. The minister said that population growth was as alarming as the destruction caused by climate change. She



said Pakistan's population was growing at a rate of 2 percent per year. "When the population increases, problems like education, health, and public services also arise," she maintained. After the Eighteenth Amendment, issues

like education, health, and public services were the responsibility of the provinces, Maryam Aurangzeb said. To deal with these problems, the issue of increasing population had to be dealt with, the information minister remarked. She said there was a need to

create a national narrative on these issues of national importance and all stakeholders should be involved in the formulation of the narrative. There should be an open discussion on such issues at the government level, and everyone has to play a role in finding a solution to them, she said.

As a result of a natural calamity of a flood, the nation recently faced great destruction and people of all ages including children and women in Pakistan were severely affected by the devastating floods. The minister said that goals were clearly defined in the declaration adopted by the National Conference held in the Parliament in the past and the declaration was also signed by the provinces. "These goals and recommended measures need to be revived. We could achieve the desired goals with policy-making, legislation, and narrative formulation," Marriyum Aurangzeb said.

In the past, the planning department has done a great job and played a key role in creating the public awareness of the issue, she said. Minister of Information assured all possible support to the Population Council in creating awareness about digital media and creating a narrative regarding the growing population.

26,502 companies
registered in FY 2021-22

DNA

ISLAMABAD: During the current financial year 2021-22, 26, as many as 502 new companies were registered as compared to the previous year, where a growth rate of 4 percent has been observed, said a Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) Annual Report released here on Thursday. According to the Report, due to this growth, the total number of registered companies now reached to 172,234. In terms of efficiency, 99.4 percent companies were registered online during the current year and around 23 percent companies were registered within the same day. The outcome is the result of the strategic use of automation and process optimization to benefit end users and shorten the overall time required to launch a business in Pakistan, it said. Report said that out of the companies registered during the financial year 2021-22, approximately 64 percent companies were registered as private limited companies, 33 percent as single-member companies and the remaining were registered either as public unlisted, not-for-profit associations, trade organizations, foreign companies or limited liability partnerships. The sector wise breakdown of registered companies during the current year shows that the construction and real estate sector took the lead with incorporation of 4,791 companies. This was followed by IT with 3,760 companies, trading with 3,534 companies, services with 2,408 companies, and E-commerce with 1,038 companies, report said. Education related companies registered were 962, food and beverages companies were 937, tourism companies were 790, textile companies were 701, and marketing and advertisement companies were 671. The remaining companies were registered in other sectors. The foreign investment was reported in 681 new companies. Most foreign investment is from China (288 companies), followed by USA (44 companies), UK (42 companies), Afghanistan (40 companies), Germany (27 companies), Canada (15 companies), South Korea (14 companies), Turkey (14 companies), Saudi Arabia (13 companies), Palestine (11 companies) and Singapore (8 companies).

ICCI signs MoU for First
International Housing Expo

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with M/s. Waqas International, Islamabad as an event management company for organizing the 1st International Housing Expo 22 at Convention Centre, Islamabad from December 8-11, 2022. The Expo would be organized as a joint venture of the Ministry of Housing & Works and ICCI. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President,

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Muhammad Waqas Khan, CEO, Waqas International signed the MoU during a ceremony held at ICCI. As an Event Management Company, M/s. Waqas International will be responsible to handle all jobs of the Expo including complete management and operation and booking of stalls from the exhibitors for the Expo. Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that being the 7th populist coun-

try in the world, Pakistan is facing an issue of rising housing shortage. He said that the purpose of organizing the International Housing Expo is to provide a suitable platform to the local and international exhibitors, stimulate the business & economic activities and provide affordable housing options to the people. He hoped that the cooperation of M/s. Waqas International would be helpful in organizing the Expo in a successful manner. Muhammad Waqas Khan, CEO, Waqas International

thanked ICCI for assigning them the role of event management company for the International Housing Expo and assured that they would make all possible efforts to make this Expo a landmark event for Ministry of Housing & Works and ICCI. Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Sheikh Amir Waheed Convener, ICCI Expo Committee, Muhammad Shakeel Munir former President ICCI, Ch. Muhammad Masud, Muhammad Naveed Malik and others were also present at the occasion.

Ministry completes all
arrangements to organize
Int'l Real Estate Expo

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Housing and Works has completed all the arrangements to organize the first ever 'International Housing and Real Estate Expo' on December 8 to promote real estate business in the country, besides ensuring safe and secure housing for the people. "A four-day expo will be organized in collaboration with other relevant ministries, agencies, organizations, and authorities to encourage the approved housing projects and uplift the construction sector in the country," an official in the Ministry told a state run news agency on Thursday. He said that the people associated with the real estate and housing industry across the country would participate in the exhibition. The stall was allocated to all the real estate developers, housing societies, real estate consultants and construction material-related industries.

Pakistan receives \$4bn
for flood relief activities

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Planning and Development was informed on Thursday Pakistan had so far received financial foreign assistance worth over US\$4 billion to support flood relief activities in the country. Officials from Economic Affairs Division (EAD) informed the committee that out of total financial assistance, the international development partners had extended an amount of US\$3.64 billion in form of loans and \$435.03 million in the form of grants. Further the meeting was informed that the development partners and the countries had dispatched in kind assistance for the flood victims.

The meeting of the committee was presided over by Senator Atta Ur Rehman here and was attended by Senators Dost Muhammad Khan, Ejaz Ahmed Chaudhry, Saadia Abbasi, Hidayat Ullah, Tahir Bazinjo and Nuzhat Sadiq. The meeting was informed that out of total loan amount, the World Bank had extended \$1.78 billion loan while the Asian Development Bank provided loan worth of \$559 million. Similarly Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank also extended \$500 million loans. It was highlighted in the meeting that out of total grant, Asian Development Bank (ADB) extended grant of \$8.28 million while Islamic

Development Bank (IsDB) provided grant of \$0.7 million. The meeting was informed that United Nations in coordination with government of Pakistan launched a \$160.3 million flash appeal on August 30, 2022 out of which \$148 million have been pledged by the humanitarian commitments as of September 15, 2022. The revised appeal, however urgently seeks \$816 million to respond to the growing lifesaving needs of the people-a jump of \$656 million from the initial appeal of \$160 million. UN's organizations WHO, UNFPA and FAO provided financial support of \$3.06 million whereas China also provided \$112.33 million for the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in flood hit areas. The United States extended financial assistance of over \$95 million while Japan provided \$7 million of financial support. – APP

OCHA head
calls on
Chairman
NDMA

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs's (OCHA) Head of Office for Pakistan Carlos Geha called on Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik here on Thursday. Chairman NDMA welcomed Carlos Geha and apprised him of ongoing lead work in related domains, especially targeting humanitarian assistance in flood-affected areas, a news release said. Both sides stressed reinforcing the shared vision of accomplishing urgent human security benchmarks related to climate change especially in remote areas and agreed upon greater technology-driven connectivity to maximize the impact reach of disaster mitigation and response in hazard-prone areas. The Chairman NDMA explained the context of NDMA's potential value addition in fostering an authentic database for planning and designing tangible goals of OCHA Pakistan. He thanked OCHA for supporting the Government of Pakistan and NDMA in coordinating response and providing relief assistance to the population affected by the monsoon-induced floods in 2022 and launching of initial flash appeal on 31 August 2022 and the subsequent launch of a revised flash appeal on 4 October 2022. The OCHA Head committed to exploring possibilities to raise additional funds during recovery and rehabilitation. – APP

Govt releases
Rs 27,220 mln
for various
projects

ISLAMABAD, Nov 28 (APP):The government has released a sum of Rs 27,220.10 million for various projects of the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) and Pakistan Electric Supply Company (PEPCO) under the Annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) during the first quarter of the current fiscal year 2022-23. According to the data of the Planning Commission, the government had allocated Rs 42,983.26 million for various NTDC/PEPCO projects with Rs 20,773.43 million foreign aid component. A sum of Rs 24,374.66 million has been spent so far on various projects. The government had specified a sum of Rs 7500 million for the Interconnection of Makran Network, Rs 2,000 million for 220 kV Swabi Substation (NTDC), Rs 1,500 million for 220/132kV GIS Substation Dhabiji (NTDC), Rs 1,200 million for 500 kV Allama Iqbal Industrial City, Rs 1000 million for 220kV Haripur Substation, Rs 750 million for ABC Cable for Peshawar, Bannu Circle (PESCO), Rs 600 million for construction of 132 kV Grid Station (Khan Mehterzai), Rs 395 million for electrification works at different villages of Chitral. – APP

Cultural night to highlight
Turkiye-Pakistan relationship

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In her remarks, the Minister of State stated that Pakistan and Türkiye have been brothers, friends and partners. The inseparable bonds of common faith, history, and culture have been reinforced by mutual trust and co-op on critical issues

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Cultural Night was organized at Jinnah Convention Center, Islamabad, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Pakistan and Türkiye. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In her remarks, the Minister of State stated that Pakistan and Türkiye have been brothers, friends and partners. The inseparable bonds of common faith, history, and culture have been reinforced by mutual trust and cooperation on critical issues. The strength of Pakistan-Türkiye relationship is anchored in affection and solidarity among the peoples of the two countries. Minister of State added that the ties between the two countries have transformed into a strategic partnership, characterized by multiple high-level exchanges, including the visits of Prime Minister of Pakistan to Türkiye in June and November 2022, the Joint Inauguration of MILGEM Corvettes PNS KHAIBER, and signing of the Trade in



Goods Agreement in August 2022, that aims at achieving bilateral trade target of US \$ 5 billion in the medium term. The Cultural Night was jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad and Embassy of Türkiye in Islamabad that brought to the fore the rich cultures of Pakistan and Türkiye. The 'Sama'

performance of whirling Dervishes from Konya, Türkiye and instrumental Tabla performance from Pakistani artists, along with traditional delicacies from both the countries, kept the large audience entertained throughout the evening. Earlier in the morning, the two countries held simultaneous Tree Plantation



Ceremonies at their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs, to mark the 75th Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties. The tree was planted jointly by Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar and Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Mehmet Paçacı, in Islamabad;

while Turkish Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Faruk Kaymakci, and Pakistan's Ambassador to Türkiye, H.E. Dr. Yousaf Junaid, planted the tree in Ankara. Indeed Pakistan and Türkiye relationship has stood the test of times and continues to grow deeper and higher with each passing day.

Future of China's unrest: more complex than it seems

AMONG the Communist rhetoric cleverly repurposed by China's anti-zero-Covid protesters is a phrase that Mao Zedong employed: a single spark can start a prairie fire. When a political system is so rigid, observers can easily fall prey to one of two conflicting tendencies. The first is to seize upon any significant unrest as the first crack in the edifice, which could bring the whole system down – as when the death of Mohamed Bouazizi precipitated the Arab spring. Since such collapses are usually astonishing at the time, even if explicable in retrospect, the temptation to suggest that they really could be coming this time can be hard to resist. The other tendency is to look at the unlikely triumph of the Communist party and conclude that any dissent is not only doomed but futile. The party has spent years studying the demise of the Soviet Union to ensure that it does not suffer the same fate. It ruthlessly crushed the student-led protests of 1989, in which millions, not merely hundreds, took to the streets. It learned from that experience too, refining other means of repression.

Though heavy policing and censorship may have seen off unrest for now, the news that the former leader Jiang Zemin has died may complicate matters. The passing of leaders has often triggered movements, and it is harder for the party to shut down mourning for a senior leader than a demonstration: in 1989, Hu Yaobang's death precipitated the pro-reform protests that began in Tiananmen Square. Mr Jiang did not enjoy the same popular sympathy; among other things, he was instrumental in the 1989 crackdown.

A binary reading of the possibilities of these protests – victorious, or stamped out and thus pointless – cannot capture their importance. There is no reason to believe that the cynical take on these events, as not only fleeting but essentially meaningless, is more accurate than a naive belief that they will ultimately lead to a scrapping of the zero-Covid strategy, or even a free and democratic China. Neither view captures the complexity of social movements.

Whether the protests reignite in the coming days or months, and whether they have an obvious and immediate impact on the party and its policies, are not the only measures of their importance. They have borrowed tactics from Hong Kong's suppressed uprising (the blank sheets of paper) and slogans have evoked October's one-man protest against Mr Xi at Sitong Bridge in Beijing, which at the time seemed utterly quixotic. In the long term, they may help to open up an alternative vision of China for young people especially, and create a sense of the possibilities for social action in the future. Sparks do not always start a conflagration: they may, however, kindle a flame that is not easily extinguished.

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How a Faction of Republican Party enables violence

ON Oct. 12, 2018, a crowd of Proud Boys arrived at the Metropolitan Republican Club in Manhattan. They had come to the Upper East Side club from around the country for a speech by the group's founder, Gavin McInnes. It was a high point for the Proud Boys – which until that point had been known best as an all-male right-wing street-fighting group – in their embrace by mainstream politics. The Metropolitan Republican Club is an emblem of the Republican establishment. It was founded in 1902 by supporters of Theodore Roosevelt, and it's where New York City Republicans such as Fiorello La Guardia and Rudy Giuliani announced their campaigns. But the presidency of Donald Trump whipped a faction of the Metropolitan Republican Club into “an ecstatic frenzy,” said John William Schiffbauer, a Republican consultant who used to work for the state G.O.P. on the second floor of the club.

The McInnes invitation was controversial, even before a group of Proud Boys left the building and violently confronted protesters who had gathered outside. Two of the Proud Boys were later convicted of attempted assault and riot and given four years in prison. Many moderate Republicans have quit the clubs in disgust. Looking back, Mr. Schiffbauer said, Oct. 12, 2018, was a “proto” Jan. 6.

In conflicts like this one – not all of them played out so publicly – there is a fight underway for the soul of the Republican Party. On one side are Mr. Trump and his followers, including extremist groups like the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers. On the other side stand those in the party who remain committed to the principle that politics, even the most contentious politics, must operate within the constraints of peaceful democracy. It is vital that this pro-democracy faction win out over the extremists and push the fringes back to the fringes.

It has happened before. The Republican Party successfully drove the paranoid extremists of the John Birch Society out of public life in the 1960s. Party leaders could do so again for the current crop of conspiracy peddlers. Voters may do it for them, as they did in so many races in this year's midterm elections. But this internal Republican Party struggle is important for reasons far greater than the tally in a win/loss column. A healthy democracy requires both political parties to be fully committed to the rule of law and not to entertain or even tacitly encourage violence or violent speech. A large faction of one party in our country fails that test, and that has consequences for all of us. Extremist violence is the country's top domestic terrorist threat, according to a three-year investigation by the Democratic staff members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, which reported its findings last week. “Over the past two decades, acts of domestic terrorism have dramatically increased,” the committee said in its report. “National security agencies now identify domestic terrorism as the most persistent and lethal terrorist threat to the homeland.

America not to blame for Europe's problems

Dr. Amal Mudallali



The Europeans are accusing the US of charging high gas prices, four times higher than on this side of the Atlantic, they say. They see this as profiteering at the expense of Europe at a very vulnerable moment in its history. The American newspaper Politico quoted a “furious” European official dumping on the US: “The country that is most profiting from this war is the US because they are selling more gas and at higher prices, and because they are selling more weapons.” He warned that “America needs to realize that public opinion is shifting in many EU countries.” Leading German and French officials have also weighed in, with French President Emmanuel...

THE weather forecast predicts a not-so-frosty winter for Europe. But the transatlantic relationship is already threatened with deep freeze if the disputes over high gas prices and trade are not resolved in the same spirit of solidarity that Europe and the US have exhibited since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Winter is here. Temperatures are falling in Europe and the thermometer has already recorded zero degrees in Poland this week. The anxious Europeans are fretting over a winter that will leave them not only shivering from cold, but boiling in anger and frustration with their American ally over the gas heating bill. When President Joe Biden was elected, Europe was elated to have a president in the White House who values the European-American relationship. He assured them “America is back,” to sighs of relief in Europe's capitals. But today, two years on and with a major war in their backyard, the Europeans are asking, “is the US still our ally or not?” It is the Ukraine war again and its consequences that are testing the relationship.

The Europeans are accusing the US of charging high gas prices, four times higher than on this side of the Atlantic, they say. They see this as profiteering at the expense of Europe at a very vulnerable moment in its history. The American newspaper Politico quoted a “furious” European official dumping on the US: “The country that is most profiting from this war is the US because they are selling more gas and at higher prices, and because they are selling more weapons.” He warned that “America needs to realize that public opinion is shifting in many EU countries.”

Leading German and French officials have also weighed in, with French President Emmanuel Macron quoted as saying the high European prices were “unfriendly.” The Germans have suggested Washington had shown a retreat from the solidarity it showed at the beginning of the war in Ukraine. A German MEP described a “creeping crisis of trust on trade issues.” The unity among the transatlantic allies seems shaky for the first time since the beginning of the war. Both sides worry that this is not the message they should be sending to Russian President Vladimir Putin. After Russian gas stopped flowing into European storage tanks, a torrent of American gas started arriving on ships to help the Europeans offset the worst energy crisis they have faced since the Second World War and strengthen their stand as they

help Ukraine in its war with Russia. The US gas replenished gas-starved Europe and filled its storage tanks to prepare for winter, helping countries diversify and free themselves of dependency on Russian gas. This led EU nations to reduce the overall share of Russian natural gas imports to the bloc from 40 percent before the invasion to about 7 percent now, according to The Associated Press.

Some Europeans acknowledge that and give the US credit for replacing the Russian gas, but the skyrocketing prices have changed people's attitude. The White House denied US responsibility for the high gas prices, with a National Security Council spokesman saying: “The rise in gas prices in Europe is caused by Putin's invasion of Ukraine and Putin's energy war against Europe, period.” American officials and experts point to energy market dynamics as the reason for the rise in gas prices and insist this is not the result of any intentional US policy or action.

The Europeans and the Americans sound like two ships passing in the night, each accusing the other of not understanding them. The Europeans complain that the US does not understand what they are going through and does not consult with them. Experts in America express astonishment at the Europeans, saying they “do not understand how the energy market works in the US.” One expert was more blunt, saying that the “US is not a charitable organization” and it needs to sell its gas according to what the market dictates. He pointed to the fact that there are middlemen, reselling by companies in Europe and other factors that affect the price, not government policy. But the problem is bigger than the price of natural gas, it goes deeper to the heart and health of the transatlantic relationship. Europeans are worried about what they call America's new economic nationalism, protectionism and trade and economic policies. They are worried that America will push them out of the global market with its new economic policies.

What changed everything and is worrying to the Europeans is America's new Inflation Reduction Act, which Congress passed in August. This act, Biden's biggest achievement as he seeks to tame inflation and boost the green economy, has become Europe's nightmare. It contains hundreds of billions of dollars in industrial subsidies, especially support for green industries and manufacturing. The EU's trade ministers, during their last meeting, called the act “discriminatory.”

Other Europeans have said it distorts competition, likened it to “China's economic isolationism,” and threatened to retaliate. This is shaping up to be Europe's winter of discontent. It is facing a war, an energy crisis and now the prospect of a trade war with the US, while its leaders are divided over their energy policies.

Officials in Europe say the combination of high gas prices and the new American subsidies are threatening European industries and making them uncompetitive. Some companies are already either shipping operations to the US or relocating entirely and hoping to benefit from the subsidies, leading to fears of “mass deindustrialization,” as The Economist described it. The German chemical manufacturing giant BASF was reported as saying that it would be “permanently” downsizing in Europe, giving the high energy prices as the principal reason. The Wall Street Journal also reported that Tesla “is pausing its plans to make battery cells in Germany as it looks at qualifying for tax credits under the Inflation Reduction Act.” There are efforts to contain the crisis and the EU-US Trade and Technology Council will meet on Dec. 5, raising hopes that the two sides can iron out their differences, especially to allay Europe's fears of what it calls “unfair” competition. The Europeans want to at least be treated like Canada and Mexico and benefit under the new act.

The problem for Europe, however, is within the continent and not across the Atlantic. The Europeans are divided, with the last meeting of EU energy ministers revealing deep and “almost irreconcilable” divisions, according to AP. The ministers were trying to agree on a price cap for gas but their “heated” discussions led to more divisions. They are slated to meet again in December, but if they do not do the heavy lifting before the meeting to bridge the gap in their positions, the energy crisis might turn into a political one. Europe is at a critical juncture in its history and in its relationship with the US. The longer it remains bogged down in the protracted war between Ukraine and Russia, the deeper its problems will become. Only a peaceful end to this conflict, and soon, can give the Europeans a chance to recover and put their economies and lives on a better trajectory than the one they are on now. Blaming the US will not solve Europe's problems. The US is doing what is in its interests.

– *Courtesy: Arab News*

A bad pitch: India's regional instability scam

Dr. Shahid Hameed



The March 9, 2022 nuclear-capable BrahMos episode put the security and stability of South Asia in danger by continuing the same Indian strategy. It also proves Indian blame game to demonize Pakistan's nuclear posture in post 1998. To unfold India's folly may include two broader possibilities of this missile launch against Pakistan

FROM last few years India's senior political and military elite is increasingly presenting an aggressive nuclear policy narrative based upon false and illogical reasons and pin responsibility for the indigenously driven problems on Pakistan. The same false approach led to adaptation of a new counterforce strategies against Pakistan namely surgical strikes and the limited war. By and large, Indian approach to deter Pakistan through these newly designed so called counter strategies failed badly. At the same time linking nuclear counterforce and threshold with terrorism or indigenously driven movements denote India's exaggerated nuclear posture that aims to keep Pakistan under consistent pressure and to drag Pakistan into false flag operation tactics.

The March 9, 2022 nuclear-capable BrahMos episode put the security and stability of South Asia in danger by continuing the same Indian strategy. It also proves Indian blame game to demonize Pakistan's nuclear posture in post 1998. To unfold India's folly may include two broader possibilities of this missile launch against Pakistan. The first assumption is that it was an accidental launch and have administrative capability problems in Indian command structure. Whereas the second possibility might be an intentional test case to develop and support Indian exaggerated nuclear posture. In first situation as perpetrated by India, if it was a mistaken launch then there are serious regional and global security implications that gives an evidence of deficient command and control system. The launch of a nuclear capable missile should have a regulatory procedure and an unbreachable command and control system. Indian nuclear se-

curity panorama as per Ashley Tellis's argument is “limited in size, separated in disposition, and centralized in control” but the BrahMos accidental launch disproves the strength of centralized command system. Unfortunately, any such irresponsibility and incompetence may have unacceptable consequences at regional and global level. In the later circumstance if the missile launch within Pakistani territory was deliberate and a test for response, it suggests another Indian strategy that has gained attention in recent discussions on India's ambitions to modify its nuclear cold start doctrine. India's ‘No First Use’ (NFU) policy is controversial, particularly when such misadventures are planned. Since India views China and Pakistan as strategic allies, any modifications to its counterforce strategies may have an impact on both countries.

In all situations, lack of ability, deteriorating command and control, and aggressive political and military mindset could lead a nuclear mishap. India has had a significant role in spreading terrorism in Pakistan. There are documented instances of widespread terrorism in Pakistan that has been funded and carried out by Indian organizations, notably RAW. India not only sponsoring militant non-state actors but also installed serving military officers in Pakistan to spread and organize terrorism. Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian naval officer, is accused of espionage and sabotage against Pakistan. The capture of a high-ranking Indian spy who acknowledged conducting terrorism in Pakistan should be taken seriously by international community. One of the many state-sponsored terrorist organizations operating in South Asian region is Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), which has committed

terrorist activities including the Samjhota express bombing that caused the deaths of about 70 innocent civilians, the the majority of whom were Pakistanis. But Pakistan has never utilised such aggressive acts to underpin or justify a nuclear escalation. In fact, India's attempts to link and tie policy changes particularly in NFU with allegedly terrorist activity display juvenile nuclear conduct. One of the reasons is that such incidents need a proper investigation and a tangible evidence to prove. An in-depth examination of the political and military establishment in India reveals that accusing Pakistan is a simple way to further one's own political interests at home. Therefore, any such false flag operation planned by the Indian military or secret services might deceive political leadership. Likewise, politicians may exploit any such occurrence to trigger a crisis in South Asia that might endanger international peace.

In order to prevent a global crisis, the international community and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must reexamine Indian nuclear strategy and the recent controversial discussions of revisions to NFU. The IAEA needs to examine and suggest updates to India's nuclear command and control system and should consider India's nuclear posture as a serious issue. On the other hand, Pakistan must offer a framework by involving the other stake holders in the region, including China and Russia, to regulate and oversee India's aggressive nuclear approach to link indigenous lower level issues with NFU in order to prevent regional instability.

– *The writer is Director Research at Center of International Strategic Studies (CISS) AIJK.*

Briefs

We are at Khan's beck and call...

FROM PAGE 01

However, the PTI has yet to announce a date for dissolving the assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Over the weekend, Elahi had brushed aside concerns of any resistance from him regarding the move, acknowledging that he owed his government to Imran and would oblige to his instructions immediately.

Taking to Twitter after meeting with Imran, Elahi reiterated the same and said: "There will not be a moment's delay when Imran Khan says to dissolve the PA."

He went on to say that the provincial assembly belonged to Imran. "We will support Imran's every decision. We fully support those we choose to ally ourselves with."

In another tweet, he reiterated that the Punjab government was standing with Imran. "Those creating misunderstandings will fail like they did in the past. Imran Khan is indispensable for Pakistan," CM Elahi said.

He also welcomed the idea of the opposition tabling a no-confidence motion in the provincial assembly. "It will fail like it did in the past."

"The opposition in Punjab has been beaten before and will face the same in the future," he said, adding that the opposition did not have the requisite numbers for passing the no-confidence motion.

"Governor's rule can also not be imposed when the PA is in session. It is my sincere advice to the opposition to go over the assembly's Rules of Business before speaking," Elahi said.

PTI 'willing' to talk on next elections

FROM PAGE 01

situation" in the country. "Our economic team has conveyed to the leadership that the country would default if elections were held in the month of November. Then we, in power, would not be in a position to control the situation," he stated.

The PTI leader maintained that the party leaders may be ready to accept elections in August or September if the government shared an economic plan.

"Principally we agree that all national and provincial assemblies' elections should be held on one date," says PTI leader said.

Confirming the development, senior PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry in a Twitter post said that if the government announced early elections, his party was ready to negotiate framework of elections and changes in ECP.

Snap polls not in interest

FROM PAGE 01

the party's chairman, Imran Khan, against dissolving the provincial assembly immediately.

The development came after the PTI's high-level committee submitted a report in relation to the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly to Khan, sources told Geo News.

The lawmakers also advised the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf PTI chief not to immediately dissolve the assembly, citing the ongoing development projects in their constituencies, the sources said. Imran Khan called off his long march towards Islamabad last week announcing quitting assemblies across the country, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The party's leadership, according to Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf Senior Vice-President Fawad Chaudhry, has approved the dissolution of assemblies in both provinces but the final decision will be made after further consultations.

England put Pakistan to sword in first Test

Brook reached his maiden century off just 80 balls, capping a highly entertaining day for a crowd of 6,000 that included around 150 "Barmy Army" fans

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Four England batsmen scored hundreds Thursday as the visitors piled up a record 506-4 on the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan in Rawalpindi. Openers Zak Crawley (122) and Ben Duckett (107) set the tone with quick-fire tons against a hapless Pakistan bowling attack before Olie Pope (108) and Harry Brook (101 not out) compounded their misery. Ben Stokes was also not out, on 34, when bad light stopped play, having helped England break a 112-year-old record for the most runs on the first day of a Test – beating Australia's 494-6 against South Africa at Sydney. After winning the toss England went straight into "Bazball" mode, the brand of freewheeling,

aggressive batting taken from the nickname of head coach Brendon McCullum. England's fiery batting – with 73 boundaries and three sixes – lifted the gloom over the start, which hung in the balance Wednesday after several of the tourists came down with a mystery virus. As if the punishment from the top three wasn't enough, Brook – playing only his second Test – cracked six consecutive boundaries off one over from debutant spinner Saud Shakeel. He is only the fourth batsman to score six consecutive boundaries in a Test, following West Indians Chris Gayle and Ramnaresh Sarwan, and Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya. Brook reached his maiden century off just 80 balls, capping a highly entertaining day for a crowd of 6,000 that included around 150



"Barmy Army" fans. Brook added 176 for the fourth wicket with Pope, who fell to pacer Mohammad Ali. Pakistan had briefly fought back in the second session

when they dismissed Duckett, Crawley and Joe Root (23) in the space of 53 runs, but that was shortlived. Debutant leg-spinner Zahid Mahmood was the most successful Pakistan bowler with 2-160 on a pitch similar to the one used against Australia earlier this year. That pitch was declared "below average" by the match referee after it yielded 1,187 runs for the loss of just 14 wickets over five days.

Duckett, who hit his maiden hundred after being recalled to the Test side following an absence of six years, was the first to go when he missed a reverse sweep off Mahmood and was trapped leg-before. West Indian umpire Joel Wilson initially ruled it not out, only to change his decision on Pakistan's review. Duckett, who hit 15 boundaries, put on 233 for the first wicket with Crawley – an England

record for the first wicket against Pakistan. It beat the 1962 stand of 198 between openers Geoff Pullar and Bob Barber in Dhaka, then East Pakistan. Crawley was bowled off a sharp incoming delivery by Haris Rauf in the next over, the Test debutant's first wicket. The lanky Crawley hit 21 boundaries in his quickfire 111-ball innings, his third Test hundred. Former skipper Root also fell leg-before to Mahmood, unsuccessfully challenging the decision. Crawley showed his intent right from the start, hitting three boundaries off Pakistan fast bowler Naseem Shah's first over of the match, and bringing up his half-century off just 38 balls. He could have become the first England batter to score a century before lunch on day one of a Test but was left nine short. England are on their first Test tour to Pakistan in 17 years.

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FROM PAGE 01

the provincial assembly immediately. The development came after the PTI's high-level committee submitted a report in relation to the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly to Khan, sources told Geo News.

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Imran Khan called off his long march towards Islamabad last week announcing quitting assemblies across the country, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The party's leadership, according to PTI Senior Vice-President Fawad Chaudhry, has approved the dissolution of assemblies in both provinces but the final decision will be made after further consultations.

Rise in terror alarming; won't get out of control...

FROM PAGE 01

to address the issue of rising militancy in an effective manner. "They need to take this matter seriously, and whenever they will need the help of the federal government and its agencies, we will assist them without any delay.

"Political matters aside, we have to play our role according to the system. I believe it is the KP CM's responsibility to seek the help he needs from the federation and to address these matters," Sanaullah asserted. In response to a question from a reporter, the minister highlighted that the Afghan government had made a promise to the world that they would not allow their soil to be used for terrorism.

UN appeals for record \$51.5 funding to help vulnerable

NEW YORK: The United Nations Thursday appealed for a record US\$51.5 billion in aid funding for next year to help 230 million of the world's most vulnerable people in nearly 70 countries, including Pakistan. The size of the appeal – 25 per cent higher than this year's – reflects the fact that the total number in need is 65 million more than in 2022, the UN and partner organizations noted.

In a video message, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that during a "year of extremes", it was essential to fund lifesaving operations next year, which were a "source of hope for millions of people in desperate need."

Needs are "shockingly high", the UN's top humanitarian official, Martin Griffiths said, warning that it was very likely that this year's emergencies would continue into 2023.

"The needs are going up because we've been by smitten by the war in Ukraine, by COVID-19, by climate," he said. "I fear that 2023 is going to be an acceleration of all those trends, and that's why we say ... that we hope 2023 will be a year of solidarity, just as 2022 has been a year of suffering."

Speaking in Geneva at the launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview report 2023, Griffiths described the appeal as a "lifeline" for people on the brink. He said that numerous countries had been hit by lethal droughts and floods, from Pakistan to the Horn of Africa. In addition, the war in Ukraine had "turned a part of Europe into a battlefield. More than 100 million people are now displaced worldwide. And all of this on top of the devastation left by the pandemic among the world's poorest."

"If the humanitarian outlook for 2023 is so grim, it is in large part because relief demands are already so high. At least "222 million people ... will face acute food insecurity in 53 countries by the end of this year", Griffiths explained. – APP

Countries endorse OIC-15 science, tech platform



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Representatives of 17 OIC member states on Thursday endorsed the proposal for establishing a ministerial platform for jointly undertaking science, technology and innovation initiatives. This platform which is an initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan is identified as the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform and constitutes fifteen plus countries of the OIC that are leading the others in science and technology. This was decided during the Senior Officials Meeting of OIC-15 held at

COMSTECH. The meeting was of hybrid nature and was attended physically by the representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, COMSTECH, Iran, Qatar, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, and Morocco, while Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Cameroon and UAE participated virtually.

The member countries discussed in detail the objectives, terms of reference, and working procedures of the OIC-15 and recommended these for adoption by the Ministerial Committee. The OIC-15 will serve as a platform where bilateral or multilateral initiatives of

STI may be presented for cooperative actions to be implemented through COMSTECH-the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation that is hosted by Pakistan. The meeting was jointly organized by the Republic of Kazakhstan, COMSTECH and the OIC General Secretariat. Speaking on the occasion, the Assistant Secretary General (Science and Technology) OIC, Ambassador Askar Mussinov lauded the outcome of the meeting as the first step towards a very important initiative for scientific uplift and cooperation. The Coordinator-General,

COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary emphasized that his organization will make every effort to practically realize the initiatives endorsed by the member states and he looks forward to them sharing the human and material resources required for major initiatives. The representative of the government of Kazakhstan thanked all the participants for their attendance and contribution to the meeting and announced that Kazakhstan will hold the first Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan in the first half of 2023.

Declan Rice says England should be feared in WC

LONDON: England's quality means they should be feared by other nations at the World Cup, says midfielder Declan Rice. The Three Lions are through to the last 16 in Qatar and face Senegal on Sunday for a place in the quarter-finals. Rice believes England's "world-class talent" and the squad's trophy-winning experience with their clubs combine to make them formidable opposition. "Other nations will look at our quality - and why should we not be feared?" said the West Ham United captain. "If you look at our attacking talent, we have world-class talent. Across the board we have players who have won the biggest trophies. "It is up to us to prove that. The likes of France have done that. We're not just here to get into the last 16, we want to go the whole way." England's players have the experience of reaching the 2018 World Cup semi-finals in Russia and the final of the European Championship last year. Rice acknowledges manager Gareth Southgate faces a "selection headache" for the game against Senegal with Bukayo Saka, Raheem Sterling, Marcus Rashford and Phil Foden competing for two starting places alongside Harry Kane in England's attack.

Mexico exit World Cup despite beating Saudi Arabia

DOHA: Mexico suffered an agonising exit from the World Cup on goal difference on Wednesday despite beating Saudi Arabia 2-1 in a dramatic finale to Group C. Second-half goals from Henry Martin and Luis Chavez secured victory for Mexico but they finished third behind Poland after Salem Al-Dawsari's late strike. Mexico desperately pushed for a third goal in an effort to improve their goal difference as they faced elimination on FIFA fair play rules. Saudi Arabia's win over Argentina in their opening match was one of the World Cup's great upsets, but they

crashed back down to earth with a 2-0 loss to Poland in their second game. Coach Herve Renard urged his players to show that was no flash in the pan and write themselves into Saudi football history by reaching knockout rounds for the first time since 1994. Having failed to win either of their first two group games for the first time in 44 years, Mexico knew victory was essential if they were to stand a chance of reaching the last 16 at an eighth successive World Cup. Mexico boss Gerardo Martino ditched the back five he used in the 2-0 loss

to Argentina and brought in Martin to lead the attack. It almost reaped immediate rewards but Saudi goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Owais raced out to block Alexis Vega after he was slipped in behind the defence by Hirving Lozano. Al-Owais, one of the heroes of the 2-1 win over Argentina, tentatively palmed away a bouncing cross ahead of a lunging Martin and held weak attempts by Chavez and Orbelin Pineda. Mohamed Kanno whipped a free-kick just over for Saudi Arabia, who saw defender Ali Al-Bulayhi forced off with injury – adding to their mounting

casualty list. Mexico continued to attack without success and Ali Al-Hassan nearly sent the bulk of the largely Saudi crowd wild late in the first half with a diving header that flashed wide of the far post. Chavez tested Al-Owais right after the interval and Martin soon broke the deadlock as he turned in from close range following Cesar Montes' clever flick-on at a corner. Mexico's second goal arrived just five minutes later when Chavez sensationally curled a free-kick into the top corner from 30 metres. –Agencies

Mountain Festival opens with painting competition

DNA

RAWALPINDI – A live painting competition on the theme "Women Move Mountains" marked the opening of a two-week long 12th edition of Pakistan Mountain Festival (PMF) on Thursday at the Fatima Jinnah Women University. The festival is an annual flagship event of Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) to commemorate the UN's International Mountains Day (IMD) that falls on December 11. As many as 34 girl-students and two boys enthusiastically participated in the live painting competition. The participating institutions included Fatima Jinnah Women University, National College of the Arts (NCA), Rawalpindi Women University, Westminster Academy, Foundation University Islamabad campus, SZABIST University, International Islamic University, FG College for Women Kashmir Road, Islamabad Model College for Girls and National Textile Institute. The participants painted mountain women's struggle in combating real-life challenges in the changing climate, women in mountain ecosystem conservation, and cultural heritage from the northern parts of Pakistan. They depicted the impact of climate change on life in mountains



besides the aesthetic value. Speaking on the occasion, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director and founder of Pakistan Mountain Festival Munir Ahmed said: "Mountain women play a key role in environmental protection and social and economic development in mountain areas. They are often the primary managers of mountain resources, guardians

of biodiversity, keepers of traditional knowledge, custodians of local culture and experts in traditional medicine. Somehow, mountain women's potential and contribution to conservation is undermined. He said mountain women's climate resilience shall be the focus to empower them to face the emerging challenges. Increasing

climate variability, coupled with a lack of investment in mountain agriculture and rural development, has often pushed men to migrate elsewhere in search of alternative livelihoods. Women have therefore taken on many tasks formerly done by men, yet mountain women are often invisible due to a lack of decision-making power and unequal access to resources. To trigger real change towards sustainable development, it is important to engage in gender transformative change. We need to empower mountain women so they can participate more effectively in decision-making processes and have more control over productive resources. By sharing excellence, opportunities and capacity development in mountains, the Day can promote gender equality and therefore contribute to improve social justice, livelihoods and resilience. "Mountains play a significant role in providing water and food supply to millions of people in the world. Mountains cover around 22 percent of the surface of the earth and 13 percent of the world's population live in the mountains. Ninety percent of the world's mountain inhabitants live in developing countries, where a huge population lives under the poverty line, and one out of every three individuals experiences the danger of food insecurity.

Briefs

Tokayev reaffirms cooperation with OECD

DNA

ASTANA: The relationship with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has always been a priority for Kazakhstan, said President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at a Nov. 30 meeting with OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann in Paris, the Akorda press service reported. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev meets with OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann in Paris on Nov. 30. Photo credit: Akorda

"Kazakhstan is keen to maintain ties with the OECD. We are also grateful for your recommendations and proposals regarding Kazakhstan's economic development," Tokayev said. Since 2008, Kazakhstan has been working with the OECD to improve the quality of its economic, social, and environmental policies and institutions. The country has also joined 42 OECD legal instruments (working groups). The memorandum of understanding between the Kazakh government and the OECD, signed in 2018, is one of the main documents determining the priority co-operation areas. It is aimed at structural reforms and joint research based on the recommendations of the OECD, Kazakhstan's participation in the work of the OECD structures, and accession to the legal instruments. During the meeting, the sides introduced amendments to the memorandum which, according to Tokayev, will facilitate cooperation.

50M people living in modern slavery in 2021

DNA

LONDON: The latest global estimates indicate that 50 million people were living in modern slavery in 2021, according to data compiled by Anadolu Agency on the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. "Of these people, 28 million were in forced labour and 22 million were trapped in forced marriage," according to a joint report released in September, "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery," by the International Labor Organization, International Organization for Migration, and the non-profit Walk Free. The last five years witnessed a significant rise in the number of people trapped in modern slavery, the report said. There were 10 million more people in modern slavery in 2021 than there were in 2016, the report noted, citing global estimates. Modern slavery comprises of two principal components: forced labor and forced marriage. Both refer to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or cannot leave because of threats, violence, deception, abuse of power, or other forms of coercion.

Switzerland braces for a Christmas under dimmed lights

DNA

GENEVA: Christmas will not be as glittering as before in Switzerland under the shadow of compulsory energy-saving policies that could dim the holiday spirit. Like all European countries, Switzerland is tightening its belt to deal with a Russia-induced energy crunch during the winter, which includes a series of measures that would affect Christmas decorations, lighting, and stores and holiday markets. In most cities, measures such as energy-saving LED lights, candles, using biogas for heat, and restricting lighting hours are being used to conserve energy while still encouraging a festive atmosphere. Electric heaters are not allowed at the English Garden in the harbor, which this time of year is transformed into a Christmas Garden. The garden is covered with biogas-heated chalets. Illumination at the Christmas markets will be provided with LEDs, while illuminated signs will be turned off at night.



ISLAMABAD: Polish musicians presenting JAZZ performance on the occasion of the Independence Day and Armed Forces Day of Poland. The event was organized by the Polish Ambassador Maciej Pisarski and Bogdan Obuchowski, the Defence Attache, at his residence.-DNA

Azerbaijan slams new French parliamentary resolution

Relations between the former Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan have been tense since 1991, when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions – Lachin, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Qubadli, and Zangilan.

DNA

BAKU: Slamming a new French resolution on what Paris calls "aggression" against Armenia, Azerbaijan on Thursday called the move "another provocation by France against Azerbaijan." "The false and slanderous anti-Azerbaijan resolution adopted in the lower chamber (National Assembly) of the French Parliament on November 30, 2022 is another provocation by France against Azerbaijan, similar to the recent resolution adopted in the Senate," said an Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry statement. The statement says the resolution "aims to undermine the process of normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, as

well as efforts to establish peace and stability in the region." "This resolution, contrary to the norms and principles of international law, once again clearly demonstrates France's biased political position, and its inability to act as an impartial and fair mediator," the statement added. Rejecting the resolutions in both French chambers, Azerbaijan accused Paris of "biased intentions," criticizing it for not working instead to resolve the conflict. "Armenia occupied the territory of Azerbaijan for 30 years," wrote Azerbaijan's Ambassador to France Leyla Abdullayeva on Twitter, referring to Armenia's decades-long occupation of Karabakh, which Azerbaijan forces largely recaptured in a fall 2020 conflict.

"It has committed war crimes and devastated the region by trampling on the fundamental rights of nearly a million Azerbaijanis. You, on the other hand, remain silent, (and) now you are hindering peace by talking." On Nov. 16, Azerbaijan rebuffed a French Senate resolution calling for sanctions against Baku and its withdrawal from territory liberated from Armenian occupation in 2020. Relations between the former Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan have been tense since 1991, when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions – Lachin, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Qubadli, and Zangilan.

In the fall of 2020, in 44 days of clashes, Baku liberated numerous cities, villages, and settlements in Karabakh from Armenian occupation, ending in a Moscow-brokered truce. The conflict's peace agreement was celebrated as a triumph in Azerbaijan. French legislative bodies have turned into the arena of a political gamble, Azerbaijani Parliament. The parliament made the remark commenting on a biased resolution adopted by the French National Assembly. Following the adoption of a biased resolution by the French Senate on November 15, 2022, the National Assembly of France again arranged a political action against Azerbaijan on November 30, demonstrating open disrespect for the

norms and principles of international law and adopting a biased, unobjective, and unfair act against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. These resolutions adopted by the Senate and National Assembly of France demonstrate that the French legislative bodies have turned into the arena of a political gamble. Azerbaijan's Parliament strongly rejects the resolution of France's National Assembly and considers it to be political hypocrisy. It was noted that the main reason why the efforts made for the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict during the almost 30-year occupation of Azerbaijani lands by Armenia were not successful is that the aggressor country was not named aggressor, that the countries

that assumed the role of mediator, France, in particular, allowed for the double standards to exist. The fact that relevant measures were not taken against Armenia for its non-compliance with the requirements of well-known UN Security Council resolutions and for ignoring international norms was also cited as a reason. It was noted with regret that the provocative attempts of French authorities, including both houses of parliament, are preventing the efforts made within the peaceful agenda between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the normalization of relations. Those attempts serve the Armenian chauvinist ideology that is based on territorial claims against neighboring states as well as revanchist and aggressive separatist forces.

Russian FM slams Polish chairmanship of OSCE

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia's foreign minister said on Thursday that no one has ever done as much damage to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as the current Polish chairmanship. Speaking at a news conference in Moscow, Sergey Lavrov said the Swedish chairmanship in 2021 started preparing the "OSCE's funeral," with Poland following its lead by "digging a grave for this organization." Both countries are among the numerous Western countries firmly opposed to Russia's war on Ukraine, which started in February. Since the war began, Sweden has also moved to join NATO, against Russian opposition. "The Swedes were the chairmen last year, back then they openly



began to act not as honest brokers, but as active participants in Western policy in the OSCE, subordinating the OSCE to the interests of the United States and Brussels. "In fact, it was the Swedes who began to prepare the OSCE funeral. And our Polish neighbors have been diligently digging a grave for this organization all this year, destroying the remnants of the culture of consensus ... No one has

ever done such damage to the OSCE, being in charge," he said. Last month, Russia slammed Poland's refusal to issue a visa to Lavrov so he could take part in a meeting of OSCE foreign ministers, which begins today in the city of Lodz. Lavrov added that the OSCE is losing its significance, and its authority and competencies "are being eroded in every possible way." Through the efforts of the EU, parallel structures and meetings are being created, such as the European Political Community, whose first meeting took place on Oct. 6 in the Czech Republic, he said. The West has shown that it will build security not with Russia, but against it, Lavrov stressed, adding that in response Russia and Belarus "have taken all security measures to be ready for any options." Belarus has been Russia's chief supporter of the Ukraine war.

Leaving EU added \$7.2B to UK food bills

LONDON: Leaving the EU added nearly £6 billion (\$7.2 billion) to household food bills in the UK, with the poorest bearing the brunt, according to new research released on Thursday. The price of food products increased by 3% a year since Brexit, leading to a 6% jump over a two-year period, London School of Economics researchers have discovered. Brexit caused a loss of £210 for the average UK household, or £6 billion overall, according to the report, titled Non-tariff barriers and consumer prices: evidence from Brexit. "Since poorer households spend a larger fraction of their income on food, they are hit harder," said Nikhil Datta, assistant professor of economics at Warwick University and one of the report's co-authors. The UK's annual inflation rate spiked to 11.1% in October, the highest since October 1981. Latest data from the British Retail Consortium trade body indicates UK food price inflation hit a new high of 12.4% in November, driven by a surge in prices of essentials such as eggs, dairy products, and coffee. "In leaving the EU, the UK squandered a deep trade relationship with few impediments to trade for one where a wide range of checks, forms, and steps are required before goods can cross the border," Datta said. "Firms faced higher costs and passed most of these on to consumers." – DNA

Chile-Bolivia river row set for UN court ruling

THE HAGUE: The International Court of Justice will give its judgement on Thursday on a climate change-fuelled row between Chile and Bolivia over the use of a crucial cross-border river. Chile took its South American neighbour to the UN's top court in 2016, asking the ICJ to declare the Silala an "international water course" and give it equal rights to the river. It is the latest in a series of water-sharing disputes between parched Chile and landlocked Bolivia, which have been rowing over access to the Pacific Ocean for nearly 150 years. The Silala rises in Bolivia's high-altitude wetlands and crosses the border with Chile, flowing for around eight kilometres (five miles). Bolivia however says the waters flow artificially into Chile due to a system of canals built to collect water from springs, and has demanded its neighbour pay compensation. Judges at the Hague-based ICJ, which was set up after World War II to rule on disputes between UN member states, will hand down their judgment at 3 pm (1400 GMT). The court in 2018 sank Bolivia's bid to gain access to the Pacific, which it lost to Chile in the 1879-1884 War of the Pacific. Former Bolivian president Evo Morales had previously sought to use the river dispute as a bargaining chip in its fight for a route to the ocean. At the time, Morales threatened to reduce the flow of the Silala into Chile's parched Atacama Desert and impose fees for its use. – APP

Spain finds more letter bombs

MADRID: Explosive devices concealed in postal packages were discovered at Spain's Defense Ministry, a satellite center at an air base and an arms factory that makes grenades sent to Ukraine, Spanish authorities said Thursday, a day after a similar package exploded at the Ukrainian embassy in Madrid. Authorities also said that a similar explosive device was dispatched by regular post to Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on Nov. 24, but was disposed of by bomb squad experts. The latest discoveries raise to five the number of explosive devices that were sent by post around the country over the past few days. The Russian embassy in Madrid on Thursday condemned the letter bombs, saying in a tweet that "any threat or terrorist attack, especially those directed at diplomatic missions, are totally condemnable." The package dispatched to the Ukrainian embassy and addressed to the ambassador slightly injured an employee when it burst into flames while he was handling it. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba quickly ordered that security be stepped up at all Ukrainian embassies abroad and has asked his Spanish counterpart for a speedy investigation. – APP

SNA ready for ground operation

DNA

DAMASCUS: The Syrian National Army (SNA) is ready for the anticipated ground operation in northern Syria, one of the commanders of the army, Mustafa Sejari said on Thursday. "It can be said that we have completed the necessary military and field preparations and preparations to start the anticipated military operation," Sejari told Daily Sabah in an exclusive interview. "We are waiting for the appropriate time and zero hour to start advancing and ground control. Our forces in the Syrian National Army are ready to carry out the ground operation alongside the allied forces in the Republic of Türkiye," he added. As part of Operation Claw-Sword, the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) continues to strike terrorist targets in northern Syria and Iraq with air and ground fire support elements. Türkiye's planned ground operation against the terrorist groups in northern Syria can be launched anytime, Presidential Spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin had said Tuesday.

China broadening the all-weather strategic co-op

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) organized a policy conclave here in Islamabad, titled "CPEC's Defining Moment: Prospect and Challenges". The eminent speakers included Prof. Dr. Azhar Ahmad; Prof. Dr. Tahir Awan; Dr. George I. H. Cooke; Mr. Shahid Raza; Mr. Hassan Daud; and Mr. Javed Iqbal. Dr. Azhar Ahmad moderated the session. Chinese Deputy Head of Mission Ms. Pang Chunxue was the chief guest of the policy conclave. In his opening remarks Dr. Azhar Mahmood said that CPEC is an opportunity which was harnessed as a result of Pakistan's geo strategic location. Due to the same reason, it has vital importance in China's One Belt One Road Initiative because it is the enriched and shortest route of east west connectivity providing connectivity to not only region but civilization. The First Speaker on the panel was Dr Tahir Awan who focused political aspects of CPEC. There are challenges and we must deal with them said Dr. Awan. Pakistan needs to take some ideas from its Chinese friends and that is what CPC is focused on "Modernization". Pakistan can also use and

implement the idea in its own requirement, Pakistan needs modernization in order to carry on with the emerging world or else be obsolete. Adding further he said that there is a need to link industry and institute in order to solve the challenges, Pakistan needs to institutionalize the challenges to CPEC. Joining from Sri Lanka, Dr. George highlighted that every country is unique in its outlook and none should be looked as a replica

tion of the other rather unique relationship it has with the international community. Adding further that no country is isolated today due to its dependency on trade and China is effectively working on enhancing bilateral relations based on mutual trade. Asia has a major role in world due to huge population bulge it has. Dr. George further said that the coming century is Asian Century in which Asia would be economic centre

of world and Beijing plays a significant role as it borders south Asia which is extremely significant for its international relations. The next speaker on the panel was Mr. Dawood Butt. Mr. Dawood said that emerging world is talking about more politics than trade and in these times Pakistan should feel proud of CEPC rather being skeptical about it, we should introspect but not be skeptic about its productivity and benefit for Pakistan because China is leading in GDP and Pakistan is no 1 recipient of China FDI. We need to remove bottlenecks for seamless functioning of CPEC. There is institutional consensus that CPEC is important but history is equally important and Pakistan need to learn from Chinese history which is full of resilience. Speaking next Mr. Shahid Raza said that threat and sanctions had not helped the world and will not in the future as well. After WW-I Germany was put under sanctions and it culminated into another world war. The problem is that we have learned from history that we never learn from history. War, threats has always resulted in destruction and decimation. Adding further he said that Pakistan's biggest struggle is its internal political battles which halts national growth.



Briefs

Headline
inflation
eases
marginally to
23.8pc

ISLAMABAD: Headline inflation measured by the consumer price index (CPI) rose 23.8 per cent year-on-year in November, declining marginally from last month's 26.6pc, as annual growth in food and transport prices continue to be the main drivers, official data released on Thursday showed. On a month-on-month basis, the CPI increased 0.8pc in November compared to a rise of 4.7pc in the previous month. This drop in monthly inflation comes on the back of "muted flood inflation", according to Ismail Iqbal Securities, which rose 0.1pc in November against 5.6pc last month. In particular, perishable food items saw prices decline by 5pc over last month compared to an increase of 20pc in October. The latest figures are in line with the Ministry of Finance's outlook for the month, issued on Tuesday, which said inflationary pressure was expected to marginally ease out due to smooth domestic supplies, unchanged energy prices in November and a stable exchange rate. The ministry had said it expected CPI inflation in the range of 23-25pc for November.

Russia
sanctions
will work:
Lithuania PM

VILNIUS: The European Union needs patience as it sanctions Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, as most measures will only have an impact in the medium and long term, Lithuania's prime minister said in an interview at the Reuters NEXT conference on Thursday. "My message is - we need to have patience. Because there are no sanctions that can switch Russia off overnight. It is not possible, we should not look for this," Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte said. She said there was a broad agreement among NATO members not to pressure Ukraine to negotiate, and called on NATO to provide air defences to not only eastern NATO members but also to Ukraine. She pointed to the missile explosion in Poland last month which killed two people. Poland and other Western states have said the missile was a Ukrainian air defence missile that went astray in pursuit of a Russian missile. "The better air defence system Ukraine has, the less probability of incidents like that might happen... It is important not only for NATO to provide a decent (air) defence system, but also provide Ukraine with a decent (air) defence system," she said. Lithuania will host a NATO summit next year which Simonyte expects to be dominated by Ukraine but also by the decision of Sweden and Finland to join the Western defence alliance. —Agencies

Court sends
Swati on 14-
day judicial
remand

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court on Thursday remanded PTI Senator Azam Swati in judicial custody for 14 days till December 15. Earlier this week, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had arrested Swati — the second time in less than two months — over a "highly obnoxious campaign of intimidating tweets [...] against state institutions". Separate FIRs were registered against the PTI leader in Balochistan and Sindh as well for using "derogatory language" and "provoking the people against the army". Following the arrest, the Pakistan Electronic Media and Regulatory Authority (Pema) prohibited media coverage of Swati on all satellite TV channels. Previously, the court had extended the PTI senator's physical remand for four days till Dec 3. However, the FIA on Thursday requested Judicial Magistrate Muhammad Bashir to send Swati to jail, saying that the agency had completed its investigation. —DNA

UAE NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATED



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Ambassador of UAE Hamad Alzaabi and others cutting cake to celebrate 51st National Day of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), at Islamabad Serena Hotel. —DNA

Ukraine says Russia pulls
back forces from river towns

Russia has already told civilians to leave towns within 15 km of the river and withdrawn its civilian administration from city of Nova Kakhovka on bank

NEWS DESK

KYIV: Ukraine's military said on Thursday Russia had pulled some troops from towns on the opposite bank of the Dnipro River from Kherson city, the first official Ukrainian report of a Russian withdrawal on what is now the main front line in the south. The statement gave only limited details and made no mention of any Ukrainian forces having crossed the Dnipro. Ukrainian officials also stressed that Russia had intensified shelling across the river, knocking out power again in Kherson where electricity had only begun to be restored nearly three weeks after Russian troops vacated the city and fled across the river. Since Russia abandoned Kherson last month, nine months into its invasion of Ukraine, the river now forms the entire southern stretch of the front. Russia has already told civilians to leave towns within 15 km of the river and withdrawn its civilian administration from the city of Nova Kakhovka on the bank. Ukrainian officials have previously said Russia pulled back some artillery near the river to safer positions further away, but until now had stopped short of saying Russian

forces were quitting towns. "A decrease in the number of Russian soldiers and military equipment is observed in the settlement of Oleshky," the military said, referring to the town opposite Kherson city, on the far side of a destroyed bridge over the Dnipro. "Enemy troops were withdrawn from certain settlements of the Kherson oblast and dispersed in forest strips along the section of the Oleshky - Hola Prystan highway," it said, referring to a 25-km (15-mile) stretch of road through riverside towns scattered in woods on the bank opposite Kherson city. It said most of the Russian troops in the area are recently mobilised reservists, suggesting that Moscow's best-trained professional troops had already left. Reuters could not independently confirm the report. Separately, Ukraine tightened security at its diplomatic missions around the world on Thursday after a mail bomb exploded at its embassy in Madrid, one of several devices sent to targets in Spain, including to Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. Ambassador Serhii Pohoreltsev told the Ukrainian news site European Pravda that the suspicious package addressed to him had been opened outside the building by the embassy's Ukrainian commandant, who was injured in the blast.

"After opening the box and hearing a click that followed, he tossed it and then heard the explosion," he said. "Despite not holding the box at the time of the explosion, the commandant hurt his hands and received a concussion." New air raid sirens wailed again across Ukraine on Thursday and residents took to shelters, but there were no immediate reports of major missile strikes and the warning was lifted. Since early October, Russia has also launched near weekly massive missile and drone attacks across Ukraine to knock out its power supply, water and heat, which Kyiv and the West say is intended to harm civilians, a war crime. The last huge volley of strikes last week knocked out heat and power for millions, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has warned Ukrainians to expect another wave soon. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov defended those strikes on Thursday, saying Moscow was targeting Ukraine's civil infrastructure to prevent Kyiv from importing Western arms. He did not explain how such attacks could achieve that aim. We disable energy facilities (in Ukraine) that allow you (the West) to pump lethal weapons into Ukraine to kill Russians," Lavrov said. Kyiv said on Thursday recent

volleys had included dud Russian missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, fired with no payload apparently to distract Ukrainian air defences. The Ukraine war is entering a relentless new phase with the onset of the first winter since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion. After pulling back in the south in November, Moscow has focused its firepower on a section of the front line in the east near the city of Bakhmut, where hundreds of soldiers are thought to be dying each day in fighting in cold and muddy trenches, yielding scant reported gains of territory on either side. Ukraine's armed forces reported heavy shelling of a number of frontline villages in the area. Russia's defence ministry said Ukraine had handed over 50 prisoners in the latest exchange between the two countries. Moscow is expected to release a similar number. There are no political talks under way to end the war, which Russia launched as a "special military operation" claiming its aim was to disarm its neighbour and root out leaders it characterises as dangerous nationalists. Kyiv and the West call it an imperialist land grab. The war has killed tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers on both sides.

EU warns Elon Musk to
strengthen safety controls

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: The EU's commissioner for digital policy, Thierry Breton, has warned Twitter owner Elon Musk that the company must work hard to comply with new social media laws. Musk, who bought Twitter in October, has signaled an interest in scrapping the platform's own rules aimed at combatting misinformation. Breton and Musk held a video call to discuss Twitter's preparedness for the EU's Digital Services Act, which is due to take effect next year. The law requires tech companies to increase checks for content that might promote terrorism, child sexual abuse, hate speech and commercial scams. Breton welcomed Musk's statements of intent to prepare Twitter for the new legislation, but said the platform needed to take concrete steps. "I am pleased to hear that he has read it carefully and considers it as a sensible approach to implement on a worldwide basis," the EU commissioner said. "But let's also be clear that there is still huge work ahead, as Twitter will have to implement transparent user policies, significantly reinforce content moder-

ation and protect freedom of speech, tackle disinformation with resolve, and limit targeted advertising." In the call, Musk agreed to let the European Commission carry out a "stress test" at Twitter's headquarters early next year. The aim would be to help the platform comply with the new rules ahead of schedule and prepare for an "extensive independent audit" as required by the new EU law. Violations could lead to fines matching as much as 6% of a company's annual global revenue and could even trigger a ban on operating in the EU. Musk had sought to fashion himself as a champion of free speech even before his \$44-billion (42.2-billion) takeover of Twitter. Many of his supporters accuse the previous leadership of Twitter of censorship. Since taking control of the network, Musk has laid off about half the company's 7,500-person workforce along with an unknown number of contractors responsible for content moderation. A significant part of the executive team quit voluntarily. Teams responsible for communications, content curation, human rights and machine learning ethics were particularly affected, as well as some product and engineering teams.

Myanmar leader says
2,000 dead fighting junta

BANGKOK: At least 2,000 pro-democracy fighters have been killed in Myanmar battling a military junta that seized power last year, the head of a parallel civilian government said in an interview aired on Thursday, urging allies to provide military aid. Duwa Lashi La, acting president of the National Unity Government (NUG), comprised of remnants of the administration of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi and others, was speaking to the Reuters NEXT conference from an undisclosed location in Myanmar. "We regard (the deaths) as the price we must pay," said Duwa Lashi La, a former teacher and lawyer in his seventies who fled his home in Kachin State in northern Myanmar with his family. The military has branded him and his colleagues terrorists and

banned citizens from communicating with them, but their parallel civilian government enjoys widespread support. Allied armed groups known as People's Defense Forces have emerged across the country. Duwa Lashi La has been pictured visiting troops, who include former students and professionals driven to the jungles by military crackdowns, clad in a flak jacket and helmet. "I have no idea when I will give up my life," he said. "It is up to God's will. I am already committed to sacrificing anything for my country," he said. The Southeast Asian nation has been in turmoil since the military seized power in February last year, reversing a decade-long democratic experiment, and used deadly force to crush protests. In addition to the 2,000 deaths in fighting, more than 2,500

civilians have been killed elsewhere, mostly in crackdowns on protests, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a rights group that has been monitoring the unrest. Pro-democracy fighters are out-gunned by an army equipped by Russia, China and India, which uses fighter jets to carry out deadly bombing raids. More than 1.3 million people have been internally displaced since the coup, according to the United Nations, which has said military attacks may constitute war crimes. The junta did not respond to requests for comment by Reuters. It has said it does not target civilians with air strikes and its operations are responding to attacks by "terrorists". Duwa Lashi La said the opposition fighters had killed about 20,000 junta troops. —Agencies

Sanjrani
felicitates
UAE on 51st
National Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Thursday warmly felicitated the leadership and people of the United Arab Emirates on the 51st National Day of the United Arab Emirates on behalf of the Parliament, Government and people of Pakistan. The Chairman Senate said that the political leadership of the United Arab Emirates had set ideal milestones of unity, development and prosperity. Pakistan shares the happiness of the people of the United Arab Emirates. He remarked that the development of the region, economic prosperity and promotion of peace was our common vision. Pakistan-UAE fraternal relations encompass multilateral cooperation. The bond of brotherhood and trust is further strengthened by the shared religious and cultural ties. In his message, the Chairman Senate underlined that exemplary cooperation in international forums reflects the trust and respect between Pakistan and UAE. We need to focus on accelerating the exchange of high-level delegations and further enhancing trade activities to further strengthen these ties and create an atmosphere of brotherhood.

Former
leader Jiang's
body arrives
in Beijing

DNA

YANGZHOU: The body of former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin arrived in Beijing Thursday ahead of a public memorial service, Chinese state media said, as hundreds of people gathered in his hometown to pay their respects. A special flight carrying Jiang's remains from Shanghai, where he died on Wednesday of leukaemia and multiple organ failure, was met at the airport by President Xi Jinping, state media said. State broadcaster CCTV announced that a public memorial service would be held on Tuesday morning in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. "The memorial conference will be broadcast live, and all regions and departments must organise the majority of party members, cadres, and the masses to listen and watch," CCTV announced. A nationwide three-minute silence will be held, together with three minutes of sirens wailing. Flags will fly at half-mast across the country.