



# Islamabad POST

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## PM Shehbaz calls for urgent support UN urges massive response for Pak flood recovery

French President Macron, Turkish President Erodgan and EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen stress immediate measures

DNA

GENEVA: The UN chief called Monday for "massive investments" to help Pakistan recover from last year's devastating floods, saying it was "doubly victimised" by climate change and a "morally bankrupt global financial system". "No country deserves to endure what happened to Pakistan," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told an international conference in Geneva, which is seeking billions of dollars to support recovery from the disaster. Guterres opened the one-day event appealing to the world to help Pakistan bounce

### Around \$10 billion Pak flood aid pledges

NEWS DESK

GENEVA: Pakistan Monday secured pledges well over a targetted \$8 billion in flood aid as it scrambles to mobilise funds to rehabilitate the devastated 33 million population and repair damages worth billions. The cash-strapped nation clinched total pledges of over \$10 billion at the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan in Geneva after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif launched an \$8 billion flood aid appeal.

- Islamic Development Bank – \$4.2 billion
  - World Bank – \$2 billion
  - Asian Development Bank – \$1.5 billion
  - European Union – €500 million
  - France – \$345 million
  - China – \$100 million
  - USAID – \$100 million
  - Germany – €88 million
  - Japan – \$77 million
- Breakdown of pledges received at plenary session II:**
- Saudi Arabia – \$1 billion
  - Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank – \$1 billion
  - UK – £9 million

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GENEVA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres addressing a joint press stakeout after the International Conference on Resilient Pakistan in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland. – DNA

**Pakistan beat New Zealand in 1st ODI**  
Fakhar, Babar, and Rizwan scored half-centuries

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistan beat New Zealand by six wickets in the opening ODI of the three-match series at the National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi on Monday. Opting to bowl first, Pakistan restricted New Zealand to 255 runs before chasing down the target 48.1 in overs. Fakhar Zaman, Babar Azam, and Mohammad Rizwan scored a half-century each to help Pakistan chase down the target. Earlier, Naseem Shah claimed his second wicket in ODI cricket as New Zealand set Pakistan a target of 256 runs. The visitors were restricted to 255-9 in 50 overs in Karachi after Shah bagged figures of 5-57 in 10 overs. Mohammad Rizwan was on song with the bat as he fought hard for Pakistan in first ODI against New Zealand. Set to chase 256 runs, Pakistan was supported by Rizwan after well-set Fakhar Zaman and Babar Azam departed. He scored seventh ODI fifty to set a perfect tone for Pakistan in run-chase. The wicket-keeper batter was highly praised for his performance.

**Will take vote of confidence at will, PTI says**  
CM reiterates support for Imran Khan

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Asad Umar said on Monday the Punjab Chief Minister's vote of confidence will be taken at will. Addressing the media, Mr Umar went on to say the PTI lawmakers were receiving calls, but there was no impact on them. Mr Umar lashed out at the coalition government for causing an uproar by having a number game in the Punjab Assembly. Mr Umar, recalling the importance of the elections, stated that the time had come to hold immediate snap elections in the country in order to get the country out of its difficulties. Mr Umar lambasted the coalition government, claiming that

**West should stop illicit cashflow from poor states: Imran**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Imran Khan has called upon the developed countries to play role in curbing the money-laundering from the third world. In order to relieve the developing countries from challenges like poverty and deprivation, it is mandatory that the developed countries play their

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### Wheat from Russia reaches Karachi

A total of 7.5 million tonnes of wheat is being imported at the govt level and by March 30

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The first batch of wheat imported from Russia by the incumbent government arrived in Karachi on Monday. Ministry of Food Security officials announced that two ships arrived in the metropolis and that another 450,000 tonnes of wheat from

Russia would reach Pakistan through Gwadar. A total of 7.5 million tonnes of wheat is being imported at the government level and by March 30 all the wheat shipments from Russia will have reached the country. Meanwhile, ships carrying imported wheat from other countries also reached Karachi port.

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### Briefs

**Mariyum commends pledges of assistance**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the first plenary session of the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan had culminated in the generous outpouring of pledges from the international community totalling of \$8.57 billion to carry out rebuilding and reconstruction efforts in the flood-ravaged Pakistan. "EU pledged \$93 million, Germany \$88 million, China \$100 million, IsDB (Islamic Development Bank) \$4.2 Billion, WB (World Bank) \$2 billion, Japan \$77 million, ADB (Asian Development Bank) \$1.5 billion, USAID \$100 million, France \$345 million, total \$8.57 billion, in line with collaborative vision of coalition of willing," she said in a series of tweets.

**Fawad slams massive spending on Geneva visit**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry fired broadside at the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the cabinet for spending huge amount on their flopped trip to Geneva to participate in donor conference since the entire conference was held via video link, as no important leader participated in the conference. Fawad Chaudhry, in a statement on Monday, said that in the donor conference, France, the host, gave \$ 10 million but not a single important leader participated in the conference. He stated that if the entire conference was to be held through video link, why was there a need to go to Geneva?

### Pak, Saudi Arabia agree to bolster cooperation

The Saudi Crown Prince received the Pakistani Army Chief in his royal tent in Al Ula

DNA

ISLAMABAD: MPakistan and Saudi Arabia have agreed to bolster military-to-military and defence cooperation between the two countries. The agreement reached during a meeting between Chief of the Army Staff General Asim Munir with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The Saudi Crown Prince received the Pakistani Army Chief in his royal tent in Al Ula and congratulated him on becoming the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan Army. The meeting discussed ways to develop bilateral relations in addition to issues of mutual interest and both the leaders agreed to further cement the relationship. Senior Saudi and Pakistani officials also attended the meeting. Earlier, General Asim Munir had held talks with Saudi defence minister on his first official trip to the Gulf kingdom. General Munir had discussed military cooperation with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz in the capital Riyadh on Thursday last, according to the Saudi Press Agency.



General Asim Munir, who took charge in November, has followed in the footsteps of his predecessors in visiting Saudi Arabia – a close defence and economically – on his maiden overseas trip. He will also visit the United Arab Emirates during the nearly one-week trip. General Asim Munir also visited Majid Al-Haram in Makkah where the doors of the Holy Kaaba were exclusively opened for him. In pictures and video clips posted on social media on Sunday, the army chief could be seen walking out of the Holy Kaaba at the Grand Mosque in Makkah.

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## Finland, Pak have every reason to solidify cooperation

According to the PCG in Finland there are about 1,000 Pakistani students studying in Finland

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

**Ambassador of Finland to Pakistan Hannu Ripatti talked exclusively to Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline magazine and Diplomatic News Agency (DNA). Ambassador Ripatti explained closure of the Finnish embassy back in 2012. He also talked about business potential of Pakistan and Finland. Here are excerpts from his interview.**

ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

Finland closed the embassy about 10 years ago and the reason for closing was for finances basically after the so-called dot com crisis. At the same time security cost was also a reason not just Islamabad but in other countries as well. We closed 10 missions and Islamabad was among them. Our then foreign minister had said that these are bad decisions but you have to do it when running short of money. We have reopened Manila, Islamabad and Doha missions and the only reason Doha was done before Islamabad was the football world cup so we wanted to have a resident consul there before the start of the mega event. At this moment we are at the temporary location at the Serena Business Complex but the idea is that in about a year's time we will have the old premises and start routine operations including the issuing of visas. For issuing visas we have to put in place certain mechanisms including establishment of a secure telecommunication system. Then, arrangements will have to be made to conduct interviews of the visa seekers. So I think we shall be able to put our house in order by October 2023. For the

moment the Dutch embassy in Islamabad is taking care of our visas for 90 days. However the big problems are for the students because they need longer term visas for which applications have to be forwarded to Abu Dhabi which takes time. That is why we want to bring our visa system here in Pakistan in order to not only cater to the needs of the students but the permanent residency seekers as well. I am pleased to share with you that Pakistani students are keen to pursue their studies especially in the field of IT and Forestry. According to the Pakistani Council General in Finland there are about 1,000 Pakistani students studying in Finland. Pakistan does not have an embassy in Finland and the mission in Sweden takes care of Finland as well. Things would become much easier if Pakistan opens an embassy in Finland.

ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

As you know the trade is done by the companies and the companies need to have a good product so that people could buy those products. Then ostensibly they need to have good connections as well. We can

help them get in touch with relevant people, but the most important thing is to get the right contact to make the trade. We have several ways of helping them. We have Fin Partnership which can facilitate and help imports and exports on both ways. The Business Council has promised to host a business summit here in Pakistan. This has been dormant during the time of the Covid pandemic and there were no big meetings during that time. We rely very much on the people who know more about the trade such as the Fin Partnership and the business council. We are trying to make sure that this kind of thing does take place periodically. I plan to visit various chambers of commerce and industries. I have already visited Lahore. Once our place is ready then of course we will be able to do such activities in a planned and much better manner.

ON CULTURAL RELATIONS

We plan to promote cultural linkages as well. You are right, in the past the Finnish embassy used to host cultural events on regular basis and it is my plan as well to revive that tradition. Another area where we can have enhanced cooperation happens to be the hospi-

ality industry. There is a possibility that the Pakistani students seeking studies in the hospitality industry can go to Finland for this purpose. In Kuopio we do have institutions that have been imparting training and higher education in hotel management etc. If the Pakistani students have a diploma in this field they can pursue further studies in Finland. Student visa allows students to work in Finland but at a limited scale. Studying in Finland is not an expensive thing as compared with the US or other countries. We do not have a scholarship program for students but there are some specific foundations that offer scholarships. The students can log on to specific websites and get further information about these foundations and facilities they offer. As I said, education in the Finnish institutions is not very expensive. There are certain facilities such as subsidized food, sporting facilities etc available at extremely nominal charges. This system is still in vogue in most of the institutions.

PAK, FINLAND BUSINESS COUNCIL

The business council is very much there. It has meetings as well. I met with one of the co-directors of the council and discussed with him as to how we can give impetus to the activities of the Business Council. We need to expand the ambit and base of the council with a view to enlarging its scope and utility. That is how a business council should work or such councils work everywhere. One way of promoting trade and economic activity between the two countries is holding business summits. We are already onto it and hopefully shall be able to do it sooner rather than later. As you know Finland is a country of five and half million people so comparing with Pakistan it may be a small country however the advantage which the Pakistani businessmen have is that they can reach out to the European Union markets through Finland. A product when registered in any of the EU member countries can be marketed in all the EU member states.



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# Peshawar BRT to increase number of buses, routes

Apart from ER-12 these new routes include a feeder route from Mall of Hayatabad to Phase 6 terminal via phase 1 (DR-11), Chamkani to Malik Saad Shaheed through Ring Road (DR-4B), a suburban express route from Pabbi to Malik Saad Shaheed via Chamkani (SER -13) and Regi Model Town to Tehkal Paayan (DR-14

PESHAWAR: The daily ridership figure for Zu Peshawar, the first-of-its-kind third generation BRT System in Pakistan, has crossed the figure of 280,000. During the past couple of weeks, the number of passengers has been constantly increasing and to tackle the increasing demand, TransPeshawar is going to be operationalize new buses along with a new express route on Tuesday, January 10, says a press release issued here on Monday. In addition, SR-08 (from Gulbahar Chowk to Mall of Hayatabad) and ER-10 (from Hospital Chowk to Kohat Adda), where were previously closed on weekends due to a lesser number of passengers, will now stay operational on Saturday and Sunday too. Sadaf Kamil, spokesperson for TransPeshawar in the press release

mentioned that in consideration of the growing popularity of the system and the rising number of passengers, 62 new buses have already been acquired and on Tuesday, January 10, these buses will become operational. "Initially 20 to 25 new buses will start running on the current routes as well as on a new express route (ER-12) from Shah Alam to Mall of Hayatabad", she added. "Due to the change in timings for educational institutes in winters, which are now the same as office timings, the system is witnessing unprecedented passenger flow, during the morning peak hours. In addition, the residents of Peshawar have also been using the service more often because of unavailability of CNG. The new Express Route (ER 12) will operate from Shah

Alam to Mall of Hayatabad and will have a total of 11 stops including Shah Alam Bridge, Sewan, Bakshu Bridge, Lande Sarak, Shaheed Tehseen Chowk, Charsadda Adda, Bacha Khan Chowk, Khyber Bazar, Saddar, Peshawar University and Mall of Hayatabad. This is going to be the first of five new routes which TransPeshawar had announced at the end of year 2022. Apart from ER-12 these new routes include a feeder route from Mall of Hayatabad to Phase 6 terminal via phase 1 (DR-11), Chamkani to Malik Saad Shaheed through Ring Road (DR-4B), a suburban express route from Pabbi to Malik Saad Shaheed via Chamkani (SER -13) and Regi Model Town to Tehkal Paayan (DR-14).—APP



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Senate, Muhammad Qasim Samad Khan exchanging views with Sanin Lukovac, Counselor/DHM Bosnia and Herzegovina. —DNA

## Attock jail turns into ground for drug dealers

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: The outcome of the inquiry proceedings against Attock Jail authorities initiated on the report of Intelligence Centre, Home Department Punjab could not be made public keeping the entire official exercise under the red carpet of bureaucratic snagson the influence of some hidden hands. The investigative report of Provincial Intelligence Centre, Home Department of Punjab, which was sent to Inspector General Prisons Punjab, the Chief Secretary Punjab, Additional Secretary of Law Punjab and other high ups of the Punjab Province in October 2022 had recommended a thorough probe into the corrupt practices by an officer of Additional Secretary but further inquiry proceedings were kept pending on the pressure of some influential hidden hands till to date, high placed sources on the condition of anonymity told. The Provincial Intelligence Centre, Home Department of Punjab, report disclosed that complaints of unbridled corruption and malpractices were received in District Jail Attock in connivance with jail officers and staffers. The report of Provincial Intelligence Unit said that

torture, violence, drugs and the use of drugs have become a common feature in the jail under the alleged patronage of the jail administration. "Powerful mafias of drug peddlers have deep roots inside the jail with the blessing of jail administration and are minting money with impunity through selling contraband drugs. They also pay their due share to the jail management. Report further revealed some prisoners detained in jail on the charges of drug peddling, started heinous businesses, supplying drugs to addicts with the alleged backing of jail officials. Thus, not only the drugs are being supplied to hardened addicts but the new jail inmates also become addicts by joining hands with old addicts," the report said. It said, "The prisoners are allowed to get food of their choice from outside of the jail after paying a bribe to the jail staff. Likewise, the medicine being supplied in the jail dispensary don't cater for the needs of prisoners. The rich/affluent prisoners manage to get themselves admitted to movement hospitals outside the jails after greasing the palms of jail doctors and offering hefty bribes to the jail officials. The more money you pay, the better you get facilities and care in the jail." The report further said, "Meetings between prisoners and

their family members have become a lucrative business for jail staffers, as they are harvesting income running into millions of rupees every month through this activity. The visitor has to pay Rs500 to Rs2,000 as a bribe to the jail staff to meet their inmate. The affluent visitors can meet his relative (prisoner) in the office of a concerned responsible officers. Whenever some eatables, food items or commodities are given to them for their delivery to the jail inmates, these corrupt staffers grab their share and later deliver a small quantity of the commodity to jail inmates. If someone complains about this rogue act with jail authorities then the jail inmates are subjected to violence and merciless thrashing." The report also indicated that "some jail staffers are also indulged into acts of sexual harassment and rape with female visitors of the inmates." "This quite disturbing and can lead to a big scandal bringing a bad name to the government of Punjab," the report said, urging the high-ups for further necessary action. The report recommended that "There is a need to conduct an inquiry into the affairs of District Jail Attock by a high-powered inquiry committee headed by an upright and honest officer to the rank of an additional secretary.

## Decisive steps taken to boost economy

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that decisive steps were being taken to stabilize the economy of the region including encouragement of private sector to invest in small industries and other sectors. He expressed these views while addressing a press conference today. "Besides getting the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir scheduled, 49% of its shares will be given to the business community", the PM said adding that the AJ&K Bank has earned a profit of 950 million rupees in addition to taxation and salaries during his government's period. He said that Skill University would be established to make the youth skillful." Institutions on the lines of SECP and NEPR will be established within Azad Kashmir", he said.—APP

## CM Mahmood insists on construction of roads

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has directed to expedite the construction work on approach roads to tourist destinations and the renovation/preservation of various archaeological sites in the province adding that establishment of tourism as an industry will not only ensure revenue generation but will also provide livelihood opportunities to local people. The Chief Minister maintained that he is personally monitoring the development projects of tourism sector and directed the construction of walking tracks on need basis to ensure access to tourist destinations. Chairing a progress review meeting on rehabilitation of archaeological sites and construction of tourism sector roads, the Chief Minister clarified that huge resources have been invested during the previous four years

to attract national and international tourists and accelerate tourism activities in the province. Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Finance Ikramullah, Secretary Planning & Development Shah Mahmood, Secretary Tourism Tahir Orakzai, Managing Director Pakhtunkhwa Highways Authority, DG KPCTA and other concerned officials attended the meeting. The participants of the meeting were informed that the rehabilitation and remodeling of 22 km long Mankyal Road and 24 km long Thandiani Road is in progress under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism Development Project (KITE) which will be completed by October 2024 at a cost of Rs 3.4 and Rs 2.5 billion respectively. Moreover, under the Provincial Annual Development Program, in Hazara Division, 38% of the physical work is complete on 18 km long Mandi Mali Road, 54%

on 10 km Shogran Road, 30% on 9 km Ghanool Paprang Road, 41% on 15 km Manoor valley Road and 31% physical progress has been made on 12 km long Nawazabad to Mundi road. These projects will be completed this year at a cost of 4.6 billion rupees. Similarly, in Malakand Division, under the ADP, 41% physical progress has been made on 14 km long Kafir Banda Road, 61% on 4.5 km Burj Banda Road, 40% on 7 km Dag Sar Charoona Road, 50 % on 9 Km Chail Beshigram Road, 29% on 4 km Bela Beshigram Road, 36% on 4 km Areen Daral Road, 35% on 6 km Madian Bishigram Road, 19 % on 3 km Guder Lake Road, 23 % on 3 km Anakar Road, and 49 % physical progress has been made on 8 km long Marghuzar to Elum Road. These projects will be completed this year at a cost of Rs 4.8 billion. The meeting was also told that steps are being taken to promote religious.

## Pakistan's economy was destroyed by Imran's govt

DNA

ABBOTTABAD: President of the Women's Wing of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Hazara Division and social worker, Dr Shaista Jadoon, on Monday said Pakistan's economy was destroyed by the naive and corrupt government that ruled the country for about four years under the incompetent leadership of Imran Niazi. Talking to the media here, she also congratulated Maryam Nawaz Sharif on becoming the chief organizer and senior vice president of PML-N. Dr Shaista said Imran Niazi and PTI ministers made new assets worth trillions of rupees, which brought about the worst corruption in history and bankrupted the country's economy. She added that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) took over the government when the country was passing through difficult times and the economic decisions they took afterwards were aimed at reviving the economy and in fact, they helped a great deal in that regard.

She said the incumbent coalition government was dealing with the crises created by Imran Niazi and it had been employing all possible measures to control inflation.

## PTI to hold seminar on terrorism upsurge, economic collapse

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In what appears to be a smart and timely move, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) decided to hold a national seminar in the federal capital today (Tuesday) against the alarming upsurge in terrorism in the country, a widespread lawlessness in the ex-FATA region and fast dwindling economic situation of the country. The PTI Chairman Imran Khan would be the keynote speaker in the seminar, which would be attended by allied reli-

gious and political parties' leadership, elders from terrorism-affected areas and people from various walks of life. PTI decided to raise effective voice for the safety and security of people's lives and property. The seminar would also be addressed by experts on terrorism and Pak-Afghan affairs. Media representatives would be specially invited to the seminar. PTI central leader Murad Saeed was tasked to make all necessary arrangements for the national seminar. During the seminar, the speakers would highlight the major causes of terrorism, besides shedding

light on reasons of the success of PTI government in ensuring peace and stability in the country in its tenure. They would also discuss in detail the performance of the PDM government that not only wrecked the booming economy but also destroyed the hard-won peace in the country in short span of few months rule. During the seminar, the imported government's failed foreign and Afghan policies would be highlighted, besides analyzing the strategy to protect Pakistan from the negative implications of the fast changing situation in Afghanistan threadbare.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif to participate in the meeting of the Parliamentary Party of Muslim-N in the Punjab Assembly. —APP

## Hindi classical music has roots in Hindu Kush's Pashtoon belt: Dr Rashid

PESHAWAR: Dr Rashid Ahmad Khan, the first ever PhD scholar on Pashto music, has claimed that Hindi classical music had its origin in the Pashtoon belt of the Hindu Kush region the folk melody of which is as old as the Gandhara civilization, dating back to 1500 BC. While summarizing the finding of his 8-year research work on "Critical Analysis of Pashto Music", Dr Rashid, who is also a known singer and poet, observed that the breeze wafting above the Hindu Kush mountains region became melodious rhymes flowing down to the flat region between river Amu and river Abasind. After successfully defending his PhD thesis on December 15, 2022, at Pashto Department of Peshawar University, Dr

Rashid became the first-ever PhD scholar of Pashto Music in Pakistan and Afghanistan as well. The research and critical thesis was the maiden attempt to explore Pashto music and to define the nature of the variations between its different traditions, Rashid told APP in an interview. Referring to his claim, Dr Rashid said the origin of Indian classical music dated back to the sacred Vedic scriptures over 3500 years ago where chants developed a system of musical notes and rhythmic cycles. "It is an agreed history fact, which was also proved in my research that the Vedic initial phrases are written in Pakhtunkhwa mountainous terrain as the holy book also has mentions of different rivers of our re-

gion like Swast for Swat, Somo Kromo for Kurram and famous Kabul river," said Rashid to substantiate his viewpoint. Mention of these locations also substantiated the viewpoint that the initial phrases of Vedic were related to areas including Hindu Kush, Nagarhar, Mardan, Swat and Peshawar valley, he reckoned. At that time the elders of the Hindu religion formed three rhymes: Odat, Anudat and Swarit which marked the beginning of Hindi classical music learning and later transformed into the very basic lesson of 'Sare Gama Pa da ni Sah', he maintained. The Hindi classical music had a very close connection with Pashto folk music which tuned finer and finer with the passage of time

and with the progress of civilization, he went on to say. In his research study, Dr Rashid also argued over the meaning of 'Gandhara' which was widely taken as 'Perfume'. According to him, the original name was 'Gandharvas' which meant 'beautiful deities' of melody, who were in heaven. The name Gandharvas later transformed into Gandhav which meant 'music' and finally became Gandhara — a place where music was played, he opined. He argued that after the arrival and spread of Buddhism in the region during the Kushan dynasty, the Hindus migrated to other parts of the sub-continent along with their religious as well as musical instruments and norms. Dr Rashid visited

different cities in Pakistan and Afghanistan and interviewed over 2,000 musicians, experts and folk artists for his research thesis on Pashto music. "I travelled to many cities and museums in KP, Baluchistan and even in Afghanistan to dig out history, eras and evolution of Pashto folk music alongside musical instruments that helped survive Pashto folk rhythmic expressions to date." "In my thesis," he said, "I have tried to introduce the five main traditions in Pashto music including the Kandahari, the Logar, the Yousafzai, and Pakitiae. I have defined the rules, modes, vocals, instruments, instrumental sounds, chords and features to elaborate the differences between these music traditions."

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JANUARY

- Jan 01 / CUBA  
Revolution Day
- Jan 01 / Palestine  
Palestine Revolution Day
- Jan 01 / Sudan  
National Day
- Jan 04 / Myanmar  
Independence Day
- Jan 06 / Iraq  
Armed Forces Day
- Jan 12 / Tanzania  
Armed Forces Day
- Jan 14 / Uzbekistan  
Armed Forces Day
- Jan 15 / Nigeria  
Armed Forces Day
- Jan 20 / Mali  
Armed Forces Day
- Jan 20 / Laos  
Armed Forces Day
- Jan 25 / Thailand  
Armed Forces Day
- Jan 26 / Australia  
National Day
- Jan 26 / India  
Republic Day



### Hotels & Restaurants

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



### Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

## President directs NHA to explain non-payment of compensation

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi while upholding the orders of Wafaqi Mohtasib has directed National Highway Authority (NHA) to explain as to why it affectedes of land acquisition obligations. The President up-even after a delay of four years. The President passed these orders in the case of Imam Baksh, Muhammad Saleh, Ali Ahmed,

Ghulam Haider, Khuda Baksh and Zahoor Ahmed (the complainants), who alleged that NHA destroyed their homes and shops during the construction of N-85 and even after their repeated request for compensation, the agency declined to meet its legal obligations. The President upheld the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib wherein NHA was directed to conduct an inquiry against the officers/officials



responsible for the inordinate delay and directed NHA to file a compliance report within 30 days of the receipt of the findings. In his decision, the President said that unfortunately, the Agency initiated the case for compensation after four years only when the affectees' launched a complaint against NHA, which, he said, was tantamount to maladministration on the part of NHA. The President observed that NHA was liable to implement the orders of the Wafaqi Mo-

htasib passed first on 8th May 2020. The President rejected NHA's representation as incompetent and non-maintainable and directed NHA to appear and explain its position in the implementation proceedings before the learned Wafaqi Mohtasib. The President further ordered the Agency to appear and explain as to why the order of the Wafaqi Mohtasib had not been complied with in the next 30 days.

## ECP disposes of plea against Ishaq Dar's Senate seat

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has disposed of a plea urging the ECP to declare vacant the Senate seat of Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. The ECP on Monday pronounced its verdict which was reserved on 26 September 2022 on the application seeking ECP order to declare Ishaq Dar's Senate seat vacant for not taking oath. The hearing of the case was held at the Election Commission in Islamabad. Ishaq Dar had returned to Pakistan from London in September 2022 and took oath as member of the Senate and finance minister.—DNA

## Operation against encroachment in govt residences

ISLAMABAD: The Estate Office, Ministry of Housing and Works has started action against encroachments and illegally constructed structures in government residences in the federal capital. "The final notices have already been issued to the residents of the government residences by the Estate office," an official in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP. The official said that the ministry has also decided to vacate government quarters from retired and relatives of late employees, who continue to occupy residences. "The purpose of the operation is to clear the government residences of encroachments," he added. He said the ministry has also sought help from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the government residences fall under the administrative control of the Estate Office.—APP

## Indonesian Envoy FPCCI discuss ways to intensify trade connectivity

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Indonesia Adam M. Tugio paid a visit to the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and had a detailed discussion with Senior Vice President FPCCI Amin Ullah Baiq to further intensify two-way trade activities for expanding bilateral economic relations. During the discussion, Ambassador Tugio underlined that business communities of both the countries need to explore sectors that can complement each other. Medical equipment, spices, garment and textile could become the important trade commodities together with traditional herbal medicines, which have a great potential as they are quite popular on both sides, he added. The envoy also underscored the importance of utilizing the current Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) as well as by working together to move towards a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Highlighting the importance of investment in ASEAN region for expansion of trade ties, the Ambassador said that Indonesia could provide opportunities for Pakistan as gateway to enter the ASEAN market. He emphasized the business community of Pakistan to participate in the upcoming "1st Pakistan - ASEAN Trade Development Conference & Pakistan Single Country Exhibition" in Jakarta, Indonesia and to interact with the business community of Indonesia and ASEAN for establishing active trade connections and linkages. Talking about future prospects of trade, Ambassador Tugio mentioned that Indonesia is aware of investment opportunities in Pakistan. In this regard, a number of Indonesian investors are in the process of signing cooperation agreements with companies in Sialkot and assured that the Embassy is ready to facilitate business to business meetings between the two sides. During the meeting, Senior Vice President of FPCCI, Mr. Amin Ullah Baiq expressed FPCCI's commitment to strengthen cooperation including exchange of delegation as well as holding business meetings with the Indonesian counterparts. He highlighted the potential investment sectors of Pakistan including IT, tourism, textile and pharmaceuticals. Ambassador Tugio expressed his gratitude to FPCCI for sharing the Chamber's perspective on Pakistan's business prospects and appreciated the important role of FPCCI in supporting the economic ties between the two brotherly nations.—DNA

## Removing Miftah was a big mistake

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Monday said the removal of former finance minister Miftah Ismail from office was a wrong decision and giving Ishaq Dollar the portfolio of the finance ministry turned out to be an even bigger blunder. Had Miftah Ismail was not removed, the IMF program would have been on track and the tranche would have been received in September last year, it said. Miftah took tough decisions to save the country and the economy would not have nosedived nor inflation would have broken all records if he was not removed, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of PEW. He said that the policies of the former finance minister would have strengthened the rupee, reduced inflation, and millions of workers would not have been unemployed due to the closure of industries. Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the majority of the local business community, foreign investors and international organizations were happy with Miftah Ismail's policies.—DNA

## RDA inflows rise to \$5.57 billion

ISLAMABAD: The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) rose to US \$7.576 billion by the end of December 2022 as compared to US \$5.436 billion by November end, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan. The data showed that the inflows of remittances during the month of December were recorded at US\$ 140 million as compared to US\$ 141 million in November and US\$ 146 million in October 2022. Roshan Digital Account (RDA) was launched by

the State Bank of Pakistan in collaboration with commercial banks operating in the country. These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan. The number of accounts registered under the programme also rose by 12,225 to 511,159 in December 2022 from 498,934 accounts in November 2022. The scheme that

received in September 2020 started a lukewarm response from overseas Pakistanis who deposited only US\$ 7 million in the opening month, however with the passage of time the interest kept on increasing as the inflow reached US\$ 40 million in October 2020 and US\$ 110 million in the subsequent month. The data showed that in Naya Pakistan Certificates, the Overseas Pakistanis invested US\$ 1.77 billion under conventional while US\$ 1.72 billion under Islamic banking.—APP

## NA speaker condemns grenade attack at Musazai's residence

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Acting Speaker Zahid Akram Durran on Monday strongly condemned the bomb attack on the residence of Member National Assembly (MNA) Nasir Khan Musazai. In a statement, the

speaker and acting speaker said the bomb attack at the residence of Nasir Khan Musazai in Peshawar was shameful and such events are aimed at sabotaging the peaceful atmosphere of the country. He thanked Allah Almighty for keeping the

MNA and family safe in the attack. He directed the law enforcement agencies to arrest and punish the accused involved in the incident. The Speaker and Acting speaker expressed their best wishes for Nasir Khan and his family.—DNA

# #KnowYourEconomy

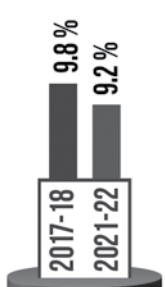
## REBUILDING PAKISTAN

Let's know ! When did Pakistan's economic decline start?

Average GDP growth rate decreased by 1.2%



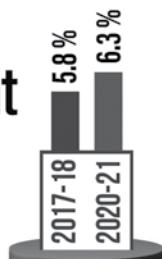
Tax revenues as percentage of GDP decreased



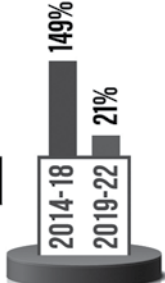
Imports increased by 30%



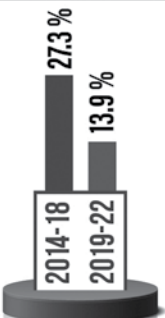
Unemployment rate increased by 0.5%



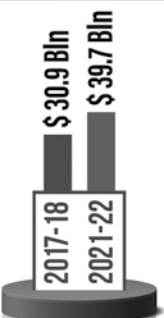
Growth rate of agricultural credit decreased by 128%



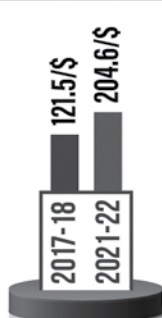
Growth rate of per capita annual income decreased by 13.4%



Trade deficit increased by 28%



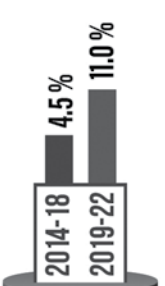
Dollar rate increased by 83 rupees per dollar



Fiscal deficit as percentage of GDP increased by 2%



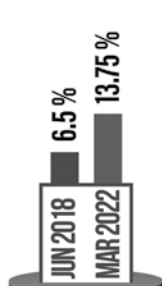
Food items inflation rate increased by 6.5%



Public Debt and Liabilities increased by 80%



Policy rate increased by 725 bps



Together we've averted default. Together we'll rebuild Pakistan.

(\*ISSUED IN PUBLIC INTEREST)



Government of Pakistan

PID(1)4256-D/22

## Briefs

**'Adequate gas supply to all consumers in Islamabad'**

ISLAMABAD: A spokesman for the Regional Office of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) on Monday said the department was 'successfully managing' to provide 'adequate gas supply' to all consumers of the federal capital territory, despite a massive increase in commodity consumption during the prevailing cold weather. Responding to a news item appearing in a section of the media about low gas pressure in some localities of Islamabad, he said a special Control Room had been established at the regional office to ensure speedy rectification of consumer complaints related to low gas pressure. "The facility is operating round-the-clock." "We have not so far received any low-pressure complaint from sector G-10/3 Islamabad," he said, assuring that the company would resolve the gas pressure-related complaints, once it received from "valued consumers." "Consumers can lodge their complaints at the Call Center at 1199 and Control Room's landlines number 051-9257774 so that the emergency team is dispatched to resolve the issue," the spokesman said. He said the company was making all-out efforts to ensure the provision of gas supply to domestic consumers, especially during meal timings. However, the spokesman advised the consumers to use alternative options for heating purposes.—APP

**PM Youth Program opens online registration**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Youth Program has opened the registration for Sports Trail Cricket and Football under Youth Sports League for men and women to promote healthy physical activities among the youth. The intended participants can register themselves through the online facility till January 30 while the on-the-spot registration facility will also be available for the players who meet the eligibility criteria. According to the eligibility criteria for participation in the talent hunt, all Pakistani including nationals from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) aged between 15-25 years on January 30, 2023, are eligible to participate in the sports league. However, the departmental players are not eligible to participate in the talent hunt. The trial locations are available across the country including the federal capital, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, AJK, and GB. In Balochistan, the trials will be held at Dera Murad Jamali, Sibbi, Turbat, Khuzdar, Uthal-Hub, Quetta and Loralai, while in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the locations will be Mardan, Bannu, Swat, Peshawar, and Hazara.—APP

**AIOU admissions to commence from Jan 15**

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will commence admissions of the Spring 2023 semester (first phase) across the country, including AJK and GB on January 15 (Sunday). According to the AIOU spokesperson, the admissions of matriculation, middle-tech, intermediate, I Com and certificate courses offered in the first phase will continue till February 21, while admissions to BS (face-to-face), MS, MPhil and PhD programs will be accepted from January 15 to February 15, 2023. Admissions in the second phase will be offered from March 1, 2023, which includes teacher training programs, associate degree (BA) and BS (ODL) programs. Prospectus and admission application forms for all the programs will be available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) on January 15. Admission to BS (face-to-face), MS/MPhil and PhD programs can only be applied via the online system, whereas admission application forms for matriculation, intermediate and I Com can be submitted manually as well as via online mode.—APP



RAWALPINDI: People queuing up to purchase subsidized flour from a delivery truck in Rawalpindi.—APP

**3rd ship carrying MT fertilizer to dock at Gwadar Port today**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Out of the two lac tons of urea fertilizer imports, the third ship carrying 31,000 metric tons of urea fertilizer is all set to dock at Gwadar Port on 10th January (Tuesday). According to Gwadar Pro Monday, the first ship carrying 32,000 metric tons berthed on Dec 29 and the second ship carrying 31,500 tons was anchored on Jan 1. All bulk cargo consignments are being processed and transported through Gwadar Port in phases. This is the first time that Gwadar port has provided services of handling, processing and administrative operation to the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) which belongs to the public sector. Be-

fore, all the import consignments including wheat import under the Afghan transit trade agreement and fertilizer imports for different companies were processed and transported from Gwadar port solely for the private sector. Gwadar Port is making all this happen in collaboration with Gwadar International Terminal Limited (GITL) and National Logistic Cell (NLC). Gwadar International Terminal Limited (GITL) official told Gwadar Pro that the processing of all urea fertilizer already offloaded is being transported through the Web-Based One Custom Clearance System (WeBOC). According to Gwadar Pro, "National Logistic Cell (NLC) which is providing logistic services is also utilising the Web-based one custom clearance system. The National Fertil-



iser Marketing Limited (NFML) is the sole distributor," he added. Given the new digitalised e-customer clearance system, all entry and exit of shipments at GITL is being made functional using WeBOC. "Since it is convenient, transparent and business-friendly, it is highly likely to boost investor confidence and enhance commercial activities in Gwadar," said an official of COPHC. "With the operationability of WeBOC, Gwadar Port, customs, NLC, FBR, banking channels and other insti-

tutions have observed an increase in efficiency and reduction of the time taken for processing in various departments," he added. It will be an impetus to foreign investors always asking for activation of E-custom functionality at Gwadar Port. After fulfilling the prerequisite, foreign investment is highly likely to come, which is desperately needed by struggling Pakistan economy in the current scenario. COPHC official told Gwadar Pro that "Shipping service provider (Makran Trader) and Ship clearing agent are both local. "This means Gwadar port is providing business opportunities to the locals on a large scale" he added. He said that as Gwadar port has earned its credibility in the private sector, the Trading Corporation of Pakistan is importing

200,000 tons of urea in one case and 450,000 tons of wheat in a separate case from Gwadar port. In April, 2020, the federal government allowed the import of fertilisers at the Gwadar Port and onward transit to Afghanistan through bonded carriers-insured and sealable trucks having a tracking device. Gwadar Port is also formally handling and processing 45000 metric tons of wheat imports as the official agreement between the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) and Gwadar International Terminal Limited (GITL) has been inked opening a new chapter of logistic activities. As per the agreement the formal processing timeframe will be between 1st February 2023 to 31st March 2023.

**Govt fixes price of 54 medicines**

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has approved the price fixation of 54 medicines in order to give relief to the masses. According to an official of the Ministry of National Health Services, the federal government has already approved the proposal to reduce the prices of 20 medicines by up to 30 percent. He said that the step would give relief to those patients suffering from various diseases and "who regularly need related medicines for the treatment of blood pressure, cancer, eye diseases, and other medical complications." He said that the government was committed to take innovative steps to ensure the provision of the best medical care to the people of the country. He further said, "Unfortunately, the previous government had increased the prices of medicines by up to 700 percent.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Senate Mohammad Qasim Khan exchanging views with Ambassador of Czech Republic Tomas Smetanka at the Parliament House on Monday.—DNA

**OGRA for ensuring 'conical baffles' in gas geysers**

ISLAMABAD: A spokesman for the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Monday stressed the need for installation of 'conical baffles' in geysers to ensure efficient and sensible use of scarce gas in the peak winter season. "The federal government has decided to install conical baffles in geysers to ensure less consumption of gas. Under this decision, Sui Northern and Sui Southern Gas Companies have requested OGRA to amend their contracts for the supply of natural gas and RLNG for domestic and commercial use," Spokesman Imran Ghaznavi said in a news release. Accordingly, he said, a public hearing was in progress here at the OGRA Head Office on the petitions filed by the Sui companies. He said OGRA had invited all consumers, the general public and interested/affected persons and parties through newspaper advertisements, in view of the request of the gas companies. Earlier, the spokesman

advised consumers to ensure careful use of gas appliances including heaters, geysers and stoves to avoid any untoward incidents. "Gas heaters and stoves pose serious health risks and are the main cause of many fatal incidents, so due care is needed in the use of gas appliances," he said. Imran Ghaznavi said carbon monoxide was colourless and odourless, adding "high levels of carbon monoxide in the air are very dangerous and may cause people to pass out or even die." In the winter season, he said people should consider 'safe alternative' ways of keeping themselves warm and remain extra careful, especially while using indoor gas appliances. Highlighting necessary precautionary measures, the spokesman suggested regular service of gas heaters, ensuring appropriate ventilation, and keeping away all flammable materials like clothes at least one meter away from the heater. He asked consumers to nev-

er leave a gas heater running when while going to bed. The spokesman said consumers must switch off gas appliances in case of gas load shedding or blackout. "Never use or store solvents, aerosols or pressure pack cans near a gas heater - even if the heater is turned off, the pilot light may still be on," he further said. He was of the view that consumers should never dispose of rubbish such as tissue papers, cotton buds or other things in a gas fire as it could affect combustion and produce dangerous pollutants. Besides, he said, consumers should avoid using outdoor appliances inside like barbecues and patio heaters. "And never use or store a gas cylinder indoors." He said the authority had initiated a safety campaign through its stakeholders and licensees aimed at educating the general public to ensure safety as the priority to avoid loss of precious lives and property.—APP

**Govt to work with coalition parties: Dastgir**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Engr Khurram Dastgir Khan on Monday said that incumbent government would work with the coalition partners to strengthen democracy in the country. Talking to PTV news channel, the minister said, "Facilitation of flood victims is the top priority of the Federal Government, and we are working with the coalition partners in this regard." Clearing the air over the energy conservation plan, he said that consultations were done before taking the decision, adding that the trading community was informed on the matter. Orders had been issued to reduce electricity consumption by 30% in all ministries and divisions, he added. Criticizing the previous government led by Imran Khan, the federal minister said that the PTI was responsible for the reduction in the production of wheat and sugar, which was a major reason for the price hike in consumable commodities.—APP

**191 advanced cameras installed at entry, exit points**

*An integrated police unified communication and response system had been launched, under which Eagle squads quickly respond to the calls, he added*

ISLAMABAD: A total of 191 artificial intelligence-enabled cameras equipped with advanced technology have been installed at the entry and exit points of Islamabad. Following the directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, the Islamabad capital police are in the process of installing modern cameras equipped with artificial intelligence to make security and surveillance more effective in the federal capital. Police spokesman said that Safe City Islamabad was performing the surveillance and monitoring duties in a fully operational and effective manner and playing an important role in the elimination of criminal elements. Due to these cameras, a taxi driver, involved in sexual harassment, was also arrested after a woman registered a complaint of sexual harassment on the helpline of Islamabad Capital Police "Pukar-15". Upon receiving the complaint, the Safe City Islamabad staff took immediate action and traced the vehicle and shared the information with the police officials concerned. The accused was arrested and a case was registered against him at Secretariat Police Station. Capital Police Officer (CPO) Safe City said that Islamabad Capital Police were utilizing all resources to strengthen the security of the federal capital, adding that the Eagle Squads have been closed from the police stations and centralized in safe city by connecting it with "Pukar-15". An integrated police unified communication and response system had been launched, under which Eagle squads quickly respond to the calls, he added. Keeping in view the convenience of the citizens, the missing report of any valuable item is registered through the online system and people are informed to collect it from the relevant police station after being traced.—APP

**Capital Book Fair delayed for a week**

ISLAMABAD: The three-day Capital Book Fair being arranged by the Department of Libraries in collaboration with other partners in the federal capital has been delayed for a week due to the certain reasons. According to an official, the book fair earlier scheduled to be held from January 5-7 will now be held from January 13-15 at the art and craft village. The book fair, being arranged in collaboration with Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), will offer a variety of books on discounted prices. The objectives behind arranging this book fair is to revive the book reading habit among general public especially youth, preserve our literary cultural heritage and bring back the culture of book in the society. Book lovers, especially students and researchers, belonging to the twin cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad are much excited about the book fair to quench their thirst for knowledge. Professor Tahir, while talking to APP, said "This book fair is the much-needed activity to instill book reading culture among the youth, who are now more focused on the electronic gadgets instead of books." He appreciated the step taken by the Department of Libraries for promoting book culture in the society and urged the educational and literary departments to keep arranging such activities on regular basis to attract the youngsters towards books and strengthen their bond with book. Nazish Abbasi, a school teacher and research scholar while sharing her views, said that unfortunately the culture of reading books was almost becoming non-existent "in our society due to many reasons, including high prices of books and easy access to books on internet.—APP

**ANF seizes over 62 kg drugs; arrests three**

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting three counter-narcotics operations in different areas seized over 62 kg of drugs and arrested two smugglers, said the ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that ANF while foiling a bid to smuggle drugs from Peshawar to Punjab recovered 33.6 kg charras and 24 kg opium from a CNG cylinder and stepney tire of a Mazda intercepted near Islamabad 'Cockpul' on Expressway. ANF also arrested two accused residents of Peshawar and Nowshera. In the second operation at Bacha Khan International Airport, ANF recovered three kg of Ice drug from the trolley bag of a Jeddah-bound passenger resident of Swabi going on flight no QR-601. In the third operation, ANF recovered over two kg of Ice drugs from an unattended bag recovered from a bus stop on Islamabad-Kahuta road. All cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations under CNS Act 1997 while further investigations are under process.—APP

**NHMP urges caution during maintenance work**

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) has urged motorists to exercise caution while driving on highways during undergoing maintenance work. According to the details issued by NHMP here on Monday, maintenance work is being carried out in different zones of National Highways including the North Zone, Central Zone, and South Zone. In the North Zone maintenance work is underway on Peshawar to Islamabad section at Wah Garden, on the Islamabad Kharian section at Hamza Marble, and on Islamabad to Murree section at Zafar Mor. In Central Zone, road work is in progress on Lahore to Chichawatni section at Harappa Bypass, on Mian Chuanu - Bahawalpur section at Thana Jala to Jala Morr, and at Police Check Post to Pull Rango. In the South Zone maintenance work is undergoing on Kot Sabzal - Halani section at Hingorja and Theem Pump Near Shah Hussain while on Hala - Karachi section maintenance work is being carried out at Khyber Stop and Indus Bridge.—APP

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## Prince Harry's revelations will benefit no one

Accounts of the psychology of the Duke of Sussex tend to focus on the trauma of following his mother's coffin along the Mall in 1997. Less attention is paid to the effect of the lurid details of his parents' horrific marriage that were aired so publicly when he was at prep school in London. The scandalous leaked phone conversations between Diana and her lover James Gilbey, and Charles and Camilla, no doubt infect Harry's earliest memories – his formative understanding of the shameless instinct of the tabloid press. The tit-for-tat TV interviews that followed, with Jonathan Dimbleby and with Martin Bashir, meanwhile, gave him profoundly troubling insights into the management and confession of family secrets and lies. Thirty years on, it seems that we are discovering the full effects of that complex trauma on King Charles's younger son. Encouraged and emboldened by his wife, Harry appears to have become besotted by truth-telling. The whole world has become his psychologist's couch. The leaked extracts from his memoir, Spare, and the trails for tonight's TV interviews, suggest a pathological appetite for coming clean. More shocking in some ways than his accounts of fraternal scuffles are the details of his grim first sexual experience and his brutal and ill-advised tallying of lives taken in combat in Afghanistan. Despite his direct denials, it is hard to imagine that in this he does not, consciously or otherwise, seek to destroy the institution into which he was born. When he and the Duchess of Sussex first decided to step away from royal duties and make a different life for themselves and their children in California, they were at pains to emphasise their continuing devotion and loyalty to the Queen and thereby to the constitutional monarchy itself. Those sentiments no longer appear part of the narrative. The prince has been going through the motions of expressing a desire to rebuild a relationship with his father and brother – good luck with that – but there is, pointedly, no deference toward their roles as king and heir. Can the monarchy, with its chronic allergies to transparency, survive this attack from the inside? Already the voices that work so hard to protect it in the media and the wider public are vicious and unwavering in their condemnation of the perceived betrayal. Harry and Meghan might believe that they have little left to lose in terms of the opinion and vitriol and bigotry ranged against them, but you fear that they haven't seen anything yet. This week will bring further allegations and revelations. However, the scene from Harry's memoir that would make the opening act of a Shakespearean drama – or a future episode of *The Crown* – is already set in stone. It is that moment, at his own father's wake, when Charles was allegedly forced to come between his warring sons, with a despairing plea: "Please boys, don't make my final years a misery." Whatever happens next, that line already feels like the epitaph to the old king's reign.



## Averting the west's collision course with Iran

A ceremony in Tehran last week marking the third anniversary of the assassination in Iraq by a US drone of Qassem Suleimani, a senior commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), conveyed a defiant message to the west. "We have not and will not forget the blood of martyr Suleimani. The Americans must know that revenge is certain and the murderers will have no easy sleep," Iran's hardline president, Ebrahim Raisi, vowed. Iran has already attempted to avenge Suleimani's death through what US officials say was an IRGC plot to kill John Bolton, Donald Trump's former national security adviser. It is demanding the arrest of more than 150 American and British "suspects", including Trump, who ordered the drone strike. Tehran has also imposed sanctions on western officials and, bizarrely, the RAF base at Menwith Hill, North Yorkshire, which it claims assisted the strike. The UK is expected to follow the US in designating the IRGC a terrorist group. The evident depth of anger and enmity felt within Iran's regime over Suleimani's killing and many other long-festering grievances is not wholly surprising, yet it should give western governments pause. It fuels an evolving, many-fronted threat to western security interests. It also reflects a huge strategic defeat: the failure of a decades-long US and European policy of engagement and the consequent emergence of the Islamic Republic as an implacable foe. The risk of open confrontation with the west is further aggravated by three explosive issues. One is the anticipated collapse of long-running talks to deny Iran nuclear weapons-making capabilities. If diplomacy fails, the prospect of military action by Israel is real. A second source of added tension is Iran's supply of "kamikaze drones" to Russia for its war in Ukraine. On Friday, the US slapped yet more sanctions on Iran in bid to curb this dangerous escalation. Was Iran's descent into domestic tyranny and international pariah status inevitable? Moderate presidents Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) and Hassan Rouhani (2013-21) encouraged hopes of rapprochement with the west and more progressive policies at home. That they ultimately failed was in part attributable to the hostility of hardliners and conservative control of the Majlis (parliament). What Trump and Netanyahu most feared – a nuclear-armed Iran – has been brought closer by their political machinations. Western policy further shored up the advent of Trump. Egged on by Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's hard-right prime minister, he reneged on the nuclear deal in 2018. Iran has since greatly increased its weapons-related capabilities. What Trump and Netanyahu said they most feared – a nuclear-armed Iran – has been brought closer by their political machinations. Obama's decision not to intervene directly in Syria's civil war left the door open to the IRGC and its ally, Russia. Likewise, the west's failure to seriously address the Israel-Palestine conflict allowed Iran's hardliners to grow their influence with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Meanwhile, Israel's escalating "shadow war" brought a series of provocative assassinations of Iranian officials and scientists. If not, then a rethink is urgently required about how best to rebuild a constructive dialogue with the majority of Iranians who reject their country's increasingly desperate, illegitimate leadership – and dream of a prosperous, democratic future. What, exactly, is the west's policy towards Iran? A fresh start is needed, before it's too late.

# RSS-BJP's IIOJK doctrine: Narrative fabrication & economic deprivation

Khalid Iqbal

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's and Bharatiya Janata Party's (RSS-BJP) Kashmir policy rests on four pillars: narrative fabrication to give a false impression of normalcy; demeaning the peaceful struggle of Kashmiri people by portraying it as a terrorist enterprise; politico-economic deprivation of Kashmiri Muslims; transforming the demographic map of IIOJK; and demoralising Kashmiri Muslims through never ending physical and mental torture. Modi-led fascist Indian regime is in an over-drive mode to distort the truth and twist the facts to promote deceitful RSS narrative

The underlying cause of the Kashmir conflict is neither a territorial dispute nor a law-and-order concern. The core issue is the granting of the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir as stipulated in various UN resolutions. Notwithstanding this, during the eight years of RSS-BJP rule over India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime has kept Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) under military siege and is hell-bent on crushing the

Kashmiri people's desire for the right to self-determination through the use of brute military force and cruel bureaucratic machinations. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's and Bharatiya Janata Party's (RSS-BJP) Kashmir policy rests on four pillars: narrative fabrication to give a false impression of normalcy; demeaning the peaceful struggle of Kashmiri people by portraying it as a terrorist enterprise; politico-economic deprivation of Kashmiri Muslims; transforming the demographic map of IIOJK; and demoralising Kashmiri Muslims through never ending physical and mental torture. Modi-led fascist Indian regime is in an over-drive mode to distort the truth and twist the facts to promote deceitful RSS narrative on Kashmir. It is crafting false impression of huge investment and development to justify its illegal actions of August 05, 2019, which led to annexation of the illegally occupied State of Jammu and Kashmir. Going beyond rhetoric, India is perpetrating systemic economic repression in IIOJK through remapping its socioeconomic order by formalizing inter-faith hatred as State policy. Leading Indian newspaper, The Hindu quoted Rahul Gandhi on December 24: "...hatred is hurting our country..." The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Bharatiya Janata Party are spreading fear among people and using hate as a weapon to divert attention from 'actual' issues" He claimed that while walking hundreds of kilometres from Kanyakumari to Delhi, "I did not see any violence or hate during the Yatra, but when I watch the TV (news), all I see [is] violence and hatred," said Rahul Gandhi during Bharat Jodo Yatra (Unite India Procession). The silver lining is that the international community is not oblivious to Modi's machinations. Periodic statements by the Secretary Generals of the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of Islamic Countries bespeak about the empathy of international community towards pain and agony of Kashmiri Muslims, even though these entities may be helpless with regard to settling the Kashmir dispute. On November 28, celebrated Israeli film director surprised audience during his speech at the closing ceremony of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa by criticizing the festival for including controversial Hindi-language movie "The Kashmir Files" in com-

petition. While praising the quality of most of the 15 films in competition, Lapid said on behalf of the jury: "We were all of us disturbed and shocked by the 15th film, "The Kashmir Files", that felt to us like a propaganda, vulgar movie inappropriate for an artistic competitive section of such a prestigious film festival." He continued: "I feel totally comfortable to share openly these feelings here with you on stage since the spirit of the festival can truly accept also a critical discussion, which is essential for art and for life." Released in India in March, 2022, the film has stirred up anti-Muslim sentiments, with audiences erupting in hate speeches and calling for the slaughter of Muslims and boycott of Muslim businesses. Nadav Lapid made his remarks in the presence of several Indian government ministers, as the festival was a government-organised event, funded by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. Three other IFFI jurors said that they stand by Lapid's views. The winner of British Academy of Film and Television Arts award, Jinko Gotoh, who was part of the five-member jury for the IFFI, has said that she and two of her fellow jurors stand by the statement made by jury chairperson, Nadav Lapid. "And to clarify we were not taking a political stance on the film's content. We were making an artistic statement, and it saddens us greatly to see the festival platform being used for politics and subsequent personal attacks on Nadav. That was never the intention of the jury." All of a sudden, the film that induced slogans and a threatening atmosphere in cinemas is back in the news, and not in a complimentary way. The Singapore government banned "The Kashmir Files" in May due to its "potential to cause enmity between different communities". Lapid has reminded India that the global film community expects that India, as the largest producer of films, will adhere to certain minimum standards and not push forward a mediocre and "vulgar" film. India needs to thank him for that. Many people from the Opposition parties in India have praised the jury head's remarks. The Congress party has termed Lapid's remarks as an "embarrassment" for the Modi government, saying that hate eventually gets called out. 'The Kashmir Files' was praised by Modi and Hindutva followers while it was flagged by critics and Muslim groups for its hatred towards Muslims.

And to financially disempower Kashmiris permanently, during the third week of December, the J&K government has notified fresh land rules captioned "J&K Land Grant Rules-2022" replacing the "J&K Land Grants Rules-1960". Local land holders see the move as one which has opened the gateway "to outsiders to buy prime properties in J&K". According to the new land laws, the current leases of land will not be extended on expiry. And the lease term has been reduced from 99 to 40 years. The government has asked the outgoing lease holders to evict properties or else face evictions under the new rules. The current land holders have termed these rules "exclusive to J&K" where outgoing lessee's the first right to renew the lease by renegotiating the lease rate with the lessor has been sequestered. Indian occupation authorities in IIOJK are sealing the properties owned by Muslim Kashmiris including endowments of educational and healthcare welfare institutions offering free/subsidized facilities to disadvantaged people. Confiscation such properties is taking place at a fast pace. The sole aim is to constrict fiscal space for the Muslim majority, and to convert IIOJK into a Hindu dominated economy zone. Kashmiri Muslims of IIOJK are being decapitated comprehensively. Torturing them physically as well as psychologically, with impunity, is part of the evolving political culture. Recently concluded unfair delimitation of constituencies has resulted in reducing the Muslim representation and enhancing the Hindu representation, at all tiers of public representative bodies—disproportionate to their respective population. In parallel, the campaign to change the demographic composition is going on relentlessly. And numerous barriers are being put in place in the way of economic actualization of IIOJK Muslims. The UN is duty-bound to intervene for arresting and correcting the situation. It is time for the UNSC to take notice of these blatant violations of its Charter by India, leading to a perpetually simmering Human Rights situation in IIOJK, and that too, by a county that aspires to gate-crash the UNSC as its veto empowered member. Above all, the UNSC also needs to play its role for settling the lingering Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people as guaranteed by the Security Council resolutions.

# The S-400 Himad system: Myth & reality

Air Vice Marshal MZ Faisal (Retd)

The two key components of any missile system are its radar and the missiles, and both have certain operational limitations. Without going deep into technical aspects of these limitations, one should understand that a fighter aircraft flying 250 feet above ground level can evade radar detection, and hence the missile launch, till about 50-70 kilometres. Similarly, the missile effectiveness is highly dependent on the target heading vis- vis the missile approach direction. For example, if the angle between the missile path and target's track is 90 degrees or higher, the missile effectiveness will drastically reduce to maybe less than 50 percent of the claimed range

With the delivery of five contracted S-400 High-to-Medium Air Defence (HIMAD) batteries that started in December 2021 and are likely to close by end of 2023, the fragile balance of power with Pakistan has been stirred but not shaken. The fact that this system has been procured by notable nations including China, which is a titan herself in missile technology, brings repute and credibility to the system and bolsters the confidence of the party acquiring it. Two features distinguish the S-400 from other SAMs; first, its anti-ballistic missile capability and second, the relatively long range that extends well into enemy territory. It will thus not only strengthen the Indian Air Defence but also provide some assistance to Indian fighter aircraft in gaining some degree of air control. Control of air remains fundamental for executing air strategy and the side that loses control of air even partially will also face stress in executing land and naval strategies. The S-400 reportedly carries four types of missiles with ranges of 400, 250, 120, and 40 kilometres. The two key components of any missile system are its radar and the missiles, and both have certain operational limitations. Without going deep into technical aspects of these limitations, one should understand that a fighter aircraft flying 250 feet above ground level can evade radar detection, and hence the missile launch, till about 50-70 kilometres. Similarly, the missile effectiveness is highly dependent on the target heading vis- vis the missile approach direction. For example, if the angle between the missile path and target's track is 90 degrees or higher, the missile effectiveness will drastically reduce to maybe less than 50 percent of the claimed range. Therefore, it can be said with high certainty that the expensive 400-kilometre range missile of the S-400 is unlikely to be fired at fighter aircraft, which are more likely to be engaged by the medium or short-range missiles of the S-400. This however does not rule out the deterrence value of this system on the forward posturing of PAF fighter aircraft. Also, the employment of long-range missiles is more suited to be employed against less agile large-body AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control Systems) or air-to-air refuelers and also in an anti-ballistic missile role. The S-400's intercept range against ballistic missiles is also not substantial, and is reportedly not more than 50-60 kilometres. The other challenge faced by the HIMAD system is the se-

lection of its deployment site. A system as heavy and large as the S-400 compromises on mobility and requires specially prepared sites. India is likely to deploy maximum batteries against Pakistan with an odd one against China. India may also prefer to provide missile defence shields over one or two major cities like Delhi and Mumbai. Incidentally, the Indian historic military flash points have been in Kashmir and Ladakh and both these mountainous regions present a lot of operational challenges for the deployment of a HIMAD system; its best performance is achieved in plain areas. The most substantial challenge arises from the screening effect of the terrain or in simpler words, the availability of a clear line of sight, which restricts target detection ranges. Additionally, mountainous terrain presents a lot of clutter – unwanted radar returns from nearby physical objects such as mountains, buildings, etc – and if anti-clutter features are used then target detection gets compromised further. Therefore, the S-400's deployment in the mountainous region of Kashmir and Ladakh will not come without degraded operational efficacy of the system. In all scenarios, the system is less likely to be deployed closer than 150-200 kilometres from the border for safety against enemy stand-off weapons. Due to the enhanced ranges of Surface-to-Air missiles like the S-400, it has become an operational necessity for friendly aircraft and missiles to operate concurrently in 'Joint Engagement Zones' (JEZ). Therefore, an extreme level of real-time coordination will be required between various agencies to find a 'Clear Avenue of Fire' for the missile shot in a highly fluid situation when your friendly aircraft are also in the vicinity. Given that the Indians lack a true networked Air Defence architecture, S-400 employment will present significant command and coordination challenges. The shooting of an Indian helicopter by a friendly missile on 27 February 2019 is a case in point. As regards the employment of the HIMAD system, it is an established fact that anti-Pakistan rhetoric and limited-scale aggression have become strategic choices for the Indian political parties to win elections. The induction of the S-400 and especially its anti-ballistic missile feature may give Indian extremist leadership a false sense of agency against Pakistan leading to a strategic miscalculation. This miscalculation can be catastrophic since both countries are nuclear; any imbalance in the conventional domain

will logically lower the nuclear threshold. Also, it is quite logical to assume that in event of a conflict, the S-400's anti-ballistic missile capability may force the other side to employ multiple weapons on a single target. This calculated yet exaggerated response may then have implications on the escalation ladder. Pakistan has always timely responded to Indian military inductions and evolving threats. It has already inducted a credible HQ-9 HIMAD system from China with ballistic missile interception capability. Given the military hierarchy's short and effective decision-making loop, Pakistan must have chalked out the plan and may already have acquired systems/weapons to counter the Indian S-400. Given the direct challenges posed by the S-400 to PAF operations, it would surely be a target of the highest priority for the PAF – which remains best suited to neutralize this threat due to its reach, speed, surveillance and reconnaissance capability, jammers, and variety of stand-off payloads. The area that merits focus for Pakistan against the S-400 is the development or acquisition of hypersonic missiles to beat the S-400 in speed. Employment of Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRV) will also be useful in challenging the multiple intercept capability of the S-400. Employment of long-range, high-speed, terrain-hugging cruise and anti-radiation missiles, supported by effective radar/radio/data link jamming and decoys, can be a very effective way to destroy the command vehicle or guidance radar of the S-400, and render the entire system non-functional. Solutions arising in the rapidly developing domains of Cyber technology and Artificial Intelligence may also play a role in neutralising the impact of such systems.

The history of war testifies that the efficacy of any SAM system is ultimately neutralised through a superior strategy. A system that has a large footprint easily gives away its location and ultimately succumbs to the firepower of modern fighter aircraft like the JF-17, the J-10, or the F-16. So shall be the fate of the Indian S-400.

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## Briefs

## UN urges massive response for Pak flood recovery

FROM PAGE 01

back from floods which submerged a third of the country, killing more than 1,700 people and affecting more than 33 million others. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who attended with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, called the floods "a climate disaster of monumental scale". Eight million people were displaced, millions of acres of agricultural land were ruined and around two million homes destroyed, while nine million more people were pushed to the brink of poverty. Shehbaz Sharif in his address mentioned Pakistan's Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework (4RF), which laid out a multisectoral strategy for rehabilitation and reconstruction in a climate-resilient and inclusive manner. As per estimates, the devastating floods in 2022 left one-third of the country submerged, about 15,000 dead or injured and 8 million displaced. Over 2 million homes, 13,000 kilometres of highways, 439 bridges and more than 4 million acres of agricultural land were destroyed or damaged. An estimated nine million more people could be forced into poverty as a direct consequence of these floods.

The prime minister said with the support of the United Nations, the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank, and the European Union, Pakistan had prepared a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), which estimates flood damages to exceed US\$14.9 billion, economic losses over US\$15.2 billion and reconstruction needs over US\$16.3 billion. He expressed profound gratitude to Secretary-General Guterres for co-chairing the conference and for his continued support for the people of Pakistan suffering in the aftermath of the floods. He recalled visiting along with Guterres the flood-affected areas of Sindh and Balochistan in September and said that the people of Pakistan would never forget this gesture of the UN Secretary-General. He stressed that the question was not only about how to survive, but how to maintain dignity and honour by moving forward with a sense of purpose and achievement.

Shehbaz Sharif said floods disrupted the education of 2.6 million including one million girls. "We are racing against time," he said, stressing that relief work needed to continue as some areas of Sindh needed drainage of water. He mentioned that the broad contours set up in the 4RF plan reflected priority for recovery and reconstruction, with a minimum requirement of \$16.3 billion. He said resilience was required to recover from colossal damages and ensure a sustainable future for the livelihood.

"Pakistan needs a new coalition of the willing to save lives," he said, urging solidarity and long-term support to the people of Pakistan to renew their hope. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said floods affected millions of people in Pakistan with immense losses to agricultural land and infrastructure. He recalled meeting the men, women and children at the makeshift camps in the flood-hit areas of Pakistan and said it was heart-breaking to witness their sufferings in the wake of climate-induced disaster.

"The UN is at the front-line of addressing the catastrophe in Pakistan and stressed improvement in infrastructure," he said. "The UN will be there to help in critical and colossal losses." He said the climate crisis needed massive support and mentioned that the people in South Asia were 15 times more likely to die with the impact of such natural disasters. FM Bilawal said Pakistan looked forward to international support and assistance as a major climate disaster affected one in seven of the country's population. He highlighted that a large area of Pakistan was inundated with water and emphasized that the international community needed to come together and join the comprehensive plan presented by Pakistan on post-flood reconstruction.

# Enemies sought to destroy Iran's progress: Khamenei

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the enemies pushed their involvement in recent riots through cyber-based propaganda and via Western and certain regional media outlets

DNA

TEHRAN: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the enemies sought to destroy Iran's progress and strengths through the recent violent riots in the country. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in the Iranian capital Tehran on Monday in an address to a group of people from Qom on the anniversary of the popular uprising in the holy city against the former US-backed Pahlavi regime in 1978. The Leader said the rioters did not actually take to the streets to protest against the economic hardships that the Iranian nation is going through as a result of Western sanctions. "There is no doubt that we are beset with

economic and livelihood problems now. But, can these problems be solved by setting trash cans on fire, taking to the streets, and instigating riots? They did not want to remedy the shortcomings, but rather, sought to obliterate the Iranian nation's strengths," the Leader noted. Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that foreign enemies were overtly involved in the nationwide riots in the country while the United States and European countries openly fueled the unrest in one way or another. The Leader added that the media hype against the Islamic Republic was aimed at creating the impression that rioters were discontent with economic problems and shortcomings in economic and other sectors of the country. "They, however,



did not want weaknesses to go away. The objective was rather to wipe out the country's strengths," he said.

The Leader pointed to attempts aimed at undermining Iran's national security, stopping the country's scientific progress through closure of educational and scientific centers, impeding the growth of domestic production, and harming booming sectors such as tourism as clear examples that back up his argument.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the enemies pushed their involvement in recent riots through cyber-based propaganda and via Western and certain regional media outlets. The Leader underlined that what the rioters did amounted to treason, calling on relevant institutions and state officials to seriously deal with any act of betrayal. Foreign-backed riots have hit various Iranian provinces since 22-year-old woman

Mahsa Amini died at the hospital on September 16, three days after she collapsed at a police station in Tehran. An investigation has attributed Amini's death to her medical condition, rather than alleged beatings by the police.

The violent riots have claimed the lives of dozens of people and security forces, while also allowing terrorist attacks across the country. In the last three months, the terrorists have set fire to public property and tortured several Basij members and security forces to death. The United States and its European allies have voiced staunch support for the continuation of violent riots across Iran and spared no effort to fan the flames of unrest in the country as part of their anti-Iran policies.

## Pak, Saudi Arabia agree to bolster cooperation

FROM PAGE 01

Another video clip shared on social media showed Gen Asim Munir visiting the Masjid-e-Nabwi, as Saudi security personnel escorted the military commander. The visit, first by Gen Asim as the army chief, comes at a crucial juncture when Pakistan is facing yet another balance of payments crisis. The country's foreign reserves have come down to \$5.8 billion, barely enough to cover one month of import bill. With the IMF programme hanging in the balance, Pakistan is hoping to secure another financial assistance package from Saudi Arabia and the UAE to avoid a default.

## Will take vote of...

FROM PAGE 01

the incumbent government had ruined the country's economy. He hurled allegations at the government for deliberately creating the wheat crisis. He also said that the federal government was completely failed in terms of supplying and importing, adding that the government was busy making fake cases against PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Lamenting that the country was witnessing the closure of the industries, Mr Umar expressed his concern over the exorbitant increase of the flour prices in the past month.

Continuing to lambast the coalition government, Mr Umar said the nation was quite frustrated with the incumbent government as the rulers were trying to save their politics. — Punjab Chief Minister PavezElahi on Monday said no one should be speculative about Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid's support for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan.

Meanwhile the Chief Minister met PTI leaders including Punjab Assembly Speaker Sibtain Khan, Raja Basharat, and Mian Mehmood-ur-Rasheed ahead of PA session and discussed political situation of the province. MrElahi said the opposition was daydreaming about coming to power in the province as it did not have required vote count [to bring about a vote of no-confidence against him in the assembly]. "Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is spreading propaganda on the matter but in reality, it will not be able to form a government in the province", he added. Masses, he said, were protesting against the failed policies of the PML-N.

On the other hand, the Punjab Assembly is set to be in session without discussing the no-trust motion against Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry ParvezElahi. The move came a day after PTI Chairman Imran Khan changed his mind and agreed to put off the vote of confidence which he insisted that the Punjab chief minister must take before Jan 11. It is unlikely that MrElahi will go ahead with the exercise during the proceedings of the 42nd session of the provincial assembly.

## West should stop illicit cashflow...

FROM PAGE 01

role in stopping the illegal transfer of capital from these countries, Imran Khan said while talking to the outgoing British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner. The British High Commissioner called on Imran Khan here at Zaman Park on Monday to enquire about the health of the PTI chairman. PTI senior leaders Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Fawad Hussain Ch, Farrukh Habib and others were present on the occasions..

## Wheat from Russia reaches...

FROM PAGE 01

So far, 350,000 tonnes of wheat has arrived at the Karachi port. As of recent, Pakistan's flour crisis has intensified due to the bad economic situation, shortage of foreign exchange and destruction of wheat crops in the floods. People are standing in long queues to buy singular bags of flour.

# Kvitova outservices Rybakina at Adelaide



DNA

ADELAIDE: Petra Kvitova won the battle of Wimbledon champions on Monday at Adelaide International II, outperforming Elena Rybakina who has crashed early in two tournaments leading into next week's Australian Open. Two-time Wimbledon winner Kvitova beat the current All England Club champion 6-3, 7-5 in

round one, exacting a measure of revenge. Russia's 23rd-ranked Rybakina won their first head-to-head meeting last year in Ostrava. World number 16 Kvitova never faced a break point in 86 minutes, while breaking Rybakina at the tail end of each set to move safely through. "I tried to play faster than Elena," said Kvitova, who won Wimbledon in 2011 and 2014. "She played really great (in Ostrava),

it was a good match and I know that she's serving really well. "I was focusing on my serve and I was trying to wait for some chances to break her." There are two ATP-WTA Adelaide Internationals this month, with Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka winning the titles in week one.

Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, a finalist at the 2021 French Open which saw her soar to 11 in the world, also crashed out, losing 7-5, 6-4 to Swiss qualifier Jil Teichmann. It was the Russian's first match in eight months after ending her 2022 season in May due to a recurring knee injury. After losing in round one of the Adelaide International last week, there was no repeat for American Danielle Collins.

The 2022 Australian Open finalist will be Teichmann's next opponent after she defeated Karolina Pliskova 6-2, 6-4. Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia, ranked 15, also progressed, 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 at the expense of Romania's Sorana Cirstea. World number one Iga Swiatek and third-ranked Jessica Pegula had been due to play this week, but both pulled out after their exploits at the United Cup with Poland and the United States respectively. In the men's draw, Britain's Jack Draper eased past Italy's Lorenzo Sonego in straight sets while American Mackenzie McDonald outlasted another Briton, Dan Evans, 7-5, 7-5.

## French federation boss under fire for 'clumsy' Zidane comments

PARIS: French Football Federation president Noel Le Graet came under fire on Monday as he was forced to apologise for what he dubbed his own "clumsy remarks" about Zinedine Zidane's potential interest in coaching the France national team. Le Graet had quipped dismissively in an interview to French radio station RMC on Sunday that he "wouldn't even have taken his call on the phone" when asked whether Zidane had rung him to express an interest in taking over as coach of Didier Deschamps.

That drew criticism from France and Paris Saint-Germain star Kylian Mbappe, who said Le Graet had shown "a lack of respect" with his comments. Real Madrid, where Zidane enjoyed decorated spells as a player and a coach, also hit out at Le Graet, while French Sports Minister Amelie Oudenaert waded in too, demanding an apology. The 81-year-old head of the FFF duly did apologise on Monday, Le Graet saying: "I would like to apologise for these remarks, which absolutely do not reflect my views, nor my consideration for the player he was and the coach he has become. "I gave an interview to RMC that I should not have given because they were looking for controversy by opposing Didier and Zinedine Zidane, two greats of French football. "I admit that I made some clumsy remarks which created a misunderstanding." Deschamps' contract expired after the World Cup in Qatar, where reigning champions France lost to Argentina in a penalty shoot-out after a thrilling final on December 18. However, Deschamps — who took over in 2012 — on Saturday signed a new deal to stay in the job until the 2026 World Cup.

That means former Real Madrid coach Zidane, who had reportedly shown an interest in succeeding Deschamps, will have to wait for his chance. Asked in the RMC interview whether Zidane, who won the 1998 World Cup as a player alongside Deschamps and was a runner-up in 2006, had called him in recent days, Le Graet dismissed him as having been a potential candidate. "I wouldn't even have taken his call," Le Graet said. "To tell him what? 'Hello sir. Don't worry. Look for another club. I just agreed a contract with Didier.'" — Agencies

## Roberto Martinez named as Portugal coach

Martinez added that he would make his decisions "on the pitch and not in an office"

LISBON: Roberto Martinez was named as the new coach of Portugal on Monday, having stepped down as Belgium coach after their elimination from the World Cup in Qatar in the group stage. The 49-year-old Spaniard takes over from Fernando Santos and the most pressing issue in his in-tray will be to clarify the situation of skipper Cristiano Ronaldo, who has just signed for Saudi club Al Nassr. "My point of departure will be the squad of 26 players who played in the World Cup, and Cristiano Ronaldo is one of them," Martinez told a press conference.

Martinez added that he would make his decisions "on the pitch and not in an office". Martinez, who cut his managerial teeth at Swansea City, Wigan Athletic and Everton, took over as Belgium coach in 2016, leading the side to the 2018 World Cup semi-finals. Under his leadership, Belgium were top of the FIFA world rankings for more than three years. But his time with the Red Devils came unstuck in Qatar, where they overcame Canada 1-0, but were then beaten 2-0 by Morocco before a goalless draw with Croatia ensured an early departure. Portugal had Santos at the helm for eight years and the 68-year-old led the team to their first ever international titles: the 2016 European Championship and the inaugural 2019 Nations League. Santos quit as coach five days after Portugal exited the World Cup at the quarter-final stage. — APP



SKARDU: Sportsmen in action during the Shayok Winter Festival 2023 Ice Hockey to promote the winter tourism in north area of Pakistan. — APP

# Finland, Pak have every reason to solidify cooperation

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 1

## About Nokia

Nokia is doing quite well. Nokia as you know is basically a handset maker and not a software company. With the advent of lifestyle smart phones it was perhaps difficult for the company to match challenges posed by other operators such as iPhone, Apple etc. Nokia's decline in the mobile device industry, culminated in the sale of the handset division to Microsoft. But that was only one of the divisions of Nokia. Nokia primarily makes networks. Nokia and Siemens used to work together but then Nokia bought Siemens and quite recently they have bought Alcatel as well. As you know Alcatel is a famous French company dealing with networks. Nokia handsets are still available in the market but another company is manufacturing these handsets



under the brand name of Nokia.

## Cooperation in tourism sector

Tourism is yet another area where both countries can cooperate. I visited Lahore some time ago and was amazed to see the grandeur of the city. The Walled City was a marvel to see. Then the Waziri mosque is yet another attraction that immediately attracts the visitors. In Taxila too there are quite a few places that attract the visitors. In Finland as well we have a number of tourist attractions. Finland as you know is well known for its Archipelagos. People who wish to explore natural beauty must visit Finland.

## Anything you would like to add

It is an interesting experience to be in Pakistan. I am very thankful to the people who have been helping me all along. Before coming to Pakistan I was told that Pakistani people are ever ready to help you and that is exactly what I have witnessed here in this country.

## Briefs

## France revises hunting rules

PARIS: France's government on Monday announced tighter rules against hunting under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and protection for walkers and local residents, but stopped short of a hoped-for Sunday ban. Although a weekend "no hunting day" is popular with the public, President Emmanuel Macron is wary of alienating rural voters and adding to anti-government resentment as he launches a major pension reform. Instead, junior environment minister Berangere Couillard said hunting under the influence would be banned, training and safety rules for hunters strengthened and digital systems developed to warn other countryside users away from active hunting zones. Punishments will also be upgraded, including hunters losing their licenses if they are involved in a serious accident. "My goal is to aim for zero accidents," Couillard said on a Monday trip to the Loiret department south of Paris. "We want to see better safety, seven days a week," she added. Statistics show hunting accidents have been on the decline in France over the past 20 years. But cases of injury or even death from stray bullets remain highly emotive and are often widely covered by the media. Some 90 accidents were recorded during the 2021-22 hunting season, eight of them fatal, according to the OFB biodiversity authority, which manages the sport. Just this weekend, an 84-year-old hunter in Corsica accidentally shot himself dead as he was stowing his gun in his car. Almost 80 percent of the French public favour a hunting ban on Sundays, polling firm IFOP found in December.—Agencies

## Malaysia, Indonesia eye expansion of trade

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia aims to boost bilateral trade with neighboring Indonesia including cross-border investments in a number of key sectors, a Malaysian official said on Sunday. Among areas of interest are pharmaceuticals, aerospace, palm-oil processing, consumer goods, as well as defense and security, International Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz said in a statement. These were reflected in nine Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between Malaysian and Indonesian companies, with a total potential investment value of more than 1.6 billion ringgit (363 million U.S. dollars), he said. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim is currently on a two-day official visit to Indonesia from Sunday to Monday, his first tour abroad since assuming office last November, with trade being high on the agenda. Within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Indonesia is Malaysia's second-largest partner in trade and the third-largest source of foreign direct investment.—APP

## Erdogan hails record \$4.4B exports

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Monday said the defense sector's exports hit a record volume in 2022, as he hailed a "revolution" and Türkiye's unprecedented march toward full independence in the critical industry. "Our defense exports, which stood at just \$248 million 20 years ago, broke a record in 2022 with \$4.4 billion," Erdoğan told an event in the north-western province of Sakarya. The event marked the delivery of six new-generation domestically made howitzers called Fırtına to the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK). Erdoğan hailed the current level of Türkiye's defense industry, as he vowed that the country's external dependence in the sector dropped to 20%, from 80% some two decades ago. Erdoğan also voiced annual budget allocated for research and development (R&D) in the industry reached \$1.5 billion, up from only \$49 million in 2022 when his ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) came to power.—APP

## Dar seeks budgetary support to cope with flood challenges

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GENEVA: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday sought budgetary support to create fiscal space for the Pakistan Government to continue substantive relief for over 33 million flood-affected people. "Pakistan's urgent expectation from this conference is not merely a commitment of resources for reconstruction and rehabilitation in short-to-medium term but we are also looking forward for budget inflows and assistance during the remainder of the current fiscal year," he said while co-chairing the First Plenary Session: 'Pakistan's Resilient Recovery Strategy', during the International Conference on 'Climate Resilient Pakistan'. This, he added, would make it possible for the government to continue providing the much-needed relief to the flood-hit people. "Let me say a few words that if considered appropriate by friendly countries, debt swaps and other use of financial instruments tied to

the relocation of equivalent domestic budgetary resources would also free up these resources to be spent for this noble purpose." He said the support from the friendly countries and multilateral donors would not only help with flood relief and rehabilitation but would also create fiscal space and external debt sustainability for the country. The minister, however, clarified that Pakistan remained committed to its international obligation and was on track regarding its macroeconomic fiscal reform agenda "which focuses on increasing revenues, increasing spending on social programmes, decreasing expenditure to create more fiscal space for the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase which we have to undertake in the next few years". He said Pakistan was now facing challenges on account of additional outlays incurred and projects for flood-related rescue relief and rehabilitation needs. Existing limited space negatively impacted Pakistani's ability to provide resilience and determination to all those affected by the natural disaster. He said Pakistan was carrying

## Spending on flood recovery likely to be \$3 bn by June

Ahsan Iqbal says The minimum needs identified for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction are estimated at \$16.3 billion

GENEVA: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal Monday said that Pakistan faced unprecedented devastation due to torrential rains and flooding in most parts of the country, and the spending on flood recovery in the country might cross US\$3 billion by June this year. Pakistan faced huge economic losses due to damage of infrastructure and loss of crops that led to significant losses in GDP, higher poverty rates, degradation of eco-system, degradation of environment and climate, job loss and disruption, degradation of environment and climate, while women and girls are also at risk of gender based violence and child marriage, he said while speaking at the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, co-hosted by the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations in Geneva. He said the Post-Damage Needs Assessment (PDNA) — conducted jointly by the Government of Pakistan and its international development partners, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, UN relief agencies, in October — has estimated the aggregate cost of the calamity at \$30.1 billion. This includes \$14.9 billion in damages to infrastructure and \$15.2 billion in economic losses. The minimum needs identified for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction are estimated at \$16.3 billion. He said out of the total \$16.3 billion, Pakistan government would spend 50% from its own resources, while it has requested the international community to help Pakistan with \$8 billion during next three years "so that we can rebuild our damaged infrastructure in shortest possible time". Minister Iqbal said Pakistan's economy was already in dire straits. The floods have caused a massive impact. The losses to the GDP as a direct consequence of this disaster are projected to be around 2.2 per cent in the financial year 2022. The agriculture sector accounts for the largest decline at 0.9 per cent. The recovery and reconstruction needs are projected at 1.6 times the budgeted national development expenditure for the Financial Year 2023, he added.—DNA

term assistance to navigate through a number of challenges. "We hope that our friends, partners and supporters always stand with us by providing the required assistance during this most critical phase of Pakistan," he added. The minister highlighted the need for fighting climate change together and expressed gratitude to the international community for supporting Pakistan at the time of the unprecedented crisis. Ishaq Dar said while Pakistan was facing the challenges faced by global adverse developments, like the Russian-Ukraine war, energy crisis, rising inflation and hiking poverty, it had to face the catastrophe of unprecedented floods in recent history. He said the floods caused devastation particularly in Sindh and Balochistan provinces, with over 33 million people affected, over 1700 lives lost, 13,000 injured, and millions of women and children became vulnerable while a total of 13,000 kilometers of roads and 440 bridges were destroyed, five million of crops damaged, over two million houses were either damaged or destroyed and around one million livestock was confirmed to have been dead or missing.

## Thousands of Serbs in Kosovo protest over security concerns

BELGRADE: Thousands of local Serbs on Sunday gathered in southern Kosovo to express their security concerns after two Serbs on Friday were shot and wounded. Serbs from central Kosovo, as well as from other parts of the country, together with political leaders, gathered in the Strpce town. A Serbian boy and a young man were shot and wounded on Friday in southern Kosovo by Albanian extremists on Orthodox Christmas Eve. The crowd carried banners that read: "Europe, West, what are our children to blame for, stop violence against Serbs and (Serbian President Aleksandar) Vucic, protect the Serbs and peace." Head

of the Strpce municipality Dalibor Jevtic said a request was made to NATO-led security force KFOR and the Kosovo police to increase their presence and ensure safety for all citizens. "Citizens are rightfully upset. Our children are not safe and they are obliged to ensure that safety," Jevtic told local media, noting that the crowd sends a message of peace but is also full of courage. "We are sending a message that we will not be scared or chased away by those who shoot and those who try in different ways to expel us. We are sending a message of peace, that we want to be our own people. That is the message that we are sending with every pro-

test. Peace is the main message, it is clear who wants the opposite" said Jevtic. Several Kosovo police units and NATO peacekeepers, known as the Kosovo Force, or KFOR patrols, were present around the town. The tension between Kosovo and Serbia recently escalated after a series of events in the region. Over Friday's incident, the Serbian government's office for Kosovo demanded urgent and decisive action from the international community. The Serbian Orthodox Church celebrates Christmas on Jan. 7 for three days under the Gregorian calendar. Orthodox Christian Serbs in Kosovo gathered in front of local churches on Christmas

Eve to light yule logs before a midnight service. Kosovo police later announced that a 33-year-old man who is a member of the Kosovo Security Forces was detained as a suspect in the attack. Kosovo, predominantly inhabited by Albanians, broke away from Serbia in 1999 and declared independence in 2008. But Serbia has not recognized the move and sees its former province as part of its territory. Tensions have been simmering between the two Balkan countries, though they appeared to ease somewhat following the removal of barricades blocking the main border crossing between them.—Agencies

## President Raisi's 1st official visit to Türkiye being finalized

TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi is slated to visit Türkiye as well as Syria, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday, adding that the plans are being finalized. Addressing a weekly press conference in Tehran, Nasser Kanaani said the plans for Raisi's first visit to Türkiye since taking the office two years ago are currently "being finalized." It comes after Turkish presidential spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin was quoted as saying last week that the Iranian president will visit Ankara "in the next few weeks." He said the planned visit was postponed due to "certain reasons," adding that the protocols are being discussed between the two sides and the visit will take place in the coming weeks. Kalin, however, stopped short of specifying the time of the visit. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Iranian counterpart Raisi last met on the sidelines of the 22nd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Uzbekistan last September. The leaders reviewed agreements reached between the two sides during Erdoğan's visit to Tehran in July 2022 and stressed on speeding up the implementation of those agreements. The Turkish leader's July visit to Tehran was hailed by Raisi as an "important turning point" in improving the level of cooperation between the two neighboring countries.—APP

## Macron voices support for Brazil's Lula

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday expressed support for his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva after hundreds of supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro stormed government buildings. The protesters stormed the National Congress building while shouting slogans and demanding intervention by the army. They broke through a police barrier and entered the Congress building. Bolsonaro supporters also managed to invade and ransack the Planalto Palace, or President's office, and the Supreme Federal Court, according to Brazil news portal G1. In a Twitter post, Macron called to respect "the will of the Brazilian people and the democratic institutions" and said that Lula "can count on France's unwavering support." The French Foreign Ministry also issued a statement on Sunday condemning the storming of the government buildings in Brazil. "France expresses its support for the democratically elected President Lula and his government," the statement added.—APP



GENEVA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Federal Councillor of Switzerland Ignazio Cassis on the sidelines of the International Conference on resilient Pakistan in Palais des Nations, Geneva Switzerland.—DNA

## World in transition to new economic order

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The right word to describe the current period of multiple convergent crises surrounding the global economy is a "transition," and action by central banks in tandem with the resilience of labor markets and the re-balancing of supply chains will be among the factors deciding what kind of economic order this transition will result in, World Economic Forum (WEF) Managing Director Mirek Dusek told Anadolu Agency in an interview. Dusek's remarks came ahead of the WEF's Annual Meeting 2023 which will take place from Jan. 16-20 in Davos, Switzerland with the theme "Cooperation in a Fragmented World." "The WEF's Annual Meeting 2023 in Davos will convene against the backdrop of a challenging economic outlook, and the program will reflect that reality in focusing on the

dual imperatives of making the right decisions for economies, companies and communities to get through these complex times while simultaneously maintaining the ability to make major investments in the future," he said. The global economy has been under pressure due to multiple crises involving food, energy supply security, the cost of living, high inflation and the climate. Supply shortages in energy markets have been reaching record levels for more than a year globally, while Russia's war on Ukraine has deepened the problems in the supply and demand balance, leading to further skyrocketing prices in energy markets, particularly for natural gas. Dutch Title Transfer Facility (TTF) natural gas prices had skyrocketed to 342 (\$364) per megawatt-hour as of Aug. 26, 2022, a dramatic rise from the 30/MWh level a year earlier. After sharp increases during the last year, prices had fallen to 69/MWh as

of Jan. 6 thanks to a milder winter and high storage levels in Europe. The price increases in food and energy markets are the main drivers of the decades-high inflation around the world. According to Dusek, the multiple convergent crises with interconnected causes are affecting millions worldwide, especially those living in the most vulnerable regions. "Just as the causes of these crises are interconnected, so too are their solutions, and we must converge on identifying and acting on measures that will not only mitigate the risk of such crises moving forward, but even more important, enable us to articulate and implement a new growth, jobs and security agenda for the future," he said. Dusek said accelerating the transition to clean energy, mainstreaming breakthrough technological innovations and introducing effective diplomatic mechanisms for a more competitive world are among the action areas that can help

the world emerge from this period of uncertainty with increased resilience. He described the current situation as a "transition." "Action by central banks in tandem with the resilience of labor markets and the nature of supply chains' reshuffling will be among the factors deciding what kind of economic order this transition will result in," Dusek said, while calling for effective government policies to recognize the current conditions as an opportunity to implement "much-needed policy reform." "First and foremost, policy should support the transition to more sustainable energy sources with the aim of decoupling economic growth from energy consumption as well as reducing carbon emissions to address climate change," he said. In this regard, the recent deep concern around energy insecurity stemming from economic and geopolitical shocks should provide momentum to accelerate movement towards a more sustainable energy model." The crises

are global in their impact in an unprecedented way, and policies should also be pursued in as cooperative a manner as possible among governments worldwide, according to Dusek. "We have already seen central banks worldwide working in tandem to combat inflation, and wider government policy to address systemic global issues should also maximize opportunities for coordinated action," he noted. Central banks have adopted a policy of hiking rates in a bid to tame surging inflation. Dusek noted that amid these crises, the WEF's mission of fostering public-private cooperation has never been more important or urgent, both to navigate the present crises and to drive tangible, system-positive change moving forward. "Bringing together a wide range of stakeholders is key to forging understanding and alignment, scaling innovation and finding proactive solutions to our common issues through tangible action," he added.

## Uganda set to declare end of Ebola outbreak

KAMPALA: Uganda said on Monday it was expecting to declare an end to an Ebola virus outbreak that emerged late last year and has claimed the lives of at least 56 people. If no new case is reported by Tuesday, the health ministry said it would formally announce the end of the outbreak on Wednesday. According to the World Health Organization, an outbreak of the disease ends when there are no new cases for 42 consecutive days — twice the incubation period of Ebola. Health ministry spokesman Emmanuel Aineboona said in an invitation to journalists that the "declaration ceremony" will take place in the central district of Mubende, the epicentre of the outbreak. Since the Ugandan authorities declared the latest outbreak in Mubende on September 20, the East African nation has registered 142 confirmed cases and 56 deaths, with the disease spreading to the capital Kampala. The last confirmed patient was discharged from hospital on November 30, according to health officials. The outbreak has been caused by the Sudan strain of the virus, for which there is currently no vaccine.

But three candidate vaccines — one developed by Oxford University and the Jenner Institute in Britain, another from the Sabin Vaccine Institute in the United States, and a third from the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) — are being trialled in Uganda. Ebola is an often fatal viral haemorrhagic fever. The disease is named after a river in Democratic Republic of Congo where it was discovered in 1976. Human transmission is through body fluids, with the main symptoms being fever, vomiting, bleeding and diarrhoea. Outbreaks are difficult to contain, especially in urban environments.—APP

## Czech ex-PM Babis acquitted in fraud case

PRAGUE: A Prague court acquitted billionaire former Czech prime minister Andrej Babis in an EU subsidy fraud case on Monday, only four days before he runs in a presidential election. Babis was charged for helping take his Stork Nest farm south of Prague out of his giant Agrofert food, chemicals and media holding to make it eligible for a \$2-million European Union subsidy for small companies. "The deed described in the indictment is not a crime," Judge Jan Sott said after delivering the verdict. The 68-year-old Babis, who served as prime minister from 2017 to 2021, has always denied any wrongdoing, calling the trial "a political process" ahead of the presidential election starting on Friday. Alongside former high-ranking NATO general Petr Pavel and economist Danuse Nerudova, Babis is one of three odds-on favourites to reach a second-round run-off scheduled for the end of January. "NOT GUILTY! I'm very glad that we have an independent judiciary and that the court confirmed what I had been saying from the start," Babis said in a tweet.—APP

## Dozens of settlers defile Aqsa Mosque

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Dozens of extremist Jewish settlers desecrated the Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem on Monday morning and later in the afternoon. According to al-Qastal News website, at least 80 settlers entered the Mosque in groups through its Maghariba Gate and toured its courtyards under tight police guard. A number of settlers escorted by police officers also gathered in the eastern area of the Mosque and embarked on performing Talmudic prayers. Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation police continued to impose restrictions on the entry of Muslim worshippers to the Mosque, and harassed a number of them during their presence in its courtyards and the entrances leading to it. Recently, Jerusalemite activists have urged their compatriots to necessarily intensify their presence in the Aqsa Mosque compound.—APP

## Briefs

### Ex-general fights case against 'espionage slur'

DNA

LAHORE: A former three-star general of Pakistan Army, who was convicted of espionage by a military court, has been released from the Adiala jail after new military leaders pardoned him. In May 2019, the Field General Court Martial (FGCM) handed down 14-year rigorous imprisonment to retired Lt Gen Javed Iqbal, and death sentence to a brigadier and a civilian for espionage and sharing "sensitive information" with the foreign spies. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a statement at that time, said then Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa "endorsed" their sentences. In 2021, an appellate tribunal commuted Mr Iqbal's 14-year sentence by half and it was further reduced by two and a half years by Mr Bajwa days before his retirement as army chief.

### Dollar takes another big bite off Pak rupee

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The continuous depleting forex reserves and lack of foreign inflows are taking their toll on the stability of Pakistani rupee as the local unit shed another 26 paisas in its value against US dollar in the interbank trading on Monday. The currency dealers informed that during today's morning trading session, the PKR slid 26 notches down letting greenback to be traded at Rs227.40. On the last day of trading activity on Friday, the exchange rate recorded a dip of 2 paisas to close at Rs227.14 to the US dollar. Pakistan is facing a serious forex crunch as the foreign exchange reserves held by SBP dropped by \$245 million to \$5.57 billion during the week ended on December 30, 2022. It is pertinent to mention here that the current level of foreign currency reserves is barely enough to cover 1.08 months of import bill.

### ECP disposes of plea against Ishaq Dar's Senate seat

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has disposed of a plea urging the ECP to declare vacant the Senate seat of Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. The ECP on Monday pronounced its verdict which was reserved on 26 September 2022 on the application seeking ECP order to declare Ishaq Dar's Senate seat vacant for not taking oath. The hearing of the case was held at ECP in Islamabad. Ishaq Dar had returned to Pakistan from London in September 2022 and took oath as member of the Senate and finance minister. - DNA

## IHC seeks minutes of cabinet meeting on increase of UCs

*IHC chief justice said that ECP was ready to conduct polls in 101 UCs and still is*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday asked the government to share the minutes of the cabinet meeting and summary regarding the increase in the number of union councils (UCs) in Islamabad on January 19. A two-member bench, headed by IHC Chief Justice Aamir Farooq, conducted the hearing on the intra-court appeals against the court's decision to hold local government (LG) elections in the federal capital on December 31. During the hearing, the high court asked the federal government to provide a solid reason for increasing the number of UCs from 101 to 125 for the LG polls in the next hearing. The court warned that it will order to conduct the elections in 101 UCs if the government fails to provide a satisfactory reason. The IHC chief justice said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was ready to conduct polls in 101 UCs and still is. The court asked what will happen now that elections did not take place. At this, the lawyer representing a citizen - who approached the court regarding the correction of the voters' list - said that it was difficult to implement the court's order in such a short period of time.

"The single bench did not hear us, or the order wouldn't have been issued," he said. The court then asked how this affects those who have challenged the voters' list. "Is it not the district election commissioner's job to see the voter lists?" questioned the court. At this, the director general of law at the ECP said it is the authority of the district election commissioner to check the voters' list. The court said that three days had been given for the correction of voter lists. IHC CJ said that the concerns of the voters will be valid when the single bench's decision remains intact. "You have to issue the schedule even if the election has to be held in 101 union councils. The issue of voters will no longer be there if the number of UCs is changed to 125 as per the federal government," he added. Justice Farooq further said that the whole process will be repeated once again once the UCs are increased. As per the single bench, he said, the federal government could not provide a concrete reason for increasing the UCs. The IHC CJ asked the director-general of law how much time will the ECP take in conducting the polls. At this, the ECP's DG law said that they need 10 days if elections are to be held on 101 UCs. The court adjourned the hearing till January 19.

# EU gives EUR 87 mn for skill development; green growth

Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs and Dr Riina Kionka, Ambassador of the European Union signed the agreement

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: To support green and inclusive economic growth in Pakistan, Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs and Dr Riina Kionka, Ambassador of the European Union have signed agreements for three new development programmes with a funding of EUR87 million by the European Union. With a focus on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan, the new programmes will improve agricultural value chains, provide access to clean energy and enhance availability of the skilled labour force. The programmes are part of European Union's support to Pakistan in the post flood rehabilitation and reconstruction. These three programmes are designed in close cooperation with the federal and provincial governments and are part of the broader coordination efforts by the EU and its member states materialised through the Team Europe Initiative. They also contribute to EU's Global Gateway, the European strategy to boost smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport sectors and to strengthen health, education and research systems across the world. Secretary EAD Dr. Kazim Niaz expressed gratitude for EU support and further said that "EU is the most valued development partner to Pakistan as it held a substantial grant portfolio in Pakistan wherein its focus is, in particular, on socioeconomic development of vulnerable communities. Clean and green energy is yardstick for any sustainable development, EU support in this particular



area is necessary in providing desired impetus to all such efforts by Pakistan". He further expressed his hopes that these three financing agreements will further contribute towards strengthening socioeconomic indicators, as the rural economic transformation, provision of cheap energy and imparting much needed technical training for the youth can greatly benefit poor communities. Ambassador Dr Riina Kionka pointed out: "Pakistan has a huge potential thanks to its people and natural resources. The programmes we have signed today help to harness that potential by giving Pakistanis the skills to get good jobs, by helping them to use sustainable techniques for agriculture

and by providing them access to clean and green energy. Our support comes at a crucial moment, as the country is grappling with an economic crisis and people are still struggling with the effects of the terrible floods. We hope that the three programmes signed today contribute to economic recovery in the aftermath of the floods and make Pakistan stronger and more resilient." **More details about the programmes signed today:** KP Rural Economic Transformation (KP-RET) Project (EUR17 million) - The programme aims to improve rural households' income by supporting farmers in the transition towards more sustainable and profitable

agriculture, creating employment opportunities and focusing on youth and women. KP-RET is part of a larger agricultural development programme led by the Government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, in which the EU contribution will ensure impact on the most vulnerable communities in rural areas. ENERGY Plus: Energy for Climate Resilience in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (EUR30 million) - The programme will create resilient hydro-power facilities and support more efficient use of energy for a sustainable transition to renewable energy. It will also contribute to a more sustainable management of natural resources through a massive tree planting programme. Additionally, it will strengthen provincial government capacity for policy-making, with a focus on participatory planning, implementation and monitoring in energy and natural resources sectors. EU support for sustainable economic development through demand-driven Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Project (EUR40 million) - The programme builds on the EU's long-standing support to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in Pakistan. It will work on the provision of adequately skilled labour with a focus on environment friendly skills in the agribusiness, water and energy sub-sectors. The programme will make the national TVET system more effective and will give better access to skills and employment opportunities for returning and prospective migrants. Specific focus will be put on increasing availability of skilled female labour force in digital and high-tech sectors.

## Court extends interim bail of Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD: A lower court on Monday extended the interim bail of PTT's chairman Imran Khan till January 31, in case pertaining to the protest outside the building of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Additional District and Session Judge Zafar Iqbal heard the bail petition of the former prime minister. PTT's petitioner Dr Baber Awan appeared before the court and requested the judge to grant a one-time exemption from appearance which was accepted by the judge. Dr Baber Awan said that Imran Khan was recovering from injuries and hopefully he would appear at the next hearing. The court adjourned further hearing into the case till January 31. - APP

## California storm leaves over 120,000 without power

CALIFORNIA: More than 120,000 homes and businesses were still without power in California early on Monday, according to data from PowerOutage.us, after a massive storm last week that disrupted road travel with flash floods, rock slides and toppled trees. At least 12 fatalities have been reported from weather-related incidents in California in the past 10 days, Governor Gavin Newsom told a news conference. Forecasters with the National Weather Service warned that northern and central California were still in the path of a "relentless parade of cyclones", promising little relief for the region until the middle of the week. In the last week, severe weather spawned violent wind gusts that toppled trucks, flooded the streets of small towns along northern California's coast and churned up a storm surge that destroyed a pier in Santa Cruz. According to PowerOutage.us, the utility with the most outages was Pacific Gas and Electric Co (PG&E) with over 73,000 customers without power, followed by Sacramento Municipal Utility District at 50,000. - APP

## Harry's racism 'olive branch' dismissed in UK

LONDON: Prince Harry's denial that he accused his family of racism was interpreted in the UK press Monday as a bizarre peace offering, but commentators argued the damage had already been done as his unflinching memoir comes out. The midnight release of "Spare" is being accompanied by four television interviews in Britain and the United States, where Harry now lives with wife Meghan. In the first to air, with Britain's ITV, the Duke of Sussex caused bafflement by insisting he and his mixed-race wife never accused the royal family of racism over comments made about the skin tone of their unborn son. "No I didn't. The British press said that," Harry said, adding that Meghan had also not called the royals "racist". - APP

## Bilawal talks to new Chinese FM



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held a telephone conversation with H.E. Mr. Qin Gang, the newly appointed Foreign Minister of China. Conveying his felicitations on Foreign Minister Qin's new appointment, the Foreign Minister noted that Pakistan and China are time-tested friends and All-Weather Partners, with a long history of mutual support and cooperation. The two Foreign Ministers discussed regional issues of mutual interest. They reaffirmed commitment of Pakistan and China to advance the bilateral All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. The Foreign Minister thanked Foreign Minister Qin for China's active participation in and support for the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan being held today. China's generous and timely assistance for post-flood reconstruction was a source of comfort for millions in Pakistan, and served as a glowing example of international cooperation. With the approach of the Chinese Lunar New Year, the Foreign Minister conveyed his best wishes and warm greetings to Foreign Minister Qin and to H.E. Mr. Wang Yi, Politburo Member and Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, whom Mr. Qin succeeded as Foreign Minister. - DNA

## LG polls in Karachi and Hyderabad on Jan 15

NAZIR SIYAL

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has announced that the local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad will be held on January 15. The verdict was announced by a three-member bench of the commission headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja on Monday. The ECP bench rejected the request filed by MQM leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui seeking delay in the local government polls in Karachi and

Hyderabad and accepted the petition of Jamaat-i-Islami contesting the proposed postponement. The Election Commission of Pakistan on Friday reserved the verdict on the MQM petition challenging the voters' lists to be used during the forthcoming local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad. During the hearing, CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja remarked that the commission would not let the LG polls to be delayed. The MQM lawyer said that the use of old voters' lists during the forthcoming local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad was against the law.

## Brazil riot police deployed at Bolsonaro backers' camp

BRASILIA: Brazilian police deployed at a camp of supporters of far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro in the capital on Monday, a day after rioters launched the worst attack on Brazil's state institutions since its return to democracy in the 1980s. Hundreds of police in riot gear and some on horseback amassed at the encampment near Brasilia's army headquarters, while soldiers in the area withdrew, Reuters witnesses said, after Sunday's storming by thousands of Bolsonaro's backers of Congress, the Supreme Court and the presidential palace. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Bolsonaro's leftist rival who took office on Jan. 1 after a narrow October election win, promised to bring those responsible for the violence to justice, after demonstrators broke windows and furniture, destroyed art work and stole guns and artifacts.

U.S. President Joe Biden joined other world leaders in condemning the attacks, calling them "outrageous", while Bolsonaro who is now in Florida denied inciting his supporters and said the rioters had "crossed the line". Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered the governor of Brasilia removed from office late on Sunday for 90 days over alleged security failings. He also ordered social media platforms Facebook, Twitter and TikTok to block accounts of users spreading anti-democratic propaganda. Facebook parent Meta (META.O) said on Monday it was removing content supporting or praising the weekend ransacking of Brazilian government buildings. Telegram, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube did not immediately respond to requests for comment. - Agencies

## Biden visits US-Mexico border

WEB DESK

EL PASO: President Joe Biden visited the U.S.-Mexico border on Sunday for the first time since taking office, tackling one of the most politically charged issues in the country as he prepares for a re-election bid. Accompanied by Border Patrol agents, Biden toured a section of the wall that divides

the two countries, a signature priority of his Republican predecessor Donald Trump, in an effort to demonstrate that he was taking the issue seriously. Biden on Thursday said his administration would tighten immigration enforcement by blocking Cuban, Haitian and Nicaraguan migrants at the border, expanding the nationalities of those who can be expelled back to Mexico. But that has not impressed Republicans like Texas Governor Greg Abbott, who accused him of failing to enforce immigration laws. "You have violated your constitutional obligation to defend the States against invasion through faithful execution of federal laws," Abbott, a possible 2024 presidential candidate, wrote in a letter he handed to Biden upon his arrival in the state. Biden told reporters he had not yet read the letter.

## KP clerics denounce terrorism

PESHAWAR: Clerics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Monday issued a fatwa against terrorists and terror activities, deeming the taking up of arms against the state's police and military haram (forbidden) in the Shariat (Islamic law). As terrorism rears its ugly head once more in the country following the end of the ceasefire with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in November 2022, scholars of various schools of thought from KP have made a clear declaration against terrorism. These clerics belong to a number of different seminaries, including Darul Uloom Peshawar, Jamia Darul Uloom Haqqania, and the Organisation of Al Madaris issued fatwas. Furthermore, the Association of Al-Madaris Al-Arabiya, Rabat Al-Madaris, Association of Al-Madaris Al-Alafiya, Al-Madaris Al-Shia Association, Jamia Al-Quran Education, and Ulama Council of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have also condemned terrorism. The fatwa issued by the clerics from the province, where most of the recent terrorist attacks were carried out in the preceding year, declares that only the head of the Islamic state has the prerogative to declare jihad (holy war). - DNA

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