



Islamabad POST

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Erdogan offers Syria-Türkiye-Russia trilateral meeting

Detailed News On Page-08

Funds for flood-hit Pak to run out in weeks

Detailed News On Page-08



Azam Swati handed over to ICT police

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Pakistan seeks G-77's lead role

APP
NEW YORK: Pakistan on Thursday said that as the developing countries endeavored to recover from multiple crises, the Group of 77 and China must take the lead in promoting the systemic and structural changes needed to revive sustainable global growth. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, also the host of the G-77 and China Ministerial Conference held here, in his opening statement, urged the body to induct equity in international economic relations and restore the developing economies on a path leading to realization of the SDGs and environmental objectives.

Cowardly acts cannot dampen spirits

KHAYAM ABBASI
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyam Aurangzeb on Thursday strongly condemned the suicide blast in Miranshah area in North Waziristan. In a statement, the minister expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of Havaldar Muhammad Amir and a civilian person in the blast. "Cowardly acts of terrorism cannot dampen our spirits", Marriyam Aurangzeb said while reiterating the government's commitment to eradicate the scourge of terrorism from the country".

Assemblies dissolution on 17 or 23

DNA
LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice-President Fawad Chaudhry said Thursday that the party might announce the dissolution of assemblies either on December 17 or 23. "The coalition government isn't serious about dialogue," the former information minister told a press conference in Lahore, as the PTI is persistent that only snap polls are the solution to end the ongoing political as well as economic instability in the country.

Afghan border forces open fire at Chaman

Multiple artillery rounds were fired upon the civilian population

DNA
CHAMAN: One person was killed and 15 people were injured when Afghan border forces opened indiscriminate fire on a civilian area on the Pakistani side after which security forces responded befittingly, Levies and hospital officials said Thursday. According to local administration, the border area is being evacuated after clashes and an emergency has been declared in DHQ Chaman. Medical Superintendent Dr Malik Achakzai said that at least 12 people are under treatment at the health facility. Levies officials reported that multiple artillery rounds were fired upon the civilian population around the Boghra Road and Custom House areas from the Afghan side. They added that the Pakistani forces have given a befitting response to Afghan shelling. The deputy commissioner of Chaman shared that an emergency has been declared at the hospital, adding that the citizens have been asked to evacuate from Mall Road, Boghra Road bypass, and Border Road. Authorities have said that the clashes broke out over the intervention of Afghan forces during the repair of the fence in the Sheikh Lal Muhammad sector of the border. This is the second time in five days that the Afghan border forces opened unprovoked and indiscriminate fire, using heavy weapons, at the civilian area in Balochistan's Chaman city. During last week's attack, six people were martyred and 17 others were injured, a statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). According to the military's media wing,

Continued on Page 06

Two martyred; Nine injured in Miranshah blast

STAFF REPORT
RAWALPINDI: A soldier of Pakistan Army and a civilian embraced martyrdom in a suicide blast occurred in general area Miranshah of North Waziristan district on Wednesday. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release issued on Thursday, the martyred soldier was identified as Havaldar Muhammad Ameer (age 30 years, resident of Mianwali) whereas an innocent civilian also embraced shahadat (martyrdom), while nine innocent civilians were injured in the incident. President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemned the suicide blast in Miranshah, North Waziristan that left a police personnel and a civilian dead. In their separate statements, both vowed to eliminate terrorism and extremism from the soil of the country. President Alvi said the entire nation was committed to fight terrorism. Prime Minister Sharif said those killing the innocent people could not be regarded as Muslims.

Continued on Page 06

NRO II 'dry-cleaned' all corrupt elements

The PTI chief reiterates that his govt was toppled under a conspiracy

ALI FURQAN
LAHORE: The "gang of corrupts" were getting clean chits nowadays under the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) II granted to them by former chief of army staff General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa, claimed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan. In his address via video link, Khan made the remarks in the backdrop of Salman Shehbaz's, the son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, returning to the country after ending over four years of self-imposed exile in London. Khan said that Gen (ret'd) Bajwa committed cruelty to the country by granting NRO-II to the gang of corrupt elements. Lashing out at the former army chief, the PTI reiterated that his government was toppled under a conspiracy and thieves were imposed on the country. Khan said: "Salman Shehbaz, who was an absconder in Maqsood Chapparsi (a peon at the Ramzan Sugar Mills) case, has also returned and given lectures to us, while Nawaz Sharif is planning to return (homeland)."

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Qureshi writes to NA speaker

SAIFULLAH
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi has penned down a letter to National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, urging him to verify the remaining resignations of party lawmakers PTI Vice Chairman, in his letter to NA Speaker, stated that the PTI MNAs can return to National Assembly for verification of their resignations. Qureshi said: "I am writing to you on the instructions of the Chairman PTI and former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, and in my capacity as the Vice Chairman and Deputy

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif meets with President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon. – DNA

Petrol price cut by Rs 10

STAFF REPORT
ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar announced on Thursday that the price of petrol was being cut by Rs 10 and diesel by Rs 7.5. In a televised address, he said: "The government is trying its best to pass maximum relief to the people. According to our calculations, Rs10 will be decreased on petrol. High-speed diesel will be decreased by Rs7.5. "Kerosene oil will now cost Rs181.38 after an Rs10 decrease and light diesel oil will be reduced by Rs10 as well," he said. The price cut will go into effect at midnight tonight. The govt had previously kept prices of all petroleum products unchanged on Oct 15, Oct 30, and Nov 15.

COAS, US Centcom chief hold talks

DNA
RAWALPINDI: US CENTCOM Commander Gen Michael "Erik" Kurilla called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ), military's media wing said on Thursday. The ISPR, in a statement, said Gen Kurilla acknowledged

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan, Tajikistan face similar security challenges: Khawaja

The Tajik President vows to work closely

ANSAR BHATTI
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Thursday said being neighbors of Afghanistan, both Pakistan and Tajikistan were facing similar security challenges and threats including terrorism and drug trafficking across the border. Khawaja Asif made these remarks during a meeting with President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, a news release said here. The minister expressed best wishes for the military and civil leadership of Tajikistan, and its people. "Pakistan believes in peaceful resolution of all issues and appreciates the efforts of Tajikistan in promoting peace," he added. Moreover, it was

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Tajik president concludes two-day Pakistan visit

DNA
ISLAMABAD: President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon left here for his country after concluding his two-day official visit to Pakistan. During the visit, Pakistan and Tajikistan agreed to further deepen the bilateral relationship and to raise it to strategic cooperation. It was agreed that a bilateral

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South Asian peace hostage to India's hegemonic designs

"The Secretary-General reaffirmed OIC's commitment and solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir

SHUJAAT HAMZA
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday said peace in South Asia had become hostage to India's hegemonic designs that included terrorist activities inside Pakistan and the unabated hostilities carried out in the Occupied Kashmir. Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch at a weekly press briefing said India's hegemonic policies were an "impediment to regional cooperation". The spokesperson strongly rejected the recent statement of the Indian External Affairs Ministry that raised objection over the visit of Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Husein Ibrahim Taha to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), calling him a "mouthpiece of Pakistan". The remarks reflect "callousness and disregard" towards inter-State relations and are against the concept of mutual respect, she stressed. Instead of criticism, she said, India should pay heed to the state terrorism

in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and take steps for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. She said the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was one of the oldest on the United Nations' agenda that remained unresolved due to India's negative approach. The OIC Secretary-General during his visit to the Line of Control in AJK last week met the victims of cross-border shelling who shared with him the details of their sufferings. Baloch said OIC Secretary-General's visit to AJK carried special significance as it came three years after India's illegal and unilateral actions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). The OIC Secretary-General will share his findings in the next Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting. "The Secretary-General reaffirmed OIC's commitment and solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and to their right to self-determination in accordance with relevant UN Security

Council resolutions," she said. "The international community should join hands to bring an end to the suppression of the people of IOJK and the violations of their human rights," she said. On India's involvement in terrorist activities inside Pakistan, she said an investigation by law enforcement agencies with the support of international counterparts found concrete evidence that the "masterminds, financiers and the facilitators of Lahore terrorist attack were Indian nationals and were located in India". Pakistan has initiated international legal proceedings including Interpol and Mutual Legal Assistance processes to bring those responsible to justice, she added. In response to relations with Afghanistan in the wake of "unprovoked" cross-border firing in Chaman and the attack on a Pakistani diplomat in Kabul, she said, "Discussions were going on at various levels... We are in contact with the Afghan authorities".

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National Contingency Energy Saving Plan approved

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Thursday that National Contingency Energy Saving Plan had been pre-



pared which would significantly reduce the import bill. In a tweet, she said that this decision was made in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on economic recovery and elimination of energy shortage. The minister said that extraordinary measures were decided in the meeting in an extraordinary situation. She said that emergency saving plan would be presented in the next cabinet meeting for final approval. She said that all the chief ministers would also be invited to the upcoming cabinet meeting as the plan be implemented in collaboration with the provinces. She said that a decision to crack down on electricity theft was also taken.

She said that converting private and government buildings to solar energy was also part of the plan.

The purpose of the Emergency Energy Saving Plan, she said, was to reduce the pressure on the people and the economy as the price of fuel, including oil, continued to rise in the global market. She said that Pakistan's import bill was \$29 billion annually which in rupees terms amounted to more than 6 trillion. As a result of the energy saving plan, billions of dollars will be saved annually, which would be more than Rs 262 billion in Pakistani rupees.—APP

AGP raises questions about dissolution of assemblies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Thursday raised legal questions about the dissolution of assemblies on the instructions of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan. While talking exclusively to City42 TV channel, AGP Ashtar Ausaf Ali Khan said that the dissolution of assemblies on the directive of disqualified Imran Khan was a question mark. "Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi will have no constitutional role for the caretaker set-up after the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly," he added. "Dissolution of the assemblies on the directive of Imran Khan is a legal question. It is the time for a charter of economy not the demand for elections," he emphasised. "Dissolving the assembly is the discretionary power of the chief minister, but dissolving the assembly at the behest of someone is a legal question," he added. "After the dissolution of the assembly, it is the authority of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the caretaker government to conduct new elections," he averred. "The ECP has to conduct the election within 90 days. It can also delay the holding of elections. New constituencies have to be demarcated before the new election.

Over 988 graduates awarded degrees at CUST convocation

In this Convocation 22 graduates were awarded PhD degrees; including 06 in Management Sciences, 04 in Engineering, 04 in Computing and 08 in the field of Mathematics

DNA

ISLAMABAD: THE Convocation for Graduates of 2022 of Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) was held at Convention Centre Islamabad wherein 988 graduates including BBA, MBA, BS, MS and PhD in the fields of Management Sciences, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Engineering Management, Project Management, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Biosciences, Biotechnology and Microbiology were awarded degrees. The Chief Guest of the occasion Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, said education plays a vital role in economic development of the country. It raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy towards the path of sustainable economic development. He said that our nation is facing daunting challenges. We should do our level best to find viable solutions to the myriad of problems that we are encountering. We should act like an educated nation to solve our problems and demonstrate our abilities to meet the challenges of the



high-tech era.

Mr. Parvez Abbasi, Nishan-e-Imtiaz was the Guest of Honour while Mian Amer Mehmood, Chancellor Pre-

sided the event.

Earlier Prof. Dr. M. Mansoor Ahmed, Vice Chancellor welcomed the graduating students for their presence

in this memorable and happy occasion and declared this event as a significant milestone in their lives. He said Education raises

the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy towards the path of

sustainable economic development. In this Convocation 22 graduates were awarded PhD degrees; including 06 in Management Sciences, 04 in Engineering, 04 in Computing and 08 in the field of Mathematics.

PhD graduates were Ahmed Ali Qureshi, Muhammad Nadeem, Syeda Hina Zaidi, Sana Iqbal, Hassan Zada, and Sanobar Shaheen in Management Sciences; Muhammad Anis Chaudhry and Muhammad Naeem, in Electrical Engineering; Erum Aamir and Muhammad Hassan in Civil Engineering; Qamar-uz-Zaman, Samreen Ayaz, Muhammad Rizwan and Said Nabi, in Computer Science; Faisar Mehmood, Muhammad Sohail Ashraf, Muhammad Anwar, Touqeer Nawaz, Hazrat Bilal, Umair Farooq and Malik Zia Ullah Bashir in the field of Mathematics. In this Convocation, 32 Gold, 20 Silver and 17 Bronze medals have been awarded to the graduates who stood 1st, 2nd and 3rd in their respective degree programs. The 'Jinnah Gold Medal' was also awarded to an overall best graduate of the Convocation ADEER KHAN of BS Civil Engineering program, on his overall distinguished performance in curricular and extracurricular activities.

Qanun-e-Shahadat (Amend) Bill referred to standing committee

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Thursday referred the Qanun-e-Shahadat (Amendment) Bill, 2022 amid a protest of lawmakers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf to the concerned standing committee for detailed deliberation. Minister of State for Law and Justice Shahadat Awan moved the bill further to amend the Qanun-e-Shahadat, 1984 [The Qanun-e-Shahadat (Amendment) Bill, 2022] in the House. The statement of objects and reasons of the bill says that "an opinion upon a point of foreign law, or of science, or art, or as to identity of hand-writing or finger impressions, or as to authenticity and integrity of electronic documents made by or through an information system the opinions upon that point of persons specially skilled in such foreign law, science or art, or in questions as to identity of hand writing or finger impressions or as to the functioning, specifications, programming and operation of information systems, are as relevant facts, however, through proposed amendment the bomb disposal will be included".—APP

US dollar continues to eat up Pak rupee

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The US dollar slowly but surely continued to build up its streak against Pakistani rupee as the greenback again went up in the interbank trading on Thursday. As the forex dealers took positions, the US dollar amid weak economic indicators and unguided political situation appreciated by nine paisas and was currently being traded at Rs224.80. Yesterday, the Pakistani rupee shed only one paisa and settled the trade for the day at Rs224.71. The Pakistani rupee is in the corner due to bleak economic indicators, political uncertainty and concerns regarding default in the face of delayed IMF talks on the ninth review. During a TV talk show the other day, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and his predecessor Miftah Ismail differed on country's default perspectives.

Public Notice

I, Tahir Jamal Khan, have lost documents of Agro Farm No. 31, Street No. 15, Sahana Scheme Extension-2, during travel. If Found please contact at 03005005527

First Lady stresses awareness to reduce deaths by breast cancer

LAHORE: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi said on Thursday that it was important to raise awareness to reduce deaths, caused by breast cancer in the country. Addressing an event, held in connection with breast cancer awareness at Sapphire Retail Limited here, she said that 50 per cent of our population comprises of women, adding that "we should not only provide jobs to them but also take care of their health". She said that ensuring women's health was vital for prosperity of a family and development of Pakistan. She said that it was important for a woman to know about breast cancer, as she would not be able to carry out her tasks if she was suffering from a disease. She said besides taking preventive measures, timely

diagnosis of breast cancer was essential. She said that if breast cancer was diagnosed at the first stage, the rate of recovery was almost 98 per cent, and the treatment was less expensive. She said that women usually hide the disease from the immediate family members due to the shame and stigma, which not only causes social issues but a number of such women lose their lives. She said that usually the disease was also ignored due to financial impact, but it was important to remember that the cancer treatment was costly, if it started late. The First Lady questioned how women could work and take care of their families if their health was not good. She urged women to spare five minutes every month for their health and carry out

self-examination. She said in case of finding any abnormal growth, women should immediately consult a doctor and talk to their close family members and inform them about the problem. Samina Alvi also called for steps to take care of the persons with disabilities besides improving people's mental health. She asked the business community to engage the differently-abled persons in the workforce and provide jobs to them. She appreciated the role of the Sapphire group for providing jobs to women in their factory, besides taking care of their health. Dr Saima Toqueer also addressed the event and briefed the women participants on methods for self-examination and available treatment.—APP

3-week faculty development programme concludes

ISLAMABAD: The first cohort of three-week National Faculty Development Programme (NFDP) designed by the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), HEC for newly inducted faculty members of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Sindh and Balochistan was concluded at Higher Education Commission (HEC) Regional Center here Thursday. The programme was attended by as many as 25 participants from public sector higher education institutions of Sindh and Balochistan. NFDP is structured to accelerate the transfer of essential knowledge, skills and attitudes in three dimensions of a successful career as a faculty member, including teaching and learning, applied research and professional practice. During the closing ceremony of the program, Advisor for Academics, Curriculum and NAHE HEC Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan virtually addressed the participants as the chief guest. He congratulated the NAHE and all the participants on successful completion of NFDP. He highlighted the core goals and course content of NFDP specially designed for newly inducted faculty members of the HEIs. He stressed on the importance of professional development for the teachers and how it will be beneficial for them to unleash the potential of their students and to work on their future academic leadership. He advised the successful participants to explore opportunities to win research grants at local, national and global level that will eventually help the local community. At the end, certificates were distributed by Director General NAHE, Muhammad Faisal Butt.—APP



FAISALABAD: Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Pacaci calls on Federal Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique.—DNA

Strong Navy vital for safety, security of country

LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan Navy is playing a commendable role to safeguard and protect Pakistan's naval and maritime interests, despite resource constraints in a challenging maritime security paradigm and overall security situation. He appreciated Pakistan Navy's role for the flood victims during the recent global climate induced super floods, providing them with medical services and relief supplies. The president expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the 5th Maritime Security Workshop 2022 (MARSEW-5), held at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore. President Alvi was the chief guest at the ceremony. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amdad Khan Niazi, was also present. The closing ceremony was attended by civil

and military officials. Speaking at the ceremony, the president said that regional countries, including Pakistan were facing challenges due to changing regional and global situation, new alliances were in the making, and readjustment of priorities and preferences in multiple domains including in the maritime domain, which necessitated the country to remain alert and adjust itself in the emerging situation with dignity, honour and preserving its sovereignty in decision making. The president underlined the need to enhance the pace of decision-making, taking right and timely decisions and their implementation on timeline basis to remain abreast with the rest of the world in all sectors including the global maritime security environment to fully harness potential of Pakistan's human, natural and maritime resources.

The president highlighted that the strong economy was a must for gaining regional and international recognition and maintaining a balance to move forward with dignity and respect in the international relations. Therefore, he added, it was imperative to explore new avenues to raise country's productivity in all sectors including developing quality and producing human resources, upscaling our business, trade, investment, industrialization and empowering the work processes with digitalization and infusing of artificial intelligence, investing in quantum computer research and development to sustain reasonable economic outlook

and to improve it on perpetual basis. He added that Pakistan was short of time. It needs to take tangible steps in all matters of the state. The Parliament needs to spend time and energy in making laws to bring reforms and to create ease for accelerated development and progress, he said. The government needs to take right decisions at the right time and bureaucracy should implement the decisions with well-thought-out KPIs and following a definite timeline which, he said, would help the country in overcoming its financial and economic difficulties and leading the country towards progress and prosperity.

"We should promote and encourage a system which has no space for corruption and corrupt practices; it is efficient, effective and productive and capable of moving and aligning itself with the fast moving and rapidly progressing world," he said. The president said that although Pakistan was the 5th largest country in terms of population, this huge human resource was not being fully utilised, as over 20 million children were out of school, women are not part of the productive economic cycle due to cultural and social taboos, and enrollment rate in the higher education was only 9% compared to 23% in the neighbouring countries. He stressed enhancing the number of skilled graduates and training human resources to fully develop Pakistan's maritime sector and develop it to its fullest potential.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

December

Dec 01 / Romania	National Day
Dec 02 / UAE	National Day
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

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.....9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....561116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International.4603666



Departments

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pak exports 120,000 locally produced mobile phones

Inovi Telecom is the first company to export locally manufactured mobile phones of a large quantity outside Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The export ceremony of locally manufactured mobile phones by PTA Authorization holder: Inovi Telecom was held at PTA headquarters today. The ceremony was held to mark Inovi Telecom's achievement of exporting one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) "Manufactured in Pakistan" mobile phones of SEGO brand to United Arab Emirates for African markets. The ceremony was attended by Member (Finance) PTA, Mr. Muhammad Naveed; Member (Compliance & Enforcement) PTA, Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokhar and senior officers of PTA. CEO Inovi Telecom, Mr. Zeeshan Mian Noor was also in attendance. Inovi Telecom is the first company to export locally manufactured mobile phones of a large quantity outside Pakistan. CEO Inovi Telecom thanked and appreciated PTA for the active support and taking measures to help bolster the mobile industry. Moreover, both PTA Members also extended their continued support for the development of a mobile device manufacturing ecosystem in Pakistan. Inovi Telecom Pvt. Ltd was issued Mobile Device Manufacturing Authorization on 9th April, 2021 in accordance with the PTA mobile device manufacturing regulation 2021.



Chief Commissioner CTO assures full support

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry that the business community is facing many tax issues and

the Corporate Tax Office should set up its Facilitation Desk in ICCI to address them. He said that the business community is the wealth creator of the country and FBR should treat it with respect and dignity instead of taking measures

that create harassment in taxpayers. He said this while talking to Dr. Nasir Khan, Chief Commissioner, Corporate Tax Office (CTO), Islamabad during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Muhammad

Asghar Khan Niazi Commissioner Audit Zone, Molyud Din Ismail Commissioner Enforcement Zone and Hasham Malik Deputy Commissioner CTO were also present at the occasion. Faad Waheed said that FBR should address flaws in the tax system and focus on broadening the tax base instead of a vertical tax approach, which is putting more burden on the existing taxpayers. He said that Sec-7E of Income Tax should be revised as tax on deemed income has created problems for the taxpayers. He said that the tax on rental income is up to 35 percent, which is very high and should be reduced as high taxes always promote tax evasion. He assured that ICCI would like to work in close liaison with CTO to facilitate the business community in tax matters.



RSCP initiates drive to mark roads with traffic safety signs

ISLAMABAD: Road Safety Council of Pakistan (RSCP) has started a drive to mark roads of various residential and commercial areas in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) with traffic safety signs and symbols to prevent accidents. Talking to APP here on Thursday an official of RSCP, Irfan Balouch said that RSCP took an initiative to mark the nearby roads of schools, colleges, and hospitals for educating the road users. He said that marking roads with signs will have a huge impact on road safety, reducing speed, and saving lives and injuries. He said that the dynamic nature and complexity of road traffic and road safety was one of the most demanding social challenges. He said contemporary road safety strategies had incorporated a multidisciplinary approach to address the problem of road safety therefore, RSCP was working in collaboration with ICT Police and Capital Development Authority (CDA). - APP

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Tamoor Khan here on Thursday directed the traffic wardens and field officers to take strict action against over speeding, double and wrong parking of vehicles which create hurdles in the smooth flow of traffic on city roads. According to a City Traffic Police (CTP) spokesman, the CTO had directed all the field officers including deputy superintendents of police (DSPs) and Inspectors to take strict action in accordance with the law against overspeeding, double parking and wrong parking particularly in congested areas to ensure smooth flow of traffic.

Workshop on tourism development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Destination Investment and Management Plans (DIMPs) and Visitor Management Plans (VMPs) for three tourist destinations (Kalam, Kumrat, and Chitral) of KP were launched here on Thursday. The DIMPs and VMPs promote responsible tourism by suggesting diversity and quality in the tourism offering of these destinations and providing guidance for tourist planning and destination management. DIMPs and VMPs were prepared by the KP's Department of Tourism (DoT) through KITE project with the support of international experts in one year. The speakers shared the opportunities for public and private sector investments with the participants. They informed that customized plans for each destination have been prepared to guide the investments from public and private sectors and that destination management will lead to an improved visitor experience, better regulation, and mobilization of resources. "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is well positioned as a preferred tourism destination, it has a considerable competitive advantage due to the natural endowments and a culture of hospitality. Govt is not only focusing on creating employment opportunities but also making efforts to conserve the natural and cultural assets, said CM KP Mahmood Khan in his special message for the event.

Action against wrong parking, over speeding ordered

He urged motorists not to park vehicles in the wrong way on roads which causes inconvenience for other road users. The CTO said, CTP had made special arrangements to control traffic on the city roads aimed at avoiding traffic mess. Traffic police officers had been directed to keep a vigilant eye on suspicious vehicles, he said and added that strict action had been ordered against overspeeding.

He urged the citizens to cooperate with Traffic Police to resolve traffic problems and facilitate people through smooth traffic flow. An enhanced number of Traffic Wardens had been deployed at busy roads to clear wrong parking while lifters were also available to lift vehicles and motorcycles parked in the wrong way, he added. He said, wrong parking which was one of the main causes of traffic mess on the

CTO said, CTP had made special arrangements to control traffic on city roads aimed at avoiding traffic mess

roads would not be tolerated, adding, the vehicles and motorcycles found parked outside of the parking area would be impounded. He informed that charges posted in Traffic Headquarters, different sectors and tehseils had been reshuffled under rotation policy. - APP

Extreme cold conditions continue across IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, sub-zero temperatures continued at the famous tourist resort of Pahalgam recording a low of minus 5.6°C on Thursday. According to the Kashmir Media Service, a meteorological department official told the media that Srinagar recorded a low of minus 3.2°C against the previous night's minus 3.2°C. Qazigund recorded a low of minus 3.6°C against minus 3.0°C on the previous night. The temperature 2.5°C below normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said. He said that Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 5.6°C against minus 5.3°C on previous night and it was 1.8°C below normal for the famous tourist resort in south Kashmir's Islamabad district. Jammu recorded a low of 7.1°C against 6.4°C on the previous night. It was 2.1°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said. Banihal recorded a low of 3.8°C (above normal by 2.1°C), Batote 5.2°C (1.5°C above normal), Katra 7.5°C (0.3°C above normal) and Bhadarwah 2.0°C (1.6°C above normal). Ladakh, Leh recorded minus 10.6°C and Kargil minus 11.6°C, the official said. The MeT department has forecast mainly dry weather till 21 December. - APP

15 lawbreakers held; 92 liters liquor, weapons recovered

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against lawbreakers on Thursday arrested 10 bootleggers, four for possessing illegal weapons and a wheat smuggler besides recovering 92 liters of liquor, seven liquor bottles, three 30-bore pistols, a Kalashnikov, ammunition, 90 wheat flour bags, and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Race Course police held an accused namely Gul Zaman, Raheel, and Afaq on recovery of 30 liters of liquor. Civil Lines, Taxila, Gungmandi, Bani, and Sadiqabad police arrested Ahsan, Jameel, Hamad Raza, Ahsan, Saqib, Irfan, and Junaid for having 62 liters of liquor and seven liquor bottles. He informed that the Food Department Rawalpindi and district police in an operation here on Thursday foiled a bid to smuggle wheat flour, and held Shams ur, Rehman, besides seizing 90 bags. Race Course, Wah Cantt, Mandra, and Dharmial police arrested Abdul Rehman, Rohullah, Aqeel, and Imran and recovered three 30-bore pistols, a Kalashnikov, and ammunition from their possession. The spokesman further informed that police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi Waseem Riaz conducted operations in different areas and netted 31 professional beggars. - APP

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Briefs

Seven drug peddlers held; over six kg charras recovered

RAWALPINDI :Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers on Thursday arrested seven besides recovering over six kg charras from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Taxila police held Sher Afzal for having 2200 grams charras while another accused namely Irfan Ullah was rounded up for possessing 1260 grams charras. Murree police in their operation held a drug pusher namely Zubair and recovered 1250 grams charras. Other accused were sent behind the bars on recovery of charras and other items. The spokesperson said that separate cases have been registered against all suspects while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Nadeem Shehzad Bukhari had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other law-breakers, he added.—APP

Govt devises strategy to enhance water storage capacity

ISLAMABAD :The government has devised a comprehensive strategy to conserve water, enhance water storage capacity and increase investment in water-related development projects to ensure energy security and overpower water scarcity. Officials sources in Water Resources Ministry told APP here that the government has expedited efforts to complete Diamer Basha, Mohmand dams, Dasu Hydropower, and other such mega projects in time to give maximum relief to the masses. The sources said the completion of the first phase of Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme K-IV would provide 260 million gallons of water per day to the citizens of Karachi and the Tarbela 5th Extension Project to start generating electricity in 2025. Completion of 10 mega projects being carried out by WAPDA would not only help store 11.7 million acre-feet water (MAF) but also add over 11,268 megawatts (MW) of clean and green energy to the national grid.

The sources said that since its inception the government prioritized the construction of new water reservoirs to meet the economic development and energy needs of the country. They said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was personally monitoring the water projects while Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah and WAPDA officials were also making all-out efforts to complete the water projects on time.—APP

LSMI output down 2.89% in 4 months

ISLAMABAD :The overall output of the Large Scale Manufacturing Industry (LSMI) of the country has shown a decline of 2.89 percent in first four months of the current financial year as compared to the production of corresponding period of last year. According to the provisional quantum indices of LSMI for October, 2022 released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the output of large-scale industry in the country on year on year basis reduced by 7.75 percent in October 2022 as compared to the same month of last year, were as it went down by 3.62 percent when compared with the month of September 2022. The provisional quantum indices of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) for October, 2022 with the base year 2015-16 have been developed on the basis of the latest data supplied by the source agencies including the Ministry of Industries and Production, Ministry of Commerce and Provincial Bureaus of Statistics. During the period from July-October, 2022 the sector showing growth included wearing apparel 4.44%, leather products 0.05%, chemicals 0.08 percent, chemical products 0.13% iron and steel products 0.06%, furniture.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Director Satrang Art Gallery Asma Rashid Khan briefs guests about exhibition held at Islamabad Serena Hotel. — DNA

Pakistan, Algeria engaged in mutually beneficial relations

PCFR hosted a Dinner in honor of Brahim Romani Ambassador of Algeria to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations (PCFR)- Karachi based registered think tank-hosted a Dinner in honor of H.E. Mr. Brahim Romani Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to Pakistan at Karachi. H.E. Brahim Romani visited PCFR on his first visit to Karachi after assuming the office of the Ambassador of Algeria to Pakistan. Mr. Ahsan Mukhtar Zubairi Secretary General of PCFR presented souvenir to the honorable ambassador. Ambassador Shahid M Amin (Retd.) Chairman Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations (PCFR) greeted the worthy guests in his welcome address. Ambassador Amin highlighted that Algeria and Pakistan has been enjoying excellent relations for many decades

as Pakistan played an important role in Algeria's independence. Ambassador Amin emphasized on the need of promotion of trade activities between the two brotherly countries and making visa process more simplified for business community. While addressing the gathering H.E. Mr. Brahim Romani appreciated the role of PCFR which serves as a bridge between the diplomatic corps and business community of Pakistan. Ambassador Romani highlighted that Pakistan and Algeria have been engaged in mutually beneficial political and diplomatic ties but there is lot of potential of economic relations which needs to be tapped. While commenting on the efforts for promotion of economic relations between the two brotherly countries he said that Algerian mission appreciate the business related trips to Algeria and has quick

visa process for members of commerce chambers of Pakistan. Ambassador Romani assured the

audience that he will do everything possible to facilitate the trading relations between the two

countries. The event was attended by members of diplomatic corps based in Karachi, government

officials, serving and former judges, business community, academics, and the elite of the city.



Group Photograph with H.E. Mr. Brahim Romani Ambassador of Algeria at the event hosted by PCFR. Ambassador Syed Hassan Habib, Ahsan Mukhtar Zubairi and Ambassador Shahid Amin also present on the occasion.—DNA

Population and Food Security seminar held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A webinar on "Population and Food Security" was jointly organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad. The webinar was part of the Grand National Dialogue (GND) series being planned on a number of pertinent issues. Earlier events on the subject have been held in Peshawar, Wah and Sargodha. Dr. Hanef Ur Rehman, Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Turbat was of the opinion that the agriculture sector of Balochistan needs to be revamped with modern technical practices. Dr. Muhammad Aslam, Dean Faculty of Marine Sciences, Lasbela University

informed that 34.7million hectare land in Balochistan is cultivated, which accounts 6 per cent of total province area. He said that smart agriculture practices along with appropriate research design need to be employed to increase the agriculture productivity. Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Pro Vice Chancellor Gwadar University called for a strong governance structure amidst the water scarcity in province. 70 per cent of Balochistan is water scarce. There is a need for water management policy. The plants which consume higher levels of water should not be grown in water scarce areas. The use of agriculture land for housing schemes should end. On the poor socio-economic indicators, it was reiterated that the development efforts

should be geared towards coherent and sustainable policies. Importantly, the locals need to be made part of the development phase. Balochistan historically has been a less populated area. Due to area's topography and lack of economic opportunities, people have preferred to migrate in search of better quality of life. When people move to rural areas, they become part of consumer community. Thus, migration is increasing the number of consumers while the producers' in rural areas are becoming less. This is a loss of food production. Mir Sadaat Baloch, President Balochistan Council for Peace and Policy said that migration in Balochistan is primarily because of economic considerations and the security environment. Due to these factors, people have migrat-

ed to other provinces and abroad. With less number of people, the investor loses interest in province. The migration trends have political implications as well. For instance from Panigur, 20-30 per cent people have migrated to Karachi. This has lessened the provincial seats of Baloch people. The smuggling of rice, flour etc. to neighbouring Afghanistan is one of the major causes of food insecurity in Balochistan. Ambassador Nadim Riyaz, President IRS, said that the issues of water scarcity, food insecurity and population have been further aggravated due to poor governance. Population management, water management and research driven practices are needed to address the prevailing challenges. The locals need to be involved in policy making.

'China Today' workshop highlighted Sino-Pak brotherhood

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China Study Center (CSC), University of Peshawar organized a one-week workshop titled "China Today" covering various themes including Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "China Today" was organized at the conference hall of CSC, University of Peshawar this week which comprised five sessions in addition to the concluding session, according to Gwadar Pro. Six presentations were made by eminent speakers/scholars that covered various themes including "Economy of the People's Republic of China", "Constitution of the People's Republic of China", "Development of Science and Technology in the People's Republic of China", "Geography of the People's Republic of China", "History of China", "Pakistan-China Relations", "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)". The workshop was attended both online and offline by a large number of students, MPhil & Ph.D. scholars from Pakistan. The Participants benefited from the valuable presentation and learnt a lot about China. Prof. Dr. Zahid Anwar Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Dean Faculty of Social Sciences and Director CSC talked about the contemporary developments in China in global and regional context. He also discussed BRI and CPEC and said that China's BRI project is based on a win-win model for all the member countries. Pakistan should take full advantage of CPEC. "The corridor aims to enhance the well-being of people throughout the country and bring long-term prosperity and stability," he said. Mr. Anwar congratulated all the participants and distributed certificates among the participants who successfully completed their one-week workshop "China Today".

Temenos and NdcTech sign MoU

DNA

ISLAMABAD: December 15, 2022 – Temenos (SIX: TEMN) has signed an agreement to grant license rights to NdcTech, a wholly owned subsidiary of Systems Limited and one of its largest regional system integrators partners, to develop further and market the Temenos Country Model Banks on top of Temenos open platform for financial institutions in these seven Middle Eastern countries. NdcTech is committed to invest and develop regulatory and business specific localized functionality to enhance these Model Banks for banks of all sizes in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. As part of this agreement, NdcTech will become a trusted partner for upgrade services in those countries to enable customers to seamlessly upgrade their technology stack and offer them a modernization path to a SaaS model on the Temenos Banking Cloud. Temenos holds a leading position in the region and boasts a raft of clients across these seven countries including some of the largest and most innovative institutions in the Middle East from Al-Rajhi Bank, to First Abu Dhabi Bank to stc pay. All Temenos clients will be able to work with NdcTech and Temenos to enhance the Model Banks and contribute to the product roadmap. Country Model Banks are a key differentiator for Temenos. By enabling partners to develop new country models, Temenos is able to scale this competitive advantage, rapidly building new model banks compatible with the banking services on Temenos composable platform and available for instant deployment on Temenos Banking Cloud. NdcTech is one of the largest System Integrator and partner for Temenos in Middle East and Africa.

FGEI, HEC ink MoU to expand PERN's connectivity

ISLAMABAD, Dec 15 (APP):Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI) and Higher Education Commission (HEC) inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand the Pakistan Education and Research Network (PERN)'s connectivity to the FGEI colleges. The MoU signing ceremony - held at the HEC - was attended by DG FGEI Maj Gen Muhammad Asghar, HI (M) and Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, SI. The HEC's PERN project is at the forefront of providing a dependable, robust, and cutting-edge communications network for research and cooperation in fields such as grid computing, telemedicine, high-energy physics, and video conferencing. HEC will extend the PERN facility to 27 post-graduate/ graduate institutions of FGEIs throughout the country.—APP

Christian community prays for prosperity

RAWALPINDI :Archbishop Rawalpindi/Islamabad Dr Joseph Arshad said on Thursday that Christmas is a message of love, peace and that the Christian community is always wishful for the country's development and prosperity. He expressed these views while addressing to Christmas celebration ceremony at Missionary St.Francis School Satellite Town. He said special care should be taken for the deserving, poor and oppressed sections during the celebrations of Christmas. Dr. Joseph said 'We must share the happiness of Christmas with our flood victims brethren and sisters and convey a message to them that the whole nation is with them in this hour of difficulty'. Speaking on the occasion, Principal Nadeem Michael said that missionary educational institutions played an essential role in promoting education and were engaged in providing quality education to Christian and Muslim students without discrimination.—APP

Gwadar Financial Literacy Gala enlightens Gwadar youth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: For the first time in Gwadar, "Financial Literacy Gala" has been organized offering youth of Gwadar an immersive understanding about the processes, procedures and modalities of financial institutions and financial instruments, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. University of Gwadar organized a financial literacy gala in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) which was participated by a sizeable gathering of young male and female educated people of Gwadar. In this event, different banks participated and displayed their stalls and educated the youth about the financial institutions and financial instruments they



offer. Students from different schools, colleges, and universities have shown interest and visited the stalls. On the occasion, a Financial Literacy Lecturer Session was organized in the seminar hall which was presided over by Pro Vice-Chancellor

Professor Dr. Syed Manzoor Ahmed. Prof. Dr. Manzoor Ahmed welcomed the guests and started the session by emphasizing the importance of financial literacy. Later Mr. Mohammad Iqbal, Area Coordinator of SBP addressed the audience about financial

literacy and the State Bank's programs and activities. Prof. Dr. Jan Muhammad Dean, Faculty of Management Sciences, Commerce and Social Sciences, expressed his views on financial literacy and its relationship with economic development.

Development works in Sector E-12 should be accelerated

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Dated 15 December 2022): Chairman Capital Development Authority Captain (R) Muhammad Usman Younis, after reviewing the development works in new sectors, expressed displeasure over the slow pace of work in Sector E-12. He issued instructions that the development activities on the tenders issued in Sector E-12 should be expedited to ensure immediate possession to the allottees. In this regard, he further said that in order to solve the long-standing problem of the residents on an emergency basis due to the proportion of population in the city, the desired results are not being achieved. He issued instructions that the speed of work on the ongoing projects in Sector E-12 should be accelerated as possible and the performance should be informed on a daily basis. He further directed that all efforts should be made to speed up development work in Sector E-12. Chairman CDA Capt (R) Muhammad Usman Younis expressed strong displeasure with the engineering wing and warned them to use their professional skills to take urgent steps to solve the long-standing problem of housing in the city.

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Desperate people deserve better

Today is a day to demonstrate our sympathy for the victims and families of this deadly and tragic incident," the home secretary, Suella Braverman, told the House of Commons on Wednesday. Sombre Conservative MPs nodded gravely as she spoke, following the death of at least four migrants in freezing waters off the Kent coast. It would be wrong to view those words, or the response, as in any way insincere. And Ms Braverman was also right to praise the heroic work of first responders, who managed to rescue more than 30 people from the icy water in the early hours of the morning. But in the wake of this appalling news, almost exactly a year after 27 migrants died attempting to cross the Channel, it is hard not to reflect on the very different tone of parliamentary debate the previous day. The timing of Rishi Sunak's Tuesday statement on illegal migration was deliberate; it was designed to show tough leadership at a time when his government is presiding over a country in chaos and he has himself been accused of being weak. The prime minister announced a plan which doubles down on the notion that small boat crossings can be stopped by criminalising, confining and summarily deporting those who make them – if necessary to third countries such as Rwanda. The red meat thus offered was rapturously received by packed Tory backbenches shouting "more!". MPs representing "red wall" constituencies, in particular, believe that the more punitive the disposition towards small boat arrivals, the better their chances of holding on to their seats. Straight after Ms Braverman's statement on Wednesday, a substantial minority backed a bill urging Mr Sunak to ignore future deportation rulings by the European court of human rights. Sadly, and shamefully, it seems unlikely that Wednesday's drownings will halt this trajectory. The archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, observed that the deaths were "another reminder that debates about asylum seekers are not about statistics, but precious human lives". When political discourse overwhelmingly focuses on "getting the numbers down", that is a necessary thing to say. This was a tragedy foretold. It has been a telling juxtaposition: a day of empty rhetoric promoting a harsh strategy of deterrence, immediately followed by events that gave the lie to the bombast. Desperate people willing to gamble their lives on the sea in sub-zero temperatures are not operating according to some superficial rendering of rational choice theory. Many, in any case, will judge the environment they have left behind to be more hostile than any they may encounter in Britain. Large numbers, including children, are seeking to unite with family members and will do almost anything to achieve that goal. It is an abrogation of moral responsibility to ignore these evident truths and not to act upon them. But that is what this performatively heartless government appears intent on doing.



Ukraine's winter: keeping the lights on

With Vladimir Putin's fury and forces ranged against it, Ukraine needs more than one kind of hardware. Reports on Tuesday said the US is close to providing at least one Patriot missile defence battery to Ukraine, having previously refused Kyiv's entreaties; Russia has warned against their use. A battery costs around \$1bn and each missile around \$3m; the systems are in high demand. Training an army to use them can take months. In contrast, an LED lightbulb can be bought off the shelf for under \$2 – and then installed – by any consumer. But Volodymyr Zelenskyy believes these are crucial to the war effort too: he wants 50m of them (the EU has so far pledged 30m). On the same day that news of the Patriot plans broke, the Ukrainian president told an emergency conference in Paris that generators are as essential as armour to help his country survive. Missiles are needed to repel the attacks. But while Ukraine has got better at defence, Russia is also improving its targeting; repairs and replacements are essential. Washington has just shipped the first tranche of equipment to support the country's power infrastructure. Generators and transformers take time to produce, so reducing power demand is also crucial; switching from older incandescent bulbs to LEDs could cut the shortfall by as much as 40%, Kyiv believes. It is trying to ensure that everyone can have at least a few hours a day of power – essential when temperatures are dipping below zero. Its aim is threefold: to keep infrastructure in working condition for the future; to preserve the health, wellbeing and morale of its citizens; and also to keep them within its borders. In October, Kyiv urged the millions of Ukrainians who have fled abroad to remain there until spring, warning – correctly – that conditions would only get worse. But it is painfully aware that another mass exodus might imperil political support in European countries which have, so far, maintained more unity than many expected. That second wave has not yet materialised, despite the grim conditions. But there is a lot more of winter to come. The UK and EU countries have spent around half a trillion euros to ease the pain of the energy crisis for their own citizens. Even so, many are enduring a brutal winter, struggling to feed their families and freezing in homes they cannot afford to heat. Their hardship, while much less than the suffering of Ukrainians, is real and must not be dismissed. As winter bites, the fear is that governments under pressure may increasingly highlight the costs of a sustained war. Pulling away from backing Ukraine is not the only danger. Accusing underpaid workers of playing into Mr Putin's hands by striking – as Nadhim Zahawi, the Conservative party chairman, did this week – was disgraceful as well as absurd. European politicians must not do the Russian president's work for him by turning support for Kyiv into a political football. The focus must remain on Ukrainians' needs.

Arab world the winner in memorable World Cup

Chris Doyle

Morocco will get the chance to overcome its other colonial power, France, in the semifinals on Wednesday. In fact, star player Achraf Hakimi was born in the poor suburbs of Madrid. Morocco were the only team in the quarterfinals not from Europe or South America. Few in the region were not cheering them on. A sense of collective pride emerged as a result of the North African country's success in becoming the first Arab and African state to reach the semifinals. One might have thought that, given the dire state of relations between Morocco and Algeria, that Algerians would have shied away from joining in the festivities

As the FIFA World Cup reaches its climactic end, one cannot help but reflect on what an extraordinary political event it has been. Those who argue that sport and politics should be decoupled will have found it hard watching politics as an ever-present from the day Qatar was awarded the event back in 2010 and at every single match since the tournament began on Nov. 20. But perhaps one of the most fascinating and hopefully impactful thrills at the World Cup has been the rare opportunity to remind the world that, for all its troubles, fissures and rivalries, the peoples of the Arab world do have much in common and that football has highlighted that reality every day in Qatar. Some might question these signs of togetherness among fellow Arabs. Yet there were copious examples where it shone. Three achievements stood out. Firstly, for Morocco to beat Spain and then Portugal in the knockout rounds was exceptional, especially following their defeat of Belgium, the second-ranked side in the world, in the group stage. There was more than an element of delight in seeing a former colony defeating, in Spain, its one-time colonial master. Morocco will get the chance to overcome its other colonial power, France, in the semifinals on Wednesday. In fact, star player Achraf Hakimi was born in the poor suburbs of Madrid. Morocco were the only team in the quarterfinals not from Europe or South America. Few in the region were not cheering them on. A sense of collective pride emerged as a result of the North African country's success in becoming the first Arab and African state to reach the semifinals. One might have thought that, given the dire state of relations between Morocco and Algeria, that Algerians would have shied away from joining in the festivities. Evidence suggests otherwise. Algerians were out supporting Morocco as enthusiastically as anyone else in the region. A friend was in Paris and told me: "After one of the Morocco victories, there were lots of Algerian supporters and flags joining their Moroccan brothers and sisters in celebration." The Algerian captain and superstar Riyad Mahrez was quick to

praise the Atlas Lions' achievements. Secondly, Tunisia beating reigning world champions France in the group stage was also an unforgettable moment. This was the first time they had beaten European opposition in the World Cup. This was every bit as big a win as in 1982, when Algeria beat the mighty West Germany in their first ever World Cup game. Third, the Saudi victory over Argentina was another huge milestone. In many ways, this ignited the World Cup for the Arab world. A sense of pride has also broken out that many of the finest players in the world come from this region. Hakim Ziyech for Morocco is one. Mahrez and Mohammed Salah were not in Doha but are still at the top of the sport. Kylian Mbappe, a star of this tournament, has an Algerian mother. The key players in the Arab teams largely play in Europe. This shows football at its best in terms of breaking down barriers. Fourteen out of the 26-man Morocco squad were born outside of the country, showing how the team relies on the Moroccan diaspora. This includes Ziyech, who opted not to play for the Netherlands. That points to one challenge that countries like Morocco face, as they lack the footballing infrastructure to develop and nurture enough talent at home. This World Cup has also often been about one country that is not there. At every single game featuring an Arab side, and plenty others beside, the Palestinian flag was there. It is a political symbol and a defiant message that the Arabs will not forget or ignore what is happening to the Palestinians in the diaspora and under occupation. As an even more brutally right-wing coalition is about to take power in Israel, this message should be carefully noted in the US and European capitals. Palestine still matters. Israeli hasbaristas were also caught out. Having belittled and mocked those who claimed otherwise, they discovered that, despite the normalization deals, Arabs are not willing to gloss over Israel's crimes and oppression. Time and time again, Israeli journalists, while trying to pretend everything was all lovely and wonderful with

their newfound Arab friends, found that "free Palestine" was pushed back in their faces. Many locals snubbed their requests for interviews. Palestinian armbands and keffiyehs were being worn at nearly every match by huge numbers of fans. The sheer arrogance of believing that a state could oppress millions of people and that all would be peace and happiness was exposed as the nonsense it is. The Moroccan players had no hesitation in raising the Palestinian flag after their wins over Spain and Portugal. Many Arabs also expressed admiration for the courage of the Iranian team after the players refused to sing their national anthem ahead of their opening match against England. This points to the widespread sympathy many Arabs feel toward Iranians, notably currently the women, who are struggling for their freedoms. The Western media has been quick to point out all that was wrong with this World Cup. It is about time it also highlighted what has gone right. For all the criticisms of Qatar in the run-up to the cup over issues such as workers' rights, one of the key elements of its bid has been fulfilled. Football in the region has been the winner. The atmosphere has been considerably warmer than many expected, with largely good-natured relations among fans of all countries. It seems that rival fans have not needed to be segregated, showing the festival-like atmosphere. Fan violence does not seem to have featured. The largest numbers of fans, of course, came from the Arab world, with Saudi Arabia providing the largest number from a single country. Many outside the region were dismissive of the claims that football mattered in the Middle East. One leading commentator contemptuously told me, while on the BBC, that Qatar did not have a footballing heritage. Yet the region should never have been ignored. A World Cup in the Arab world has brought some cheer to a region that has been hit hard by wars and other crises, and whose peoples have not had much to celebrate in recent years.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Hard bargains, no lectures: What Africa needs at Biden's summit

Ashley Simango

For decades the US did not prioritise Africa – Washington adopted an "anchor states" model to Africa, working primarily via a handful of powerful, regional actors to leverage influence. It could afford to do that, in good measure, because its supremacy on the continent, as in other parts of the world, was largely unchallenged – especially since the end of the Cold War. That is no longer the case: China is the continent's biggest trading partner, with mounting influence

Starting on Tuesday, United States President Joe Biden is hosting African presidents, prime ministers and monarchs for a US-Africa Leaders' Summit. In the past, such glittering meetings have often devolved into neo-colonial lectures, with African leaders passively listening to the US president hypocritically say out vague notions of spreading "liberal democracy" values. But times have changed. For all its challenges, Africa's global stature is at its most attractive in modern history – and our leaders must drive a hard financial bargain with the US, extracting maximum value for the continent through their negotiations and discussions with Washington. They must not let the summit ebb into waffling lectures from the US on "values" it does not itself practice at home or abroad. Instead, African leaders must grab the microphone – and, if needed, be uncompromising about the continent's economic interests. For decades the US did not prioritise Africa – Washington adopted an "anchor states" model to Africa, working primarily via a handful of powerful, regional actors to leverage influence. It could afford to do that, in good measure, because its supremacy on the continent, as in other parts of the world, was largely unchallenged – especially since the end of the Cold War. That is no longer the case: China is the continent's biggest trading partner, with mounting influence. The US and European Union covet what Africa could offer: support on the war in Ukraine, cooperation in climate change reduction and access to rare earth minerals critical to the West's competition with Beijing on everything from computing to sophisticated weaponry. Which brings me to the strategic leverage that Africa today enjoys. The US-led West is keen to reduce Chinese and Russian military forays into Africa. For instance, in November, Central Intelligence Agency Deputy Director David Cohen met Teodoro Nguema, heir to the throne in the oil-rich, deeply autocratic Atlantic Ocean state of Equatorial Guinea. The US's supreme interest in

ing a naval base on Africa's vital Atlantic coast – and thus facing the US East Coast. Never mind democracy. In other words, the US knows exactly what it wants to gain from Africa. Here is the question, though: Does Africa know what it wants from the US? When it became apparent that many African nations would take a neutral position on the war but aggressively lobby all sides for an immediate end to hostilities, Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, began circling Africa trying to diplomatically upstage Russia. On this front, African leaders need to tell Biden that they will stick to their current course, balancing relations between the West and Russia, while calling on all sides to stop dangerous weapons build-ups and, of course, the war. Turkey and India can serve as examples. After all, the US and Russia are both weaponising the "pornographic" spectacle of food shortages in Africa to soil each other's image. If there is one area where Africa today can negotiate harder with the US, it is on commodities, rare earth minerals and their economic partnership more broadly. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, is home to the world's largest-known deposits of cobalt and is a major source of lithium – both of which the US craves in its fierce quest to beat China in next-generation computing, decarbonisation, and electronic wargaming. The US Defense Department has opened talks with Malawi's miners to avoid leaning too much on China, which by 2019 was supplying 80 percent of America's precious earth minerals. The EU, which is Washington's closest ally, is so desperate for energy amid the war in Ukraine that Mozambique started shipping liquefied natural gas to Europe in November. This partly helps lessen pressure on the US to fill up the EU's Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage tanks. At a time when Russia is doling out mercenaries, and China cash, to African leaders in exchange for strategic influence and resources, the US and its allies know that they cannot afford business as usual with the continent. So it is important that African leaders speak – as best as

possible – in one voice to negotiate preferential trade regimes and access to finance at fair interest rates. There is already evidence that this can be done: Consider the case of Zambia, which counts China as its biggest trading partner. As Lusaka looks to restructure its sovereign debt, the US has asked Zambia's creditors like China and France to accept their losses. As Stephen Chan, a professor at London's School of African and Oriental Studies, said in November, we may now see "competitive posturing" from the US and China to demonstrate who is "more generous" towards Zambia. The Biden administration has already announced that it will use the summit in Washington to pledge support for the African Union to be included in the G20 – a sign that the US recognises the growing clout of the continent. But African leaders should press for more than just a seat at the global high table. They can learn from supposedly staunch allies of the US, like Saudi Arabia, which drive hard bargains with Washington to protect their national interests, even if that means limiting oil production to keep crude prices high. Saudi Arabia does not easily tolerate intimidation from Washington. Nor should African nations. At the climate talks, COP27, in Egypt in November, there was a glimmer of optimism that emerged in the manner in which Africa carried out its climate diplomacy. Presidents from Africa took to the podium to lambast the US and other industrialised nations for creating the climate crisis and demanded tangible billions in climate reparations funds. Biden's summit in Washington is an opportunity to build on Africa's status as an influential geopolitical player. Our leaders need to look their US counterparts in the eye, secure the best deals possible for the continent and its individual nations, and not let the US set the agenda with its hypocritical preaching on liberty and democracy. The US might be the world's biggest power. But this could be Africa's moment.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

Afghan border forces open fire at Chaman

FROM PAGE 01
the Afghan border forces used artillery and mortar in the attack. The ISPR said that Pakistan's troops at the border gave a befitting albeit measured response against the uncalculated aggression, but avoided targeting innocent civilians in the area. The statement added the Pakistani border forces have also approached Afghan authorities in Kabul to highlight the severity of the situation and demanded strict action to avoid any such recurrence of the incident in the future.

Two martyred; Nine injured...

FROM PAGE 01
The terrorists are acting on the will of anti-state elements, he added. The president and the prime minister prayed for the souls of Havaladar Muhammad Ameer and a civilian who lost their lives in the terror incident. Both paid tribute to the sacrifices rendered by security personnel for the safety of homeland. Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah while condemning the suicide blast in Miranshah area of North Waziristan expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of Havaladar Muhammad Ameer and a civilian. "The entire nation pays tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for the country and salute to their courage" the minister said in a news statement. He said the sacrifices of martyrs would not go in vain. The entire nation stood with its security forces which had capability to curb terror activities in the country, he added. Sanaullah said terrorists would be chased and their nefarious designs would be foiled. He also expressed concern over the law and order situation in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

South Asian peace hostage to India's...

FROM PAGE 01
She mentioned that Chargé d'affaires Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizamani, who escaped unhurt in the attack, was still in Pakistan and would leave once the consultation process was complete. She termed the visit of State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar to Kabul "very successful that provided the opportunity to convey Pakistan's concerns". "We hope that the assurances given to us [by the Afghan authorities] will be fulfilled," she said. On Pakistan's climate change situation, she said the international conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan would be held in Geneva on January 9, 2023, and will be co-chaired by the prime minister of Pakistan and the United Nations Secretary-General. Pakistan, she said, will present the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Recovery, and Resilience Framework (4RF) at the Conference. The 4RF document is based on the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), launched on October 28, 2022, which estimated flood damages to exceed USD 14.9 billion, economic losses over USD 15.2 billion, and reconstruction needs over USD 16 billion. Asked about the suspension of truckloads at the Pakistan-China border, she said the trade activities between the two countries halted as routine for three months due to snowfall. In response to a question on follow-up on the investigation regarding the killing of prominent journalist Arshad Sharif in Kenya, Baloch said the matter pertained to the Interior Ministry as appointed the focal body by the government.

Morocco press hails team as World Cup dream ends

US-based Middle East cultural magazine the Markaz Review said that "for the millions watching... it felt like the ultimate showdown"

RABAT: Moroccan media hailed the national football team on Thursday as the country digested its defeat to France on the doorstep of the World Cup final, ending a history-making run. "Morocco went out with honour and with their heads high," Lakome2 news website said. The "Lions of the Atlas" were the first Arab or African team ever to reach a semi-final in 92 years of football's top tournament. A string of victories, including over Belgium, Spain and Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal, "allowed Arabs and Africans to hold their heads high", wrote sports outlet Al-Mountakhab. "We can't fault the Lions of the Atlas, even if we had dreamed of reaching the final," it said. Sports website Le360sport said the team's "epic" run had been hit by "physical glitches" in the back line - a reference to defender Romain Saiss's thigh injury early in the game and the withdrawal of centre-back Nayef Aguerd just moments before the start. News site Le Desk noted that the team had missed "several opportunities to score".



But most of the coverage was gushing. Even the habitually sober business journal L'Economiste sang the team's praises, saying they should be added to the "Pantheon of football". Reaching the semi-final of a World Cup, "a first for an African team, is a starting point, not a destination", it said. Social media was flooded with a mix of praise for the team and criticism of the referee. "Our sadness at being defeated mustn't let us forget the joy we've experienced," one user wrote. Another lauded the team for their "sacrifices" and fighting spirit. "Thank you for having restored faith and smiles to a people who desperately needed it." US-based Middle East cultural magazine the Markaz Review said that "for the millions watching... it felt like the ultimate showdown." But, it said, "players on both teams fought valiantly and treated each other to hugs and moral support, suggesting a sea change in international relationships between former colonies and their European nemesis." - APP

All-rounder Kuldeep puts India on top in first Test

CHITTAGONG: Left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav shone with both bat and ball as India plunged Bangladesh into serious trouble on the second day of the first Test in Chittagong on Thursday. Bangladesh collapsed to 133-8 at stumps, with Kuldeep picking up 4-33 after his 40 made a vital contribution to India's first innings total of 404 runs. Mehidy Hasan, 16 not out, and Ebadot Hossain, 13 not out, survived the day but Bangladesh still needed 71 runs to avoid a follow-on. "Losing eight wickets is disappointing," admitted Bangladesh spin coach Rangana

Herath, insisting nonetheless that the game was not over. "But you know this is Test cricket, three days to go, we need (to) hang in there and we need to fight hard," he said. Mohammad Siraj ripped the hearts out of Bangladesh's top order with 3-14 before Kuldeep - playing the series as a late replacement for Ravindra Jadeja - mesmerised the home side with his left-arm spin. Siraj dismissed Najmul Hossain on the first ball of the Bangladesh innings as the hosts made the worst possible start in reply to India's total. Umesh Yadav comple-

mented his efforts by bowling Yasir Ali for four three overs later. "Red ball is my favourite format," Siraj said after the day's play. "It is where you have to maintain a consistent line and length and that helps me in white-ball cricket also." Liton Das offered some counter-punch with five fours, including three off consecutive balls from Umesh, before Siraj bowled him for 24. The paceman also claimed the wicket of debutant opener Zakir Hasan for 20. Kuldeep struck off his second ball, forcing Bangladesh captain Shakib Al

Hasan to give Virat Kohli a catch at slip for three, reducing Bangladesh to 75-5. The 28-year-old spinner then removed Nurul Hasan (16), Mushfiqur Rahim (28) and Tajjul Islam (0) to put India firmly in control. India were all out in the second session after adding 126 runs to their overnight 278-6, with Bangladeshi off-spinner Mehidy finishing with 4-112 and left-arm spinner Tajjul taking 4-133. Ravichandran Ashwin defied Bangladesh's attack to hit 58, the third half-century in the India innings after Cheteshwar Pujara's 90 and Shreyas Iyer's 86. - APP

UK nurses stage unprecedented walkout

LONDON: UK nurses on Thursday staged an unprecedented one-day strike in a fight for better wages and working conditions, despite warnings patients could be put at risk. Up to 100,000 members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland stopped work from 0800 to 2000 GMT after rejecting a pay deal. The RCN's industrial action - the first in its 106-year history - is part of a surging wave of stoppages by public and private sector employees as spiralling inflation outstrips wages growth. Outside St Thomas' Hospital in central London, nurses on picket lines chanted slogans and held aloft placards urging "Pay us our worth" and "It's time to pay nursing staff fairly". They were joined by England's chief nursing officer Ruth May, according to The Times. At Aintree University Hospital in Liverpool, northwest England, one nurse said striking was "the only way we can put our point across". "The public need to understand the pressures that everyone's under," said Pamela Jones, who has been a nurse for 32 years. "You've only got to come to A&E (accident and emergency) to see the queues, there's no beds." - APP

Thai princess collapses from heart condition, palace says

The princess is the daughter of the king's first wife Princess Soamsawali, and his eldest child. She has been a part of her father's innermost circle since he succeeded King Bhumibol in 2016, and has been made a senior officer in the king's personal guard

DNA

BANGKOK: The Thai King's eldest daughter collapsed from a heart condition on Wednesday evening, Thailand's royal palace says. Princess Bajrakitiyabha, the eldest daughter of King Vajiralongkorn, collapsed while training her dogs north-east of Bangkok, the palace said. The 44-year-old was taken to a nearby hospital, then taken by helicopter to Bangkok, where she is being treated. The palace described her condition last night as "stable to a certain extent". Medical bulletins from the royal palace in Thailand are typically vague and cryptic, and from the single statement issued about Princess Bajrakitiyabha, it is difficult to gauge how serious her condition is, says the BBC's Jonathan Head in Bangkok. The statement says nothing about her state of health now. Some reports have suggested it is a lot more serious than stated. The princess is the daughter of the king's first wife Princess Soamsawali, and his eldest child. She has been a part of her father's innermost circle since he succeeded King Bhumibol in 2016, and has been made a senior officer in the king's personal guard. She is the most visibly accomplished of the inner royal circle, with post-graduate degrees in law from two US universities. King Vajiralongkorn has not yet named an heir to the throne, but Princess Bajrakitiyabha is widely viewed as the most suitable successor. Being one of the king's three children who have formal titles, she is eligible for the throne under a 1924 Palace Law of Succession. She is a fitness enthusiast and also has a long record of advocating penal reform in Thailand.



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs witnessing the signing of Grant Financing Agreement with French Development Agency (AFD) worth 0.3 million for Babu Sabu Wastewater Treatment Plant. - DNA

Paucity of funds hampers flood relief efforts, officials warn

ISLAMABAD: The officials of the United Nation in Pakistan on Thursday feared that the paucity of funds was hampering the flood relief and rehabilitation efforts in the country. Addressing the journalists here, the officials said Pakistan needed \$816 million in funding to cope with the challenges faced by the flood-affected people in different areas. However, funds amounting to only \$2.623 million had been received so far which created a gap of \$553.7 million in funding, they added. They

said upto 9.1 million people may be pushed below the poverty line due to the recent flood in Pakistan and more funding was required to rebuild the affected homes and restore their livelihoods in different sectors like agriculture and livestock during the winter. Humanitarian Coordinator of UN Julian Harneis said world community did not respond to the appeal of the UN in a proactive way as the countries were already facing a host of challenges such as grim economic situations, en-

ergy crises and others. "There is a chaotic situation in flood-affected areas where two hundred thousand people are homeless, the school remains inaccessible for two million people, risk of exploitation and violence against women and transgender mounting and rising inflation pose serious humanitarian crises in Pakistan," he added. He urged the humanitarian partners and donors to keep the aid continued by donating more funds to ensure the rehabilitation of flood affectees. - APP

Argentina near full-strength for WC final against France

The third piece of the puzzle that could be key to Argentina's success against France is midfielder Di Maria, who was left on the bench for the whole of the semi-final against Croatia as Argentina cruised home having taken a first-half lead

DOHA: Argentina made a statement in their 3-0 World Cup semi-final win over Croatia and will head into Sunday's showpiece with two players back from suspension and Angel Di Maria fit and ready to face France. Defenders Gonzalo Montiel and Marcos Acuna missed the semi-final as they were suspended after accumulating two yellow cards. Left back Acuna was the biggest loss for Argentina in that game as he has been a critical part of coach Lionel Scaloni's set-up during the tournament, playing in all of their previous five games and starting four times. In their quarter-final against the Netherlands, he was arguably one of Argentina's best players, winning nine of his 13 duels, completing

100% of his dribbles and earning the penalty from which Lionel Messi scored their second goal. He could be critical if Argentina are to control that side

of the pitch, where France have Ousmane Dembele in great form. Montiel has been a squad player but he was also critical in their win over the Dutch, converting

in the penalty shootout, which Argentina won 4-3. The third piece of the puzzle that could be key to Argentina's success against France is midfielder Di Maria, who

was left on the bench for the whole of the semi-final against Croatia as Argentina cruised home having taken a first-half lead. Di Maria, who has been recovering from a thigh injury

suffered against Poland in the group stage, has played only nine minutes in Argentina's last three matches. Yet he is expected to be fit and ready to go in Sunday's final. The 34-year-old was Argentina's hero in last year's Copa America final against bitter rivals Brazil, scoring the goal that earned them their first major title in 28 years. He and Messi are the only two Argentina players who were also in the squad that lost the 2014 World Cup final against Germany in Brazil. Di Maria, who missed that match more than eight years ago due to injury, will get a second chance to get his hands on the most sought-after prize in world football and should be fresh for the final as Argentina go in search of a third World Cup title. - Agencies



Pakistan, Tajikistan face similar security...

FROM PAGE 01
agreed upon that Pakistan would continue to provide assistance in intelligence capacity building and sharing of technical expertise with Tajik Armed forces. The minister proposed friendly sports competitions between the armed forces and display of military band on reciprocal basis on special occasions of the two countries. During the meeting, matters related to bilateral defence cooperation, counter terrorism, defence production and exploration of new avenues to progress and prosperity were discussed. The Tajik President assured his government's commitment and pledged to work with Pakistan to strengthen their bilateral ties.

Tajik president concludes...

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Strategic Partnership Agreement will be finalized at the earliest. "The modalities for the bilateral Strategic Partnership Agreement will be finalized during the intervening period before the visit of the prime minister of Pakistan to Dushanbe," the Foreign Office spokesperson said at a weekly press briefing. President Emomali held comprehensive delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, who also hosted a banquet in honour of the visiting dignitary. During the morning, the Tajik president held meetings with Minister for Defence Khwaja Muhammad Asif and Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani. A number of Agreements and MoUs were signed in the areas of industry and new technologies, transit trade, combating trafficking in narcotics, cooperation between customs authorities on the establishment of electronic data interchange, research in the field of water resources, and cooperation in education. The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to complete connectivity projects like CASA-1000 to open new avenues for future energy corridors.

Qureshi writes to NA speaker

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Parliamentary Leader of the party." He wrote that after the conspiracy to remove former PM illegally and unconstitutionally from his office, 123 members of PTI MNAs tendered their resignations on the floor of the house on 11 April 2022. "I made an unequivocal verbal announcement of the decision for all party members to resign from National Assembly seats with the clear approval and agreement of 123 MNAs who were present on the floor of the National Assembly," he added. In the letter, Qureshi pointed out that 123 PTI MNAs submitted written resignations to former Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri on April 11, 2022. "The lawmakers had submitted resignations as per constitution and assembly rules", the letter added.

COAS, US Centcom chief hold...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan's achievements in the fight against terrorism, flood relief and contributions for regional peace. The visiting dignitary laid a floral wreath at Martyrs' Monument in honour of the Martyrs of Pakistan whereas a smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army presented a guard of honour to the visiting dignitary. Later, Commander CENTCOM called on COAS followed by a delegation-level meeting where matters of mutual interest, regional stability and security situation, defence and security cooperation particularly military-to-military ties were discussed during the meeting. Last month, the US Centcom chief felicitated Gen Asim on assuming charge as the Pakistan Army Chief. Both top military officials have a previously established relationship from General Kurilla's time as CENTCOM Chief of Staff.

Briefs

Irish UN
peacekeeper
killed in south
Lebanon

AQIBYA: An Irish soldier of the UN peacekeeping force in south Lebanon near the Israeli border was killed and three wounded after their convoy came under fire, Irish officials said Thursday. Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin said he was "deeply shocked and very saddened" by the loss of life. The UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL said the "incident" happened near the village of Al-Aqbiya, just outside the force's area of operations in a strip along Lebanon's border with Israel. The Irish military said "a convoy of two armoured utility vehicles carrying eight personnel travelling to Beirut came under small arms fire" around 2115 GMT on Wednesday. It said four personnel were taken to hospital near Lebanon's main southern city of Sidon, where one was pronounced dead on arrival. Another underwent surgery and was in a serious condition while the other two were treated for minor injuries. Witnesses told AFP the vehicle had been blocked by villagers after it took a road along the Mediterranean coast not normally used by the UN force. They said they had heard gunfire and the driver had appeared to lose control of the vehicle as the convoy attempted to leave the area. An AFP photographer reported that a UNIFIL vehicle had slammed into a shop on the road towards Sidon. Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney told public broadcaster RTE that the peacekeepers had been on a "standard administrative run" to the Lebanese capital when their armoured vehicles got separated. —APP

EU faces
subsidy race
with US in
trade spat

BRUSSELS :EU leaders debated how to protect their industries from subsidised American competition, amid fears of a state spending race between the economic superpowers. Arriving at an EU summit, French President Emmanuel Macron said a response was needed "to maintain fair competition", one which "allows us to match what the Americans are doing". The European bloc is unsettled by parts of a multi-billion-dollar US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) that lavishes subsidies and tax cuts for US purchasers of electric vehicles — if they "Buy American". The European Commission sees that as discriminatory against European car manufacturers, a breach of World Trade Organization rules, and a threat to investment in Europe. It is urging EU leaders to sign off on a plan that would loosen state aid rules and boost public investment in cleaner energy. In the summit room, leaders stressed "the strategic and deep ties between the EU and US across the full breadth of the relationship," an EU official said. —APP

Ukraine
says Russian
shelling
kills two in
Kherson city

KYIV, UKRAINE :Russian shelling on Thursday killed two people in the southern city of Kherson, the Ukrainian presidency said, in the latest such bombardment since Kyiv's forces recaptured it last month. "The enemy hit the centre of the city again. One hundred metres from the Kherson region administrative building," the deputy head of the president's office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, said on social media. "There is information about two people killed. Emergency services are on site." Russian forces seized Kherson — which had a pre-war population of nearly 300,000 people — shortly after invading Ukraine in February. Ukraine's army recaptured the city last month in a significant military and symbolic defeat for Moscow. Ukraine's ministry responsible for reintegrating recaptured territory said Thursday that 11,000 people had left Kherson since it was recaptured by Kyiv's forces and that most had been evacuated by the government. —Agencies

Online Pak national pavilion
empowers physical production

The online national pavilion project combines online retail and offline wholesale to build full-channel market penetration

DNA

BEIJING: "With the development of the real economy as the core, the online Pakistani national pavilion on China's e-commerce platform is expected to support Pakistan's physical production, logistics and creation capabilities. This could be materialised by making use of online communication, education and advertising to expand the audience and shorten the distance between enterprises and consumers of China and Pakistan," Ms Ge Xiao'ou, President of Prestige International said, in an interview with Gwadar Pro. Prestige International is a Chinese company dedi-

cated to international trade business. In 2019, it started cooperating with Chinese e-commerce platforms JD.com and COFCO Womai.com on its national pavilion project. It currently operates 8 countries' national pavilions, including Pakistan, the Philippines, Laos, etc. Since its opening in December 2021, the Pakistani national pavilion on JD.com has expanded its categories from zero to 72 products, covering a number of basic areas of people's livelihood such as grain and oil flavoring, casual snacks, tea brewing and drinking. Pakistani products are highly popular among Chinese online consumers. Ge revealed that this March the total number of purchase orders for

a biscuit was 2.8 million, ranking high among similar products in all national pavilions. Ge added, "we will continue to increase the categories of products with Pakistani characteristics. At present, we are preparing to introduce pine nuts, jewelry, handmade carpets and other products that show the national customs of Pakistan in an all-round way." The online national pavilion project combines online retail and offline wholesale to build full-channel market penetration. As a permanent import expo online and offline, it provides overseas brands and products with as much Chinese customer base as possible through cooperation with China's largest e-commerce retailers,

wholesale markets, food processors, manufacturers, and traders. Ge explained that the current limitations for the development of online Pakistani national pavilion are cultural differences, lack of awareness of Pakistani products among Chinese consumers, mismatch between production and packaging technology of the products and local policies and regulations. She termed it a long and arduous process and hoped for cooperation from more platforms to meet their knowledge content release so that more consumers could understand the product types and advantages of Pakistan. Last month, China and Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding on E-com-

merce Cooperation. The cooperation between China and Pakistan in the field of e-commerce is comprehensive, ranging from livelihood industries to cultural exchanges, as well as digital economy, financial cooperation, infrastructure, and humanitarian projects, which can be realized through online channels. China's e-commerce market is huge and has the potential to expand bilateral trade with Pakistan. Ge believes that the establishment of Pakistani national pavilion on China's e-commerce platforms will help further strengthen cooperation in areas such as online payment systems, logistics, warehousing, and customs facilitation, and promote cooperation be-

tween micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups. The development of e-commerce in China is in line with the needs of China's economic development through practice. It not only promotes the improvement of production capacity, but also meets the needs of consumers and even generates new demands, becoming a way of life. According to Ge, the Chinese e-commerce model is innovative and can be replicated. "We can use our development experience to help other countries create more job opportunities in the process of overseas e-commerce business development and improve the ability of economic development," she added.



TOKYO: Ambassador-designate Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, was briefed by Mr. Shingo Ito of Toyota Tsusho regarding Toyota's future plan of business diversification & Investment enhancement in Pakistan.—DNA

Back from underworld:
Greek city's cultural rebirth

ELEFSINA, GREECE: It was the Greek city where the ancients flocked in the hope of learning the secret of life after death. Now Eleusis — known to Greeks as Elefsina — aims to resurrect its flagging fortunes by becoming European capital of culture next year. Roman emperors including Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus — of "Gladiator" fame — were among the glitterati of antiquity who came to

be initiated into its secret death-defying cult based around Persephone, the queen of the underworld. But Eleusis long ago lost its glamour. Its grim factories, steelmills, refineries and ship and breaker yards drew thousands fleeing the poverty of rural Greece over the last century. Choked by smog and pollution, its bay a vast ships' graveyard, for decades it resembled a modern version of the un-

derworld from which Persephone escaped. Her rebirth each year with the spring was recreated in the secret ancient rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Local leaders hope becoming a European city of culture will do the same trick for the post-industrial city half an hour northwest of Athens. Eleusis 2023 CEO Nana Spyropoulou said they had faith that a small "but his-

torically significant city can draw the international and European cultural spotlight. "Our goal is to make use of Elefsina's cultural wealth, and to leave a legacy for the future," she told reporters. Dance, concerts, street art, films and exhibitions will draw on the city's fabled history and its long experience with unemployment, immigration and environmental degradation.—APP



WAH CANNT: President RCCI Saqib Rafiq being presented a shield during his visit to Wah University.—DNA

Climate Resilient Pak moot in Geneva on Jan 9

She said India's hegemonic ambitions have caused tensions with its neighbors and its hubris for domination remains a primary obstacle to meaningful regional cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan will be held in Geneva, Switzerland on 9th of next month to mobilize support towards building back better after the recent devastating floods in Pakistan. This was announced by Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch while speaking at her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday. She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres will co-chair the conference. The spokesperson said Pakistan will

present the reconstruction rehabilitation, recovery and resilience framework based on post disaster needs assessment launched in October this year to estimate the flood damages. The spokesperson said the conference will engage the international community to mobilize support towards building back better after devastating floods. It will also be an opportunity to hold an informed dialogue on climate adaptation and resilience and to discuss supportive arrangements for the recovery processes. The Prime Minister and the UN Secretary General have jointly

addressed an invitation letter to donor countries, international financial institutions and other development partners for this conference. The Foreign Office Spokesperson said a comprehensive dossier has been developed highlighting India's involvement in a deadly terrorist attack in Johar Town, Lahore last year. She said our law enforcement agencies with the support of international counterparts have found concrete evidence that the masterminds, financiers and the facilitators of Lahore terrorist attack were Indian nationals and are located in India. She said the

Indian agencies recruited terrorists for this attack, trained them, provided them finances and logistic support. Pakistan has initiated international legal proceedings including from Interpol and Mutual Legal Assistance processes to bring those responsible to justice. Responding to a question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch rejected the statement by the Indian External Affairs Ministry on the recent visit of the OIC Secretary General to Azad Jammu and Kashmir. She said we consider it as untenable. She said Jammu and Kashmir is one of the oldest internationally recognized disputes on the agen-

da of the UN Security Council and it remains unresolved due to India's intransigence and unwillingness to implement the UNSC resolutions. She urged the international community including the OIC to play their role in highlighting the atrocities in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The Spokesperson said peace in South Asia has remained hostage to India's illegally occupation of and brutalities in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. She said India's hegemonic ambitions have caused tensions with its neighbors and its hubris for domination remains a primary obstacle to meaningful regional cooperation.

FPCCI, Algeria
Chamber
sign MoU
to promote
trade

KARACHI: Algerian Ambassador to Pakistan Brahim Romani said his country's policies were centered on an open economy and offering maximum facilitation and incentives to local and foreign investors. He stressed holding different exhibitions on both sides as Algeria was the center of tourism and other economic activities, and the Pakistani business community should benefit. There was an exemption for five to ten years in the fees and taxes for the investors at industrial zones, along with guarantees to the investors, he said adding that Algerian Government had taken various initiatives needed to encourage local and foreign investment. Similarly, he added, he would like to advise the Algerian business community to explore Pakistan's potential market and economy. He hoped for the best bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the coming days. He showed his confidence that signing of MoU between FPCCI and ACCI for setting JBC would benefit both countries—further strengthening economic cooperation and partnerships between the two business communities. Meanwhile, he praised the role of FPCCI, the apex trade body of Pakistan, in promoting bilateral trade and cooperation. "I hope, two institutions of brotherly countries shall play a vital role in boosting trade and economic cooperation," he reaffirmed, adding that both the countries were continuously working on promoting cooperation. He noted that there was big potential for bilateral trade and economic cooperation. —APP

ECC gives
go ahead to
sugar exports

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet, here on Thursday, approved a summary regarding the export of sugar during the fiscal year 2022-23 and allowed its exports of up to 100,000 metric tons (MT). The summary was moved by Ministry of National Food Security and Research before ECC. The meeting which was presided over by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, said a press statement issued by the finance ministry. The cabinet committee further decided that the ECC would review the situation on fortnightly basis, while the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) committed that the existing price of sugar would not increase in the domestic market at least till January 31st, 2023. The committee also approved the technical supplementary grants including Rs. 7 million in favor of the Ministry of Climate Change and Rs. 743.57 million in favor of the Ministry of Housing and Works for the execution of its development schemes. Among others, the meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar; Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema; Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr. Ayesha Ghous Pasha; Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik; SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha; Coordinator to PM on Commerce and Industry Rana Ihsan Afzal; Coordinator to PM on Economy Bilal Azhar Kiyani; federal secretaries, senior officers and office bearers of PSMA, the statement added.

Rich tribute
paid to S.M.
Muneer

KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi on Thursday organized a condolence meeting in the memories of famous businessman S.M. Muneer (Bhai jaan) in Auditorium-II here. President Artistic Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah, business leaders Khalid Tawab, Ahmed Chinoy and a large number of the business community participated. Ahmed Shah said that S.M.Muniir's passing away is very sad and a big tragedy, who always taught brotherhood. We have to take his mission forward, he said. He said that today not only from Karachi to Khyber, but his loved ones all over the world are in grief.—APP

EU legal advisor
backs UEFA in battle
with Super League

LUXEMBOURG: The European Court of Justice's top legal advisor said on Thursday that football governing bodies UEFA and FIFA had acted within the law when they threatened to expel clubs or players who joined a proposed Super League. The opinion of Advocate General Athanasios Rantos is not binding on the court, which is examining a complaint from the company that planned to run the new league, but it will be influential and taken as a sign of the direction the case is taking. "EU competition rules do not prohibit FIFA, UEFA, their member federations or their national leagues from issuing threats of sanctions against clubs affiliated to those federations when those clubs participate in a project to set up a new competition," he wrote. The court's final decision is not expected until early next year, but the decision will be a relief for the world's biggest football associations and the existing national European leagues wary of allowing some of their richest clubs to break away. The legal opinion was immediately welcomed by FIFA and the Spanish La Liga as well as lobby groups representing European football clubs, leagues and supporters. FIFA said it was happy Rantos had said it could "approve any new football competitions", that he had said it could impose sanctions and it "had exclusive rights to market" its international competitions. FIFA also welcomed his recognition of "the special nature of sport, including the pyramid structure, which preserves the nature of sporting merit and open competitions accessible to all, as well as the principles of promotion and relegation, competitive balance, and financial solidarity." The Spanish La Liga also welcomed the news. "La Liga, along with other European leagues, will continue to fight for European institutions to legislate and provide legal protection for the current European model of soccer," said La Liga president Javier Tebas in a statement. Fan association Football Supporters Europe said: "Last year, twelve obscenely wealthy clubs tried to destroy European football by creating a closed breakaway league. They failed because fans across the continent — including their own — stood in solidarity against their plans." —APP

SAR signs 20-
year contract
with ARASCO

RIYADH: The Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) has signed a 20-year contract with ARASCO, which is one of the largest animal feed producers in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, to transport grain by SAR East network from King Abdulaziz Port in Dammam to ARASCO's plant in Al-Kharj. The contract was signed by CEO of Saudi Arabia Railway (SAR) Dr. Bashar Al Malik and CEO of ARASCO Naseer A. Abanmi. The contract includes the transportation of 850,000 tons of ARASCO grain by SAR network to Al-Kharj annually. Nasser Abanomy expressed his happiness with this strategic partnership with SAR saying: "It is important for the company's products, especially grain, to be readily available as we are committed to provide our customers with high quality products. This partnership will lead to increasing our products amounts in both local and regional markets, increasing competitiveness, and contributing to achieving our future objectives." Dr. Bashar Al Malik commented: "This contract reflects the level of the national partnerships we have reached to achieve the objectives of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, the National Transport and Logistics Strategy, and the National Strategy for Industry. We aim to enhance food security and guarantee that important commodities are accessed by consumers. This partnership will contribute to reducing carbon emissions in the Kingdom, which serves the objectives of the Saudi Green Initiative. More than 30,000 trucks will be displaced from the road which will have an impact on enhancing traffic safety rates and improving road infrastructure. For SAR, it is a new opportunity to expand and increase the company's revenue sources." Al Malik added, Saudi Arabia Railways had inaugurated, in October, the railway project linking the north and east networks and the internal railway network project in the Jubail Industrial City.—Agencies

Briefs

Shallow 6.2 magnitude earthquake jolts Taiwan

TAIPEI: A 6.2-magnitude earthquake struck off Taiwan's eastern coast on Thursday and was followed by multiple lighter aftershocks, the island's weather bureau said, with shaking felt in the capital Taipei. The quake hit just after midday (0400 GMT) about 30 kilometres (19 miles) off the coast of Hualien County at a shallow depth of six kilometres. The US Geological Survey reported a lower 5.9-magnitude reading and a depth of 12 kilometres. The national fire agency said six hikers who were climbing Yushan, the island's highest mountain, suffered minor injuries when they were hit by falling rocks during the quake. "The earthquake was felt all over Taiwan because it's very shallow," Chen Kuochang, head of the weather bureau's seismological centre, told reporters. "There have been eight aftershocks so far and we expect more aftershocks in the next three days." Taiwan's subway and railway authorities both said on Thursday trains were temporarily running at reduced speed but services had not been halted. There have been 12 quakes over 6.0 magnitude this year, according to the centre, four times the average 2.8 a year, and the second highest since 1999. A 7.6-magnitude quake in September 1999 killed around 2,400 people, the deadliest natural disaster in the island's history. - APP

Pakistan's foreign reserves drop \$15m

MONITORING DESK
KARACHI: Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) plunged to \$6.7 billion, official data showed Thursday, as the country struggles to meet external financing needs. In a statement, the central bank said the foreign currency reserves held by the SBP were recorded at \$6,700 million as of December 9, down \$15 million compared with \$6,714.9 on December 2. The drop means the reserves have fallen further from last week's barely one month of import cover, even as it battles decades of high inflation and scrambles to secure International Monetary Fund (IMF) funds. Overall liquid foreign currency reserves held by the country - including net reserves held by banks other than the SBP - stood at \$12,570.2 million. Net reserves held by banks amounted to \$5,870.2 million. The central bank cited no reason for this as "reserves did not record any major change during the week."

Arshad's case JIT records statements of PIMS team

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probing journalist Arshad Sharif's murder on Thursday recorded the statements of PIMS medical team. Sources privy to the matter said the medical team handed over the photographs taken during autopsy of Arshad Sharif to the inquiry team. While the JIT has also penned a letter to the fact-finding committee to bring back the belongings of the slain journalist from Kenya. Meanwhile, the Kenyan authorities have assured the Pakistani team investigating journalist Arshad Sharif's assassination of cooperation. The assurance has been held out after the investigation team received the visas of Kenya, sources said, adding that the team led by DIG O.S Ahmed would travel to Nairobi on Dec 17 (Saturday). The investigation team, they said, was in communication with the Kenyan officials with the help of Pakistan mission in that country. The official probe team would try to get fresh evidence from the Nairobi police chief to reach conclusion.

UN: Funds for flood-hit Pak to run out in weeks

"It is deeply worrying as other emergency responses around the world get a far higher percentage of response and we're not getting that financing here," Harnais added

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The United Nations on Thursday said emergency food aid for devastated flood-hit communities in Pakistan would run out in January after a funding appeal received only a third of its target. The country was lashed by unprecedented monsoon rains over the summer that put a third of the country underwater, damaged two million homes and killed more than 1,700 people. "It is a big concern for us to ensure food security in the coming days and weeks for the people affected by rains," UN Resident Coordinator for Pakistan Julien Harnais told a press conference in Islamabad. The UN had appealed for more than \$816 million but said its agencies and other NGOs have only received \$262 million from international donors. "It is deeply worrying as other emergency responses



around the world get a far higher percentage of response and we're not getting that financing here," Harnais added. The UN's World Food Programme will run out of funds for

Pakistan on January 15, said the director of its mission in the country Chris Kaye. "We have a major and frankly, I think, very serious crisis ahead of us as we go into 2023 unless we get the required support," he added. The number of people in need of life-saving food assistance will grow from the four million previously identified to 5.1 million during the winter, said Kaye. Between eight million and nine million have been pushed below the poverty line by the floods. The monsoon washed away vast tracts of crops, with many already impoverished families losing their livelihoods. While most of the floodwater has receded, some homes remain submerged, leaving families living on elevated roads or in displacement camps. Some people have been pushed into child labour, child marriage, or trafficking, the UN said. Pakistan places highly in the ranking of nations vulnerable to extreme weather caused by climate change but is responsible for less than one percent of global greenhouse gases.

Pakistan-ADB sign five agreements worth \$775m

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan and Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed five Financing Agreements of US\$ 775 million to support recovery and reconstruction efforts in the flood-affected areas of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. The government has also signed financing agreement with ADB as well as to train the workers in the Punjab province, said a press release issued here Thursday. These projects will support reconstruction and rehabilitation of irrigation and drainage structures, flood risk and on-farm water management, as well as improving power and transport infrastructure in the flood-affected provinces. The signed agreements also include a project to improve access to quality employment for skilled workers in Punjab. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs witnessed the signing of five Financing Agreements amounting to US\$ 775 million between Economic Affairs Division (EAD) and ADB. Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary, EAD and Asad Aleem, Deputy Country Director, ADB signed the five financing agreements. The financing agreements include US\$ 475 million concessional loan Emergency Flood Assistance Project to support recovery and reconstruction efforts in Pakistan following this year's devastating floods and to strengthen the country's disaster and climate resilience. - APP



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi calls on President Dr. Arif Alvi. - DNA

President Arif Alvi meets Chief Minister Punjab

LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi met Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi at the CM Office, here on Thursday. Matters of mutual interest, overall economic and political situation of the country were discussed during the meeting. The chief minister briefed the president about the ongoing development projects in the province, and apprised him about the relief and rehabilitation activities under way in the flood-hit areas. The president said that political tolerance and unity was a demand of the country people, and a need of the hour, adding that sincere efforts were being made to overcome challenges facing the country. He said that decisions have to be made in difficult circumstances, as nothing was final in politics. He appreciated the Punjab chief minister, saying that he was a mature politician and had a sound grip on political issues. Former federal minister Moonis Elahi and Member National Assembly (MNA) Husain Elahi were also present. - APP

PRCS distributes assistive devices among PWDs

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), in collaboration with the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS), distributed wheelchairs, crutches, and walkers among 50 disabled persons in a ceremony held here on Thursday to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The day was marked with the pledge that every individual should play his part to make persons with disabilities (PWDs) useful citizens of society. Turkish Ambassador Dr Mehmet was the chief guest on the occasion while officials of the PRCS were also present on the occasion. In his welcoming address, PRCS Chairman

Sardar Shahid Ahmad Laghari said the Red Crescent has always taken initiatives to protect PWDs and make them useful citizens of the country. Highlighting the importance and usefulness of the day, the chairman said, "It is important to be aware of the problems and needs of PWDs to devise strategies for their welfare." Addressing the ceremony, Ambassador Dr Mehmet Pacaci said PWDs are part of our society and it is our social and religious responsibility to protect their rights and bring them into the mainstream. Describing the relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye, the Ambassador said the two countries always supported each other in the testing times and these ties are getting stronger with every passing day. On the occasion, various activities including wheelchair races, and badminton competitions were also organized for PWDs, and prizes were distributed among the winners. Turkish Ambassador and Chairman PRCS, at the outset, also inaugurated a new building of the Youth and Volunteers Department. In the end, gifts and shields were distributed among the volunteers and disabled people who showed outstanding performance in the field. - APP

Pak, Azerbaijan to expand co-op in social protection programs

Faisal Karim Kundi said that Pakistan was serious in expanding bilateral trade with Azerbaijan. Speaking on the occasion, the ambassador said that Azerbaijan too was eager to expedite its planning for various projects with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan will hold a meeting of officials of both the countries for sharing of experiences and lessons learned regarding social protection programs. This was agreed during a meeting between the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi and Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov. The ambassador

was accompanied by Deputy Head of Mission, Tamerlan Khalilov. Speaking on the occasion, Faisal Karim Kundi apprised the ambassador about the different interventions of Benazir Income Support Program and the recent distribution of 70 billion rupees among flood affected people in Pakistan. Faisal Karim Kundi and Khazar Farhadov agreed to hold a meeting of officials of Pakistan and Azerbaijan for sharing the experiences and lessons learned regarding social protection programs of both the countries. Faisal Karim Kundi said that Pakistan was serious in expanding bilateral trade with Azerbaijan. Speaking on the occasion, the ambassador said that Azerbaijan too was eager to expedite its planning for various projects with Pakistan. The markets of Azerbaijan had a huge potential for Pakistani products, he added. - APP

Sindh hands over Azam Swati to ICT police

DNA
ISLAMABAD: PTI senior leader Senator Azam Swati has been brought from Sukkur to Islamabad in a special plane as a court extended his judicial remand for another 14 days. SP Islamabad Police Rukhsar Mehdi took Senator Azam Swati with him in police vehicle. Meanwhile, a court extended Azam Swati's judicial remand for another 14 days. The PTI leader marked his attendance via video link. Earlier, the Sindh High Court (SHC) was told Thursday that cases against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Azam Swati had been quashed across the province and he had

been sent to Islamabad. The Sindh prosecutor general told the court that all the cases against Azam Swati had been categorised as C class. "Not only Karachi, but the cases against Azam Swati have been quashed across the province, and he has been sent to Islamabad. The petitions are now ineffective," he added. "The Sindh inspector general of police (IGP) has submitted the report. He gave special attention to the issue in personal capacity. We are grateful to him for that," he stated. The Sindh IGP also appeared before the court and apologised for the bitterness during the last hearing. On the other hand, a court in Islamabad ordered Thursday to produce Azam Swati at 12pm in controversial tweet case. Judicial Magistrate Muhammad Shabbir heard the case, and Dr Babar Awan appeared in the court on behalf of Azam Swati. "In your case, the challan has not been presented yet," the court said to the lawyer for Azam Swati. "We were asked for three days that there will be arguments on the bail application, and then the judge was transferred," the lawyer told the court. "Two high courts of the country set a high precedent for the rule of law and disposed of all the cases [against Azam Swati]," he added.

Erdogan offers Syria-Türkiye-Russia trilateral meeting

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday that he has suggested to Russian President Vladimir Putin for a trilateral meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and trilateral steps on security issues. "As of now, we want to take a step as Syria-Türkiye-Russia trio," Erdogan told reporters during his flight back from Turkmenistan when asked about Türkiye's security concerns in northern Syria. "For the discussions on this issue, first the intelligence organizations, then the defense ministers, and then foreign ministers of the parties should meet," the state-run TRT broadcaster quoted the president as saying. "Let's meet as leaders after their talks. I offered this to Mr. Putin. He viewed it positively," Erdogan added. Erdogan and Assad have not met since the outbreak of a civil war in Syria in 2011, as Türkiye has backed Syrian rebels politically and militarily during the 11-year crisis. In the past few months, however, the Turkish president has said he does not rule out a meeting with the Syrian president after more than a decade

of severed ties between the two countries. On the flight back to Türkiye, Erdogan also urged a quick solution to what he called "a terror threat" posed by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) from Syrian territory to Türkiye. The 2019 Sochi deal with Russia envisages the withdrawal of YPG fighters to 30 km south of Türkiye's border with Syria, he said, adding his country will "take every step" to establish the "safety corridor." Türkiye carried out an aerial operation against the YPG in northern Syria and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq on Nov. 20, a week after a bomb explosion in Türkiye's largest city Istanbul killed six and injured 81. Türkiye will launch a ground operation into northern Syria "at the most convenient time" to build a security strip. Erdogan has vowed several times in the past weeks. The PKK, listed as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the United States and the European Union, has been rebelling against the Turkish government for more than three decades. - APP

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