



# Islamabad POST

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## PM Shehbaz vows implementation of Journalist Safety Law

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## No space for peace's spoilers: COAS

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## England won't fear France, says Saka

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### Briefs

#### Religious card of corrupt leader failed

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that the religious card of the shameless, incompetent, corrupt Kashmiri seller has failed. In a tweet, she said that Imran Khan had ruined governance, economy and foreign relations of the country during his four year rule. The minister said that the accountability narrative of PTI leadership failed and they destroyed relations with friendly countries. "Imran US conspiracy narrative has been buried", she maintained.

#### Dar, Fazl trying to browbeat IMF

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior AML leader Sheikh Rashid tweeted that Ishaq Dar and Maulana Fazlur Rehman were trying to browbeat the IMF. The AML leader said the business activities had already slowed down and now the Centaurus mall had been victimized. Mr Rashid stated that the public was bearing the brunt of Miftah Ismail and Ishaq Dar's incompetence. He affirmed that the former prime minister Imran Khan was satisfied and delaying the process of dissolving the assemblies till Dec 30.

#### Dr Christain calls on Dar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner, Dr. Christian Turner along with UNDP Consultant Sir Michael Barber called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Finance and other senior officers from Finance Division participated in the meeting. said a press release issued here. The finance minister extended his warm welcome to the British HC and UNDP Consultant Sir Michael Barber and appraised them about the overall economic outlook of the country.

## Arshad Sharif murder Apex court orders FIR registration

### FIR of the case registered in Ramna police station

COURT REPORTER / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan Tuesday ordered the government to register a first information report (FIR) of the murder of journalist Arshad Sharif and submit the report of the fact-finding committee. Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial issued the directives today during the hearing of the suo motu notice of the journalist's killing in Kenya. A five-member bench including CJP Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar is hearing the case. "The journalist community in the country and the public at large are deeply distressed and concerned about the death of the senior journalist and are seeking the court's scrutiny of the matter," said the apex court in a statement announcing the suo motu action. It had also announced that it would hold a hearing today. The court had issued notices to the interior secretary, foreign secretary, information secretary, director generals of the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA), Intelligence Bureau, and president of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. At the outset of the hearing, CJP Bandial asked Additional Attorney General Amir Rehman about the fact-finding committee report. "Since receiving a letter from Arshad Sharif's mother, the SC human rights cell is investigating the matter. The Interior Ministry had to submit a report of the fact-finding committee last Friday," remarked the CJP. He added that the court is yet to receive the report. "Should we summon the interior minister? Where is the interior minister?" asked the CJP. At this, the additional attorney general informed the court that the report will be submitted tomorrow. "Wasting time in the investigation is the government's habit, not the Supreme Court's," said the CJP in response, adding that Sharif was a well-known journalist. "Why was Arshad Sharif murdered, and in a foreign country?" asked the CJP. He added that the country has vast resources. "Mr attorney general it's been a long time since the

### PM Shehbaz welcomes SC's suo moto

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday welcomed the suo motu notice taken by the Supreme Court on the killing of prominent journalist Arshad Sharif. He assured that the government would extend full cooperation to the Court. "I welcome Supreme Court taking suo motu notice of the murder of journalist Arshad Sharif," he said in a Twitter post. Shehbaz Sharif mentioned that he had already written a letter to the Chief Justice of Pakistan for setting up a judicial commission to probe the murder. The Supreme Court on Tuesday headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial directed the government to register a first information report (FIR) by tonight. The court also sought the inquiry report of the committee formed by the government to probe the killing of Arshad Sharif.

fact-finding committee has returned, why has the final report of the commission not yet been received by the Supreme Court?" asked the top judge. The CJP stated that the medical report the court received were "unsatisfactory", adding that every life must be considered important. He added that senior doctors prepared the medical report but it was not satisfactory. "Mistreatment of journalists cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. In Pakistan, journalists are the voice of truth," said Justice Bandial. At this, the AAG intervened and informed the court that Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah was in Faisalabad when the report came and once he sees it,

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## Roadside bomb kills seven in Afghanistan

### At least 19 people were killed and 24 others wounded earlier this month

MAZARI SHARIF: A roadside bomb killed seven petroleum company employees commuting to work on a packed bus in northern Afghanistan's biggest city, an official and survivors said on Tuesday. A police official told media that Tuesday's blast happened around 7:00 am (0230 GMT) in Mazari-Sharif - an ancient city famed for its beautiful blue mosque. "I was reading the Quran on my phone screen and there was a boom," survivor Azim, whose right leg was injured by shrapnel, told AFP. Mohammad Hanif, who

was also hurt in the blast, said there were around 52 people aboard the bus at the time. Seven people were killed and six others wounded according to Asif Waziri, spokesman for the Balkh province police department. "The bomb was placed in a cart by the roadside. It was detonated as the bus arrived," he said. There has so far been no claim of responsibility. At least 19 people were killed and 24 others wounded earlier this month by a blast at a madrasa in Aybak, southeast of Mazari-Sharif. - Agencies

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## INDEPENDENCE DAY OF FINLAND



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Finland Hannu Ripatti, Ambassador of European Union Riina Kionka, spouse and daughter of Ambassador Ripatti cutting the cake to celebrate the 105th Independence Day of Finland. Finland has re-opened its embassy in Pakistan. - DNA

## Fazl, Shehbaz rule out snap polls

Say Imran wants to create chaos in the country



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam - Fazl (JUI-F) chief Fazlur Rehman on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at PM House in Islamabad. Sources privy to the matter said that both bigwigs met to discuss the ongoing situation in the aftermath of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) decision to dissolve Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies.

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## FM to visit Indonesia

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will pay official visits to Indonesia and Singapore from 7-9 December 2022. In Bali, Indonesia, the Foreign Minister will hold a bilateral meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister H.E. Ms. Retno Marsudi. He will participate in two multilateral events: i) 15th Bali Democracy Forum; and ii) International Conference on

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## Some partymen afraid of dissolution of assemblies: Imran

Says the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was not controlled by him

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman and ex-PM Imran Khan has said that some members of his party were afraid of the dissolution of assemblies. Speaking to the current affairs vloggers in Lahore on Tuesday, he directed members of his party members to ignore if they disagree with any statement from coalition partners as they were not limited to our line and length, and we should ignore such talks. Imran Khan maintained that the dissolution of assemblies won't affect party's image. Repeating his mantra, the former PM said that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was not controlled by him. The PTI chairman went on to say that the accountability system will be improved if his party came into power again. Earlier, Imran Khan said

that giving more relaxation to the incumbent government would be a 'bad omen' for economy. According to sources, PTI chief presided over a meeting of lawmakers from Sheikhpura, Kasur, and Nankana Sahib. The participants included Punjab health minister Dr Yasmin Rashid, Provincial minister Sardar Asif Nakai, MNA Sardar Talib Nakai, MNA Brig (ret'd) Rahat Aman, Provincial minister Syed Ali Abbas Shah, MNA Sardar Amir Dogar, and MPA Khurram Ijaz Chatha. Matters pertaining to the dissolution of provincial assemblies and resignations were discussed. All the participants assured the party chief their complete support in the dissolution. The sources added that the participants said that free and fair elections were the only solution to the issues the country was facing. Dissolution of

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## Stalemate persists between IMF, Pakistan over review

### An IMF review for the release of next tranche under bailout funding has been pending since September

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Talks between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are at a stalemate with global lender pushing Islamabad on policies and reforms needed to keep the bailout programme's targets on track and complete the pending ninth review, a fund official told reporters. "... a key purpose of program reviews in Pakistan, as in all program countries, is to evaluate both program performance to date, as well as, forward-looking, whether the program is on track or policy measures are needed to meet program targets, advance reform objectives, and maintain macroeconomic stability going forward," Esther Perez Ruiz, IMF's Resident

Chief in Pakistan, said in a written reply. An IMF review for the release of the next tranche under bailout funding has been pending since September. However, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar claimed last week that Pakistan is on track for all targets for the review. However, IMF said the review will be delayed until after the end-September quantitative targets have been met. "Significant new developments have taken place since the last program

review including the extraordinary floods and a number of new measures and developments, which affect this year's economic outlook," Ruiz added. Sources, privy to the talks, told the publication that the global lender has communicated to the finance ministry that it requires completion of all end-quarter performance criteria and targets. "Both sides would also require broader agreement on forward-looking data on the basis of which the performance targets and indicative targets for the remaining program period till June 2023 will be set," they added. Following the catastrophic floods, IMF and Pakistan had revised all macroeconomic and fiscal frameworks were adjusted altogether so both sides could strike a consensus on it.

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## Karachi Arts Council elections on Dec 18

DNA

KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan Chairman Commissioner Karachi and Chief Election Commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Memon has said that the Deputy Commissioner South has been appointed as the Election Commissioner for Arts Council elections 2023-2024. According to the law, elections will be held on December 18. The administration shall take all possible measures for peaceful elections, shall take all possible measures for campaigning and elections, rioting or actions which may cause unrest during election campaigning and elections shall be prohibited, possession of arms shall be prohibited. He expressed these views while addressing a press conference at the Arts Council along with Deputy Commissioner South Saeed Leghari on Tuesday. DNA

## 180 girls exhibit driving skills under UNDP WoW program

LAHORE: As many as 180 girls showcased their driving skills as they rode motorcycles with dexterity in an exhibition of skill, mobility and autonomy in a motorbike rally under the UNDP's Women-on-Wheels (WoW) program at a local hotel, on Tuesday. The UNDP, Pakistan had provided motorcycle training to 180 girls across Lahore to create a long-lasting sustainable impact on the lives of women and girls to increase their mobility, independence, and visibility in public spaces. Being part of its commitment to support Government of Punjab in gender equality for equitable and sustainable development under the UNDP's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a policy dialogue on 'Women's Mobility' was also held prior to the motorbike rally of girls. —APP

## Governor LHC suspends FIA's notice to Imran

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday suspended the operation of a call-up notice issued to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in the cipher audio leak scandal. Justice Asjad Javed Ghural passed the orders while hearing a petition filed by the PTI chairman against the call-up notices by the FIA in the scandal. The court also sought a reply from the federal government and the FIA till December 19. Imran Khan's counsel argued before the court that the FIA had launched an inquiry into the alleged audio leak pertaining to the diplomatic cipher and summoned his client for recording a statement on December 6. He submitted that it was not clear in the notice whether his client was summoned as a witness or accused. The court observed that audio leak was a sensitive issue, and questioned whether any inquiry was held as to how the audio leaked. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi, Convener Pak-Argentine Parliamentary Friendship Group in a meeting with Pablo Tettamanti, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Argentine and Ambassador of Argentine, Leopoldo Francisco Sahores at Parliament House. — DNA

# General elections to base on 7th population census: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that the next general election in the country would be held on the basis of data compiled through 7th Population and Housing Census (digital census) in October 2023. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of training of master trainers for 7th Population and Housing Census, the minister said that government would spend about Rs34 billion on this exercise of vital importance that would help in framing economic policies and ensure equitable distribution of resources among

all the stakeholders for the development of the country. He said that the government is providing Rs13.5 billion to the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), which would arrange digital solutions, adding that it would be the first digital census that would help swift completion of the process. He said that an offline data collection system would also be available for areas out of internet coverage, adding that this census would also determine whether the population was on an increasing or decreasing trend. The minister said that the census was a constitutional

obligation on the basis of which the government determines National Finance Commission Award and distributes national resources for just development of all areas. Ahsan Iqbal said that Pakistan was ranked among the rapidly population-growing countries. He said, due to increase in population, the availability of basic civic facilities like education, health and clean drinking water were reducing whereas the per-capita availability of water and agriculture land was also on decline. He said that a huge bulge of local population comprised of youth, which was a blessing if we could provide

them proper education and skills for economic development of the country. He said that in the meantime, the increasing polarization would push this national dividend into extremism and called for creating balance between resources and challenges. The minister said that economic stability was not possible overnight, adding that it required proper time and continuity in policies and political stability. He said the crisis which was faced by the current government was created by previous regime and it was the result of its incapability and bad governance.

However, he said that the government has successfully averted the default challenge on external front and took tough decisions and was honouring all commitments made by last government with multi-lateral agencies. He said that government tolerated another shock worth \$30 billion due to recent flash floods and rains that hit the country particularly Sindh and Balochistan provinces. He said that government was also able to overcome this challenge. He said reconstruction and rehabilitation work in all affected areas was in progress and that

would continue till the settlement of last effected person. Ahsan Iqbal said that the government intended to organize Climate Resilience Conference next month to mobilize about \$16 billion for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of flood effected people, adding that the conference would be attended by friendly countries. Later, talking to media, the minister said that narrative developed by Imran Khan was badly beaten and it was exposed in local body election in Azad Jammu and Kashmir where 70 percent seats were won by other parties other than PTI.

## Achieving SDGs pivotal for regional progress

ISLAMABAD: Convener of National Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Romina Khurshid Alam on Tuesday said both Sri Lanka and Pakistan shared the same challenges like climate-induced emergencies, poverty and other socioeconomic issues. Expressing the views in a meeting with the Sri Lankan delegation led by its State Minister for Finance Priyantha here at the Parliament House, she said achieving SDGs was a win-win situation for both countries. The Sri Lankan state minister expressed solidarity with the people of Pakistan who had been facing the devastating impacts of recent floods in the country. He said mutual cooperation and a unanimous approach essential to transform regional socioeconomic challenges into opportunities. Convener SDGs Romina also sought the cooperation of Sri Lanka for the students' exchange program and enhancing business-to-business contacts between both countries. She also pointed out that the health sector in Pakistan could learn a lot from the success stories of the Sri Lankan health sector, especially in the area of training the world's best midwives. —APP

## KP gov't taking steps to promote tourism as industry

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is taking concrete measures for the promotion of tourism as an industry in the province for which the tendering of Integrated Tourism Zones at four different locations of the province will be completed soon. Additionally, a road show/investor conference will be held in Karachi this month, followed by road shows in Lahore and Islamabad to attract investment in the tourism sector. This was disclosed in a progress review meeting of the tourism department held here on Tuesday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair. The meeting was given a detailed briefing regarding the ongoing reforms in the department, development projects in the tourism sector and the progress on the decisions made during the last meeting. The participants were informed that the feasibility study has been completed for Boyun Ski Resorts and Hund Park under the public-private partnership mode. —APP

## PSF, IST sign MoU for science popularization

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) and the Institute of Space Technology (IST) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the promotion and popularization of Science, STEAM Education in space science, technology, and its application. The MoU was signed in a ceremony held on Tuesday at the Ministry of Science and Technology. The ceremony was witnessed by the Federal Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch, Secretary G.M Memon and other senior officers of the ministry, PSF and IST respectively.

The MoU was signed by the chairman PSF, Professor Dr. Shahid Mahmood Baig and Vice Chancellor IST, Major General (R) Rehan Abdul Baqi. In this programme of cooperation, PSF has planned to organize a Teenager Space Maker Camp for young Pakistani students, for which Chinese leading organization the China Youth Science Centre (CYSC) of the China Association of Science and Technology (CAST) has very kindly provided ten space maker kits to PSF. The PSF, today handed over these kits to IST and the both would jointly undertake the

space maker camp. Teenage students will be trained to make space balloons with these kits which would reach up to 30 kilometers in space. The objective of this MoU is to define the general framework of scientific and technological cooperation between the parties. In addition the MOU is aimed at getting benefits from each other's expertise through mutual collaboration and interaction in joint scientific activities. The MoU will also cover the areas of joint management, organizing and preparation for participation in international Olympiads, moots,

galas and competitions. While giving his remarks regarding the space maker camp, Agha Hassan Baloch said that this was the first program of its nature and it would bring positive results by uplifting the teenager students' scientific skills and harness their talent in the right direction. He said that for the promotion of scientific aptitudes in the students, fifty STEM schools equipped with latest STEM labs were being developed across the country and in January the training sessions for STEM teachers would be started. —APP

## Durrani terms Pakistan gateway to trade, economy

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani has said that Pakistan was a gateway of trade and connectivity, especially for the landlocked Central Asian States. Talking to Vice Foreign Minister of the Republic of Argentina Pablo Tettamanti in the Parliament House, he said that Pakistan was a land of opportunities for trade and economic activities and it was also blessed with deep seaport Gwadar which can connect the number of regional countries for mutual progress and development. Zahid Akram Durrani invited traders and businessmen from Argentina to explore increased investment opportunities in Pakistan. While talking about the vast tourism potential in the country, NA Deputy Speaker said that Pakistan has been blessed with all kinds of natural resources. He said that although Pakistan has been facing the worst impacts of devastating floods yet Pakistani people were resolute enough to get out of this challenge. Convener Pakistan-Argentina Parliamentary Friendship Group MNA Dr. Muhammad Afzal Dhandla stressed the need to enhance the parliamentary cooperation between the two countries. He said that parliament to parliament contacts were pivotal for the progress and development of both countries. —APP



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. Donald Blome, Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. —DNA

# IIUI Extravaganza 2022 kicks off

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki on Tuesday inaugurated the Extravaganza 2022 organized by International Islamic University (IIUI) Islamabad at the new campus. The event would continue till December 9 during which a food gala, book fair, speeches media hunt, art exhibition, and competitions of Qirat & Naat and Mushaira are being organized. On the first day, a book fair, flower exhibition and food festivals were organized. The inaugural ceremony was also joined by Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, IIUI President Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, diplomats of KSA and other Muslim countries, vice presidents of the university, Deans, DGs, students advisors, provosts and a large number of students at both the campuses. Speaking on the occasion, KSA Ambassador said that the extravaganza 2022 is a true picture of the university's Islamic and international character. He said these activities will provide a platform to the youth to showcase talent and utilize their energies. The Saudi Ambassador said IIUI has a special role in nurturing the Muslim youth in

light of Islamic teachings. Talking about Pak-Saudi relations, he said both countries have deep-rooted brethren ties that are historic. He said the university is an omen of strong ties between KSA and Pakistan. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed in his address said universities are vital across the world as every nation's progress is dependent on higher education institutions. He said the government is keen to make the youth compatible and competitive according to modern needs so that young minds may contribute to socio-economic progress of the country. He added that universities must operate according to the needs of society. IIUI has made

a tremendous chain of activities that deserve appreciation. Dr. Mukhtar opined that universities must address the societal requirements like IIUI adding that IIUI is heading in the right direction. He added that we must shift towards the technologies and we must not be hesitant to opt for modern ways of education. It is time to pay back to society according to its needs, he said. Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi said that the university is keen to focus on the needs of society and we are making all our efforts to bring youth towards the initiatives that may pay back to society. He said the university has a clear idea that youth is the biggest

agent of change and this extravaganza is an example as in dozens of events we have brought various platforms for the young talented students to shine and serve society and humanity. He said students are the top priority of IIUI management which is why it is going to launch a facilitation centre for the students. IIUI President specially thanked the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques for the continuous financial support of IIUI. Earlier, the vice president female campus Dr. Samina Malik said that the university under the leadership of Dr. Hathal is working hard to prosper and shine and results are now on our doors as the university has outshined in the rankings and the performance report has already been published. The chief guest visited the food stalls of the students of various countries who had come with cultural cuisines and famous sweet dishes of their respective countries. Later, IIUI president also inaugurated the calligraphy exhibition set by up the department of Islamic Arts and Architecture. Famous calligrapher Rasheed Butt was the chief guest of the exhibition. —APP



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Briefs

China's Xi to visit Saudi Arabia

BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping will be in Saudi Arabia from December 7-9 on an official visit to the kingdom and to attend a Chinese-Saudi summit, state news agency SPA said on Tuesday. This is President Xi's first visit to the world's biggest crude oil exporter since 2016. The trip will include a bilateral summit chaired by Saudi King Salman and attended by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, the agency reported. Xi, head of the world's second-biggest economy, will also attend a summit with rulers from the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council and talks convening leaders from elsewhere in the Middle East, the state news agency said. The Chinese leader's arrival coincides with heightened tensions between Saudi Arabia and the United States over issues ranging from energy policy to regional security and human rights. The latest blow to that decades-old partnership came in October when the OPEC+ oil bloc agreed to cut production by two million barrels a day, a move the White House said amounted to "aligning with Russia" on the war in Ukraine. On Sunday, OPEC+ opted to keep those cuts in place. China is Saudi Arabia's biggest customer for crude oil, purchasing roughly a quarter of Saudi oil exports. - APP

Schoolgirl killed in knife attack in Germany

BERLIN: A 14-year-old girl has died and another, aged 13, has been seriously injured after they were attacked by a man with a knife while walking to school in southern Germany. Police say the suspect came out of a refugee shelter in the village of Illerkirchberg on Monday morning and attacked the pupils. The older girl later died in hospital. German police arrested a 27-year-old man, who they said was an asylum seeker from Eritrea. The 13-year-old girl suffered serious knife wounds but reports said her life was not in danger. The man had fled to the refugee shelter after the stabbing and police said they had found him with a knife thought to have been used in the attack. The suspect was taken to hospital with serious wounds, thought to have been caused by the knife, and he was later questioned by police. Prosecutors were trying to establish whether the suspect had psychiatric issues and whether he had known the two girls before the attack. In a statement, police urged the public not to use the incident to stoke suspicion of foreigners or asylum seekers. "Everything connected to this is completely unclear so far," police spokesman Wolfgang Jürgens told reporters. - APP

Spain's former king wins partial victory in UK

LONDON: Three appeal judges in London on Tuesday ruled that the former mistress of Spain's ex-king Juan Carlos I could not sue him for harassment in the English courts for the period while he was on the throne. The judges said in a written judgment that he was "immune from the jurisdiction" in England and Wales until his abdication in 2014. That means that Corinna zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Sayn can still pursue the 84-year-old former monarch in the English courts for his alleged behaviour after that time. Zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Sayn, who lives in England, wants an "injunction and damages" due to "a continuous and ongoing campaign of harassment" against her. She claims the campaign began in 2012, following the "break-up of an intimate romantic relationship", and continues to this day. She filed a harassment suit in London in 2020, alleging he pressured her to return gifts worth 65 million euros (\$65 million), including works of art and jewellery. - APP

PM vows implementation of Journalist Safety Law



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing at a seminar titled, "10 Years of UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity in Pakistan" in Islamabad. - DNA

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said media freedom and democracy reinforced each other and expressed his government's resolve to support an environment for journalists free of intimidation and harassment. "My government believes that no journalist or human rights activist should be called out in the line of duty," he said, expressing his firm resolve to proactively facilitate the implementation of the Journalists Safety Law. Addressing at an event here to mark 10 years of the United Nations' Plan of Action organized by Journalist Safety Forum, the prime minister termed a free media and freedom of expression the important pillars of a State. Shehbaz Sharif said press freedom in Pakistan had been close to the hearts of journalists and civil society. He said journalists of the country over the

years greatly contributed to press freedom and mentioned that Hamid Mir, as the chairperson of Journalist Safety Forum, faced difficult challenges including an attempt on his life. He termed the killing of prominent journalist Arshad Sharif an "extremely sad incident" and said that he soon after spoke to the government of Kenya and later wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of Pakistan to form a judicial commission. Shehbaz Sharif said despite the chequered history with 33 years of military rule, the collective political efforts lead to resumption of democracy to put the country on right track. He termed the 1973 constitution 'a very sacred document' which acted as a binding force among the units of the federation and ensured democratic values besides ensuring basic rights of citizens. In 2013, he said, Pakistan became the first country in Asia to pass legislation on the safety of journalists and last year, the parliament passed the landmark 'Protection of

Journalists and Media Protection Act'. Shehbaz Sharif, on requests of the media community, assured to look into the Section 6 of the Act to prevent harassment and intimidation of journalists. He mentioned that there were still challenges facing the journalists in their line of duty and required sustained efforts by media, civil society, UN and international bodies. He appreciated the contribution of international community in supporting economic and social development of Pakistan, particularly UNESCO and countries including Norway, Denmark and France. He expressed confidence that the outcomes and recommendations of the Forum would help lead towards a free media in Pakistan. Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey said freedom of expression could not be termed as an obstacle in the working of a government and emphasized the need to promote safety of journalists, media pluralism, and the right to inform and be informed. He lauded Pakistan's law on the safety of jour-

nalists as a significant step in encouraging freedom of expression. Ambassador of Denmark Linulf said it was crucial to promote freedom of expression and ensure a safe environment for journalists. He said Denmark backed the 'community journalism' in Pakistan. He congratulated Pakistan for its remarkable step to legislate on the safety of journalists, the first in Asia. Ambassador of Norway Per Albert Isaas said best quality journalism provides proper information and ensure democratic values. Pakistani journalists, he said "self-censored" the content, which could otherwise be said directly, such as the use of word "establishment". Chairperson Journalist Safety Forum Hamid Mir proposed that federal and Sindh governments must notify the safety commissions under the laws passed by the National Assembly and stressed passage of similar laws for the journalists of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Punjab.

LHC suspends FIA summons to Imran Khan

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday overruled an office objection to a petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, against the summons by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in the cipher audio leak scandal, and ordered to fix the petition for hearing. The LHC registrar office had objected to the maintainability of the petition on the ground of its territorial jurisdiction. Justice Asjad Javed Ghural took up the petition as an objection case and overruled the objection after hearing arguments of the petitioner's counsel. Imran Khan's counsel Salman Safdar argued before the court that the FIA was a federal institution and the LHC had jurisdiction to hear the matter. The PTI chairman, through the petition, submitted that the FIA had launched an inquiry into the alleged audio leak pertaining to the diplomatic cipher and summoned him for recording a statement on December 6. - APP

Zelensky visits Donbas front

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday visited the frontline region of Donetsk in east Ukraine, describing fighting in the area as "difficult" with Russian forces pushing to capture the industrial city of Bakhmut. The visit came as Vladimir Putin convened his security council in the wake of the latest spate of drone attacks on military-linked facilities inside Russian territory. - APP

China rejects latest US report on its military

Defense Ministry spokesperson accuses Washington of 'distorting' facts, 'creating' division, 'inciting' confrontation

BEIJING: China on Tuesday rejected the latest US report on its military, accusing Washington of "distorting" facts, "creating division" and "inciting" confrontation. Reacting to Pentagon's "2022 China Military Power Report," China's Defense Ministry spokesperson Senior Colonel Tan Kefei said it "distorted China's national defense policy and military strategy, made groundless speculation about China's military development, and grossly interfered in China on the Taiwan question." "China is firmly committed to the path of peaceful development, upholds a national defense policy that is defensive in nature, and is always a builder of world peace, contributor to global development and defender of the international order," he added. The US Defense Department last week in its annual report outlined the "challenges" facing the American military and assessed "changes" in China's military and security strategy. It highlighted China's efforts to "expand its national power to transform the international system; increase military coercion; strengthen its space, nuclear and counterspace capabilities; and intensify its diplomatic, political, economic and military pressure against Taiwan." A senior US defense official had said: "It's important to understand the contours of (People's Liberation Army - PLA) modernization to include their thinking about what the PLA's way of war would look like, to kind of survey their current activities and modernizing capabilities and to assess their future military modernization goals." - DNA



ISLAMABAD: 5th BPC between Pakistan & Argentina was held today. Pakistan was led by Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed Khan while Argentina by Foreign Secretary Tettamanti. - DNA

BHC bars filing of new cases against Azam Swati

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Balochistan High Court (BHC) Tuesday ordered that no more cases be registered against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Azam Swati, who is facing charges of slander against military officers in his tweets. A two-member BHC bench consisting of Justice Kamran Khan Mulakhail and Justice Aamir Rana passed the order on a petition seeking the termination of cases against Swati. The petition was filed by the PTI leader's son Osman Swati. Moreover, the court has also sought a written report of the cases filed against the ailing Swati from the police chief. On Sunday, a Quetta court handed over Swati to police for a five-day physical remand in the case. The PTI lawmaker was arrested by the Balochistan Police from Islamabad and brought to Quetta. At the time of his arrest, he was already on judicial remand in Adiala Jail, following his detention for a second time in the case of a controversial tweet on November 27. He was then shifted to Quetta under a transit remand acquired by the police.

'Pak set to become one of world's biggest economies by 2047'

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan says when Pakistan would complete its 100 years in 2047, the World Bank in its report 'Pakistan at 100' foresees it as innovation-driven country of multiple trade and investment hubs and centres of excellence. Addressing an event in Washington D.C, he said that Pakistan has the 23rd largest economy on the basis of Public Private Partnership (PPP) and 42nd in terms of nominal GDP. The Ambassador said Pakistan is a young country, with abundant labour and growing professional class. He said hundreds of thousands of students graduating from Pakistan's universities are ready to be absorbed by national and global markets. Masood Khan said Pakistan, for decades, was the fastest performing economy in South Asia and one of the fastest in Asia but its growth slowed down because of wars in the neighbourhood and security challenges posed by terrorism. The Ambassador said now the security situation is improving and there are no wars therefore we will resolutely build our markets. He said that new and ground-breaking business ecosystems are being unlocked in Pakistan. - DNA

No one will be allowed to disrupt gains of terror war



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir visited Tirah Valley, Khyber District today.

COAS spent day with forward troops deployed along Pakistan - Afghanistan Border. He was brief by field commander about operational preparedness and border control measures in place as part of Western Borders Management Regime. While interacting with officers and men, COAS praised them for their high morale and operational readiness in the line of duty. COAS said that State's writ has been established due to innumerable sacrifices by tribal people and security forces. Our fight against terrorism will continue with the support of the nation till we achieve enduring peace and stability, COAS reiterated. COAS said that defence of the motherland will be ensured at all costs and there won't be any space for peace's spoilers. No one will be allowed to disrupt the hard earned gains of war against terror made thus far, COAS concluded. Later, COAS visited Corps Headquarters Peshawar and laid floral wreath to pay homage to Shahuada. COAS was also briefed about operational, training and other matters of the formation including efforts to create secure environment for socio-economic development projects to uplift the newly merged districts. Earlier, on arrival, COAS was received by Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat, Commander Peshawar Corps. - DNA

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