



# Islamabad POST

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**Aryna Sabalenka triumphs in thrilling China Open 2023**

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## Apex committee takes key decisions Pakistan sets Nov 1 deadline for illegal immigrants exodus

24 attacks conducted in Pakistan out of which 14 were carried out by Afghan people: interior minister



ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti addressing a press conference. - DNA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani government Tuesday gave November 1 as a deadline to illegal immigrants residing in the country, warning that action would be taken against them after the time limit. Addressing a press conference following an apex committee meeting on the national action plan, the interior minister said that the huddle set November 1 as the deadline for the illegal immigrants to leave the country voluntarily. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chaired the high-level huddle, attended by

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## Fiscal reforms critical for economic stability

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's economy slowed sharply in fiscal year 2023 with real gross domestic product (GDP) estimated to have contracted by 0.6 per cent, according to the World Bank. In a report released on Tuesday, titled 'Pakistan Development Update: Restoring Fiscal Sustainability', the global body said the decline in economic activity in the country reflects the cumulation of domestic and external shocks including the floods of 2022, government restrictions on imports and capital flows, domestic political uncertainty, surging world commodity prices, and tighter global financing. The report said the previous fiscal year ended with significant pressure on domestic prices, fiscal and external accounts and exchange rate, and loss of investor confidence. "The difficult economic conditions along with record high energy and food prices, lower incomes, and the loss of crops and livestock due

to the 2022 floods, have significantly increased poverty." As per the report, the poverty headcount is estimated to have reached 39.4pc in fiscal year 2023, with 12.5 million more Pakistanis falling below the lower-middle income country poverty threshold (\$3.65/day 2017 per capita) relative to 34.2pc in fiscal year 2022. "Careful economic management and deep structural reforms will be required to ensure macroeconomic stability and growth," said World Bank Country Director for Pakistan Najy Benhassine said in the report. He added: "With inflation at record highs, rising electricity prices, severe climate shocks, and insufficient public resources to finance human development investments and climate adaptation, it is imperative that critical reforms are undertaken to build the fiscal space and public means to invest into inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient development." Without a sharp fiscal adjustment and decisive implementation of

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov called on Federal Minister for National Health Service Regulations and Coordination Dr. Nadeem Jan in Islamabad. - DNA

**Nepal hit by two earthquakes**  
The tremors of the quakes also felt at New Delhi

DNA

KATMANDU: Two earthquakes rocked western Nepal on Tuesday, injuring 11 people, damaging homes and triggering a landslide that blocked a major highway, authorities said. The quake of magnitude 6.3 and 5.3 in the district of Bajhang, bordering India, blocked the road to the southern plains, interior ministry official Rama Acharya told media. The quakes, centred in Talkot and Chainpur, struck at an interval of about 30 minutes. Police official Bharat Bahadur Shah said 11 people - seven women and four men - were injured and were being treated in hospital. One woman was missing after being hit by

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## CJP Isa asks why cases aren't filed against martial laws

Justice Akhtar questioned that if parliament has the right to legislate, can it give the authority to form benches to the government?

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: A full court bench of the Supreme Court has resumed hearing multiple petitions against the Practice and Procedure Act. The bench is being headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, while the proceedings are being broadcast live, as was the previous hearing in the case. The CJP remarked that the law affects the chief justice and senior judges. He added that on the one hand if the CJP's authority is not being reduced, it is being limited, but on the other the same authority is being divided between two senior judges. This will impact the next chief justices as well, which was why a full court was hearing the case, Justice Isa remarked. He also added that they wanted to wrap up the case today. Petitioner Niazullah Niaz's lawyer Akram Chaudhry argued that this law has been specified for a few

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## Cipher trial to be held in Adiala

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Law on Tuesday issued a notification to hold Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's trial in Adiala jail in the cipher case. The notification was issued after special court judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain wrote a letter to the Ministry of Law, asking it to issue a notification to hold the hearing of the cipher case in the Rawalpindi prison due to security concerns. In the notification, the law ministry said it did not have an objection to holding the PTI chief's trial in Adiala jail. A day earlier, the special court established under

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## Briefs

**Sattar calls for transparent polls**

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement - Pakistan (MQM-P) and Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) on Tuesday called for the transparent polls. Addressing a press conference in Karachi flanked by GDA general secretary Dr Safdar Abbasi, MQM-P bigwig Farooq Sattar said: "There is a dire need to provide level playing field to all the political parties to ensure transparent general elections." "Despite the fact that Sindh chief minister has been changed, corruption still prevails in the province.

**Australia down Pak by 14 runs**

DNA

HYDERABAD: Australia have defeated Pakistan by 14 runs in the ICC Men's ODI World Cup warm-up game at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad. Despite brilliant knocks from skipper Babar Azam and Iftikhar, the Men in Green fell short in the chase of 352 and suffered loss in their second practice game. Earlier, Australian batters showed no mercy to Pakistani pacers in their innings as they posted a colossal total of 351 runs in 50 overs Glenn Maxwell played a fine knock, scoring 77 off 71 with ten boundaries that went all over the ground, he was followed by Josh Inglis who helped the Aussies accelerate their innings in the last 10 overs, scored 48 off 30 with a handsome 160 strike rate.

## 'Pre-poll rigging'

**PTI demands recovery its leaders; workers**  
Party writes to PM Kakar, CEC; says enforced disappearances 'most serious of all constitutional violations'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) called upon the caretaker prime minister and the chief election commissioner on Tuesday to take immediate action in recovering their forcibly disappeared leaders and workers. In separate letters addressed to PM Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja, PTI's Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan raised alarm over the mysterious disappearance of the party's key leaders and workers. As per Khan's letter, copies of the letters have also been shared with the provincial chief ministers. In his letter, Khan has highlighted names of PTI leaders whose whereabouts are currently unknown. These include Farrukh Habib, Sadaqat Abbasi, Usman Dar, Owais Younis, Irfan Saleem, Abdul Karim Khan, and Awami Muslim League (AML) Chief Sheikh Rashid.

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**NS not returning under any deal**

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Punjab President Rana Sanaullah Tuesday dispelled the speculations that party supremo Nawaz Sharif return to the country is part of any deal. Addressing the media in Lahore, Sanaullah revealed that Nawaz will address the public gathering at 6pm on October 21 at Minar-e-Pakistan soon after arriving in the country on the same day. "Nawaz Sharif will arrive in Lahore on October 21 at 5:30pm," he said. He mentioned that Nawaz is coming to lead the party at the request of

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**Civilian casualties doubled in September**

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Terrorist attacks in Pakistan have increased, with 136 people killed in 65 militant attacks across the country in September, a report published by an Islamabad-based think tank said. According to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) monthly report, 144 people were injured, including civilians and security personnel, with

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## Press Freedom crackdown Indian authorities raid homes of senior journalists, activists

Despite allegations of receiving illegal funds from China, NewsClick vehemently denies these charges

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Police in the Indian capital, Delhi, conducted raids on Tuesday morning at the homes of several prominent journalists and authors in connection with an investigation into the funding of the news website NewsClick. Despite allegations of receiving illegal funds from China, NewsClick vehemently denies these charges. The raids, which have raised concerns about press freedom, involved the seizure of mobile phones and laptops from those targeted. NewsClick, established in 2009, is an independent news and current affairs website known for its critical stance towards the government. In 2021, it faced a raid by tax authorities over allegations of violating India's foreign direct investment rules. Tuesday's coordinated raids at 30 locations mark one of the most extensive operations against India's media in recent years, prompting opposition leaders to criticise it as a "fresh attack on the media" by the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) government. Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur has denied

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## India, Canada row intensifies further

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: India has told Canada that it must repatriate 41 diplomats by Oct. 10, the Financial Times reported on Tuesday. Ties between India and Canada have become seriously strained over Canadian suspicion that Indian government agents had a role in the June murder in Canada of a Sikh separatist leader and Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who India had labeled a "terrorist". India has dismissed the allegation as absurd. The Financial Times, citing people familiar with the Indian demand, said India had threatened to revoke the diplomatic immunity of those diplomats told to leave who remained after

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# ISSI launches report on “human security through development”

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) launched a Special Report on “Human Security through Development” today. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik. Other discussants included: Ambassador Shafiq Kakakhel, Chairperson BoG, SDPI; Ms. Aisha Khan, Executive Director, Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change; Dr. Aliya Khan, Former Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, QAU, and Mr. Faheem Sardar, Senior Policy Specialist, NSD. In his address, Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Malik emphasized the evolving geopolitical landscape worldwide, where human security challenges manifest uniquely in various countries. He underscored the importance of aligning human security goals with Pakistan's national capabilities to transform them into tangible realities. The Chairman stressed the necessity of making policy adjustments to advance development goals and objectives, stressing that every element of national power must contribute to the nation's development efforts. He emphasized the critical role of nurturing a skilled human resource base to effectively address challenges to national progress. Furthermore, the NDMA Chairman highlighted that Pakistan is transitioning from a reactive stance to a proactive approach in the context of disaster preparedness, disaster management and post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction. In this context, he enumerated the wide range of policy measures and concrete actions initiated by NDMA including in

collaboration with national and international partners. In conclusion, he emphasized the importance of formulating National Development Goals tailored to Pakistan's specific needs, underlining that while the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are valuable, each country should also focus on its unique developmental priorities as well. In his welcome remarks, Director-General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized the significance of the Special Report as a valuable addition to the ongoing discourse on human security in Pakistan. He noted that while traditional security concerns are vital, they often fall short in addressing the increasingly accentuating non-traditional security threats and challenges. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood pointed out that Pakistan's National Security Policy (NSP) has rightly prioritized human security as part of comprehensive national security framework, recognizing the numerous security challenges that have impeded the country's progress towards sustainable development. Among other things, he stressed the importance of nurturing the young generation, describing them as a valuable asset for the nation and

highlighting the need to enhance their skill development for increased human security. Furthermore, he emphasized that climate change stands as a significant human security issue for Pakistan and must be addressed with the utmost seriousness. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood concluded by thanking the contributors - noting that the Special Report underscores the necessity for a comprehensive approach to tackle the whole range of human security challenges effectively in a holistic and integrated manner and should serve as a road-map for all the relevant stakeholders. In her remarks, Director Neelum Nigar highlighted the significance of the CSP report for policymakers, practitioners, and academics, emphasizing its focus on the critical aspects of human security and development within Pakistan. She underscored the diverse backgrounds of the contributors, which enriched the report with a wealth of insights and perspectives on the subject of human security. Dr. Nigar emphasized that the report thoroughly covers challenges and opportunities in Pakistan's human security and development domain.



## 33 Pink toilets to be built for working women

MULTAN : A plan to establish 'Pink toilets' for women in government offices of South Punjab has been launched as 433 toilets to be built for working women. The preparation of the plan has been started as per directions of Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Saqib Zafar. A review meeting about the project was held by Secretary Services South Punjab Amjad Shoaib Khan Tareen in which Additional Secretary Specialized Healthcare Sadia Mahr, Additional Secretary Coordination Muhammad Farooq Dogar, Additional Secretary Primary and Secondary Healthcare Qamarul Zaman Qaisrani, Additional Secretary Higher Education Ata-ul Haq and others were present. Amjad Shoaib while addressing the meeting said that pink toilets would be built in government offices for working women and visiting women in different districts. He said that the Pink Toilets for Women project was part of the implementation of the Gender Action Plan regarding gender equality and informed that there were 450 separate toilets for women in government offices across the region. He directed all the concerned departments to submit an action plan for the construction of pink toilets within a week and convey the estimated cost and budget details in the action plan. Pink toilets will also be established at highways and other public places. Mr Tareen added that the situation of the existing toilets for women in government offices will also be improved while daycare centres and separate waiting areas also be established for women in the second phase.—DNA

## Chairman PRCS inaugurates BSL-III laboratory

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant stride towards enhancing public health services and reinforcing disaster response capabilities, Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, officially inaugurated a cutting-edge Biosafety Level III (BSL-III) laboratory at the PRCS National Headquarters today. This advanced facility, equipped with state-of

the-art technology, is poised to offer a diverse range of laboratory tests to the public at significantly discounted rates, underscoring PRCS's steadfast commitment to community service. The ceremony was attended by Muhammad Abaidullah Khan, Secretary General of PRCS, as well as delegations and officers from the IFRC, Turkish Red Crescent, German Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and PRCS staff. Adhering to stringent specifications set

by the WHO and other international benchmarks, the PRCS PCR Lab with BSL-III standards sets a new standard for laboratory safety. Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari underscored the pivotal role this facility will play in mitigating health-related risks associated with handling infectious agents, toxins, and biological hazards. The laboratory's strategic design aims to enhance safety operations and cultivate an environmental culture crucial for effective responses to pandemics and epidemics. During the inauguration, Chairman Laghari remarked, “The commencement of this cutting-edge BSL-III laboratory marks a significant milestone in our continuous efforts to serve the community and fortify our disaster response capabilities.

## Governor hails PAK-China friendship at celebration

DNA

Peshawar : Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has said that China is a time tested and true friend of Pakistan who has always helped Pakistan in difficult times. The whole world gives examples of Pakistan-China friendship and this is the reason why Pakistanis always share in the happiness of Chinese people and Celebrations held across Pakistan on the occasion of the 74th Independence Day of the People's Republic of China is a clear proof that Pakistan-China friendship is sweeter than honey, higher than the Himalayas and deeper than the oceans. He expressed these views while addressing a colorful event organized by China Window, a Chinese



cultural center established in Peshawar, on the occasion of China's National Day. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Barrister Mian Feroz Jamal Shah Kaka Khel, Provincial Minister for Sports, Youth Affairs and Science and Technology

Dr. Najibullah Marwat, Iranian Consul General Ali Banafsha Kha, Secretary Information Abdul Jabbar Shah, MD Bank of Khyber Muhammad Ali Gulfaraz, Director Information Mohammad Imran, President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fawad Ishaq, President of

Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik, high civil and government officials, writers, poets, intellectuals, artists, representatives of minority communities and people from different walks of life attended the function. On this occasion, a cake was also cut in connection with the National Day of China.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Railways, Shahid Ashraf Tarar chairing a meeting at Ministry of Railways in Islamabad.—APP

## Crackdown against power theft continues

QUETTA : On the special instructions of the Ministry of Energy Power Division, operations against electricity thieves and defaulters of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) are in full swing in all operation circles. A handout issued by the QESCO, said that so far, 5117 connections have been found involved in electricity theft across the province. Illegal connections included 3049 domestic, 1986 commercial and 82 industrial. He further said that as many as 1265 applications have been filed for legal action against electricity thieves in police stations and levies stations, and so far 380 FIRs have been registered against electricity thieves in all areas of the province including the provincial capital Quetta. Of which 66 FIRs have been registered in the provincial capital Quetta, 89 in Lorelai, 65 in Khuzdar, 93 in Sabi, 46 in Pishin and 21 in Makran. Apart from this, a total of 166 electricity thieves have been arrested so far, against whom legal proceedings are ongoing. Meanwhile, 25 lakh 30 thousand unit detection fines have been charged to the electricity thieves. A fine of 13.83 million rupees has been imposed on all the electricity thieves, while 9.26 million rupees have been collected from the electricity thieves so far.—APP

## AUP starts BS in development studies

PESHAWAR : The Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Agriculture Peshawar (AUP) has started a new degree program for BS Development Studies Director IDS Professor Dr. Inayatullah Jan and his team thanked the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht and the Syndicate members for approving the degree programme. Dr. Inayatullah said that Development Studies is an emerging social, economic, political, cultural, environmental and gender-oriented field. The course covers several interrelated subjects such as economics, sociology, political science, gender studies, ecology, statistics, social science research, and others. This course is designed in

response to development needs at local, national, regional and global levels. It would enable graduates to develop the theoretical, conceptual and analytical skills needed to understand the process of socio-economic development and the challenges it faces, he said. This course is important for development workers and practitioners, social workers, social science researchers, development consultants, administrators, policymakers, and academics. Upon successful completion of the course, graduates would have a better understanding of contemporary development issues and the role of communities, civil society, the private sector and government agencies in addressing these issues. Dr. In-

ayatullah said this study is a market-based field therefore, graduates have great career opportunities in development agencies, donor agencies, national and international NGOs, private sector, government institutions, and educational institutions. In their practical life, Development Studies graduates would be able to play a key role in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda at the national and global levels. He further said that many new undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes have been started during the tenure of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht and the university is on the path of further development under his leadership.

## PDMA for winter contingency plan to minimize disaster risks

PESHAWAR : The Provincial Disaster Management Authority, under the guidance of the Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Tuesday commenced the process of developing the Winter Contingency Plan for 2023-24 in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The primary objectives are to minimize disaster risks, identify hazards, assess risks, and map available resources to enhance preparedness and ensure a coordinated and prompt response. In this context, a crucial pre-winter planning and orientation meeting

was convened with the Provincial Line Departments, chaired by PDMA Director General, Janat Gul Afridi. Director General Janat Gul Afridi said, “We have initiated the Winter Contingency Planning process involving all stakeholders, and the plan is expected to be finalized by mid-November. We have developed data collection tools and shared them with stakeholders, including information on district/sector-specific hazards, vulnerability profiles, hazard impacts, damages, compensation details, resource mapping, needs assessments, and coordination efforts.” He added, “Through the upcoming

contingency plan, our aim is to mitigate potential losses caused by winter-related natural hazards including extreme low temperatures, fog/smog, snowfall, rainfall, landslides, flash floods and seismic activity in the mountainous north and west.” The Winter Contingency Plan will categorize districts based on Vulnerability and Risk Assessment, ranging from very high to low vulnerability levels. Each weather pattern will have its own set of contingencies. The unique geography, terrain, and natural resources of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expose the province to various climate-related challenges.—APP

## IG PUNJAB visited Mianwali and PHP check post

MEHTAB PIERZAD

LAHORE :Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited Mianwali, met the brave soldiers who foiled the attack of terrorists at PHP check post Kundal, bravely fought and killed two terrorists in counter action. IGP encouraged all the force with cash reward, praised their bravery. He also attended the funeral prayer of Shaheed Head Constable Haroon Khan at Police Lines Mianwali, met the family members and assured them of all possible support from the department. According to the details, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Additional IG Special Branch Zulfiqar Hameed, Additional IG CTD Waseem Sial, Additional IGP PHP Rao Abdul Karim, DIG IT Ah-san Yunus along with other

officers reached Mianwali and moved to Kundal Check Post. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar met the brave jawans posted at the patrol post who foiled the terrorist attack. DIG Patrolling Police Athar Waheed and the soldiers posted at the frontline briefed the IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar about the terrorist attack last night. IGP praised the bravery of officials posted at the top of check post including Raees, Imtiaz, Shah Jahan and others, gave them cash prizes for excellent performance. IGP Punjab awarded 05 lakh to the CTD jawans who conducted the counter operation, Rs 03 million to all the staff posted at the check post. Additional IG Patrolling Rao Abdul Karim, Additional IG CTD Waseem Sial, Additional IG Special Branch Zulfiqar Hameed, DPO Mianwali and other officers

briefed IG Punjab about the search and sweep operation against the attacking terrorists, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that the Punjab Police, along with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and the armed forces, will take full action against the terrorists in the difficult hilly border areas. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that Kundal check post will be named after Shaheed Head Constable Haroon Khan, border area patrolling police posts will be strengthened and equipped with latest facilities. IG Punjab said that the morale of Police force is extremely high, cowardly terrorist attacks cannot lower our morale. IG Punjab encouraged the brave officials of Patrolling Post Kundal for their excellent performance. Later, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar reached Police Lines Mianwali where he attended the funeral prayers

of martyred Head Constable Haroon Khan. All the other officers including RPO Sargodha, DPO Mianwali were also present in the funeral prayer. Active troop of Punjab police saluted the dead body of the martyr. After performing the funeral prayers, the body of the martyr was sent to his native place for burial. IG Punjab paid tribute to the unparalleled sacrifice of martyred Head Constable Haroon Khan and said that sacrificing one's life for the sake of the country is the work of great people. Head Constable Haroon Khan presented his life in the line of duty. IG Punjab further said that the welfare of martyr Head Constable Haroon's family will be taken care of. On late Saturday night, terrorists attacked the EsaKhal Kundal Patrolling post in Mianwali, which was foiled by the Punjab Police team by tak-

ing timely action. Haroon Khan, head constable of the patrolling police, embraced martyrdom in the terrorist attack, the terrorists were forced to escape due to timely action by police force. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that more than 10 terrorists tried to attack from 02 sides, the police was fully alert even late at night, immediate counter-measures were taken, the terrorists tried to enter the building for a long time. The police retaliated and foiled the terrorist attack. Later, CTD Punjab Police in retaliatory action killed 02 terrorists after 04 hours of intense fighting while 01 terrorist was seriously injured. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that the killed terrorists were involved in many terrorist acts across the country, search and sweep operation is going on in the area.

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## Briefs

## 3 dead in Bangkok mall shooting

BANGKOK : Three people were killed and four wounded in a shooting at a major Bangkok shopping mall on Tuesday, with the shooter arrested by police.

Multiple videos circulating on social media showed people running from the Siam Paragon mall, one of the Thai capital's top shopping destinations, which is hugely popular with tourists and locals alike. Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin told reporters the attacker had been apprehended and the situation brought under control.

"Police are clearing the scene. The situation is easing," Srettha told reporters. Yuthana Srettanon, director of the Erawan Emergency Center, said three people were killed and four wounded in the incident, in a message sent to reporters. Dozens of police vehicles and a number of ambulances could be seen outside one of the shopping centre's main entrances in the wake of the incident.

People were still being escorted from the mall, while bystanders could be seen walking past along the gridlocked road outside. The shooting comes just days before the one-year anniversary of one of the bloodiest days in recent Thai history, when an ex-police officer armed with a knife and gun attacked a nursery, murdering 24 children and 12 adults. —APP

## UN seeks \$526m to avert South Sudan hunger

GENEVA : The UN World Food Program (WFP) said on Tuesday that it needs over \$526m for hunger response in South Sudan as the "urgency is looming." This year the WFP received "less than half" of the funding that it needed, and the next year is "equally concerning," the food agency's South Sudan director told a UN briefing in Geneva. "Basically, half the funding means half the food assistance, and in order to reach as many people as possible, we have reduced rations to 50%, meaning people are getting less than 300 grams of food per day, and this includes those people arriving from Sudan," Mary-Ellen McGroarty said. "Continuing in this manner means that we are unable to break the cycle of entrenched hunger and provide a way out for families facing extreme hunger," McGroarty stressed. "We are barely pulling people back from the cliff edge of desperation." The humanitarian situation on the Sudan-South Sudan border is at a "critical juncture." —APP

## Pak calls for peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute

NEW YORK: Pakistan has called on the United Nations to push for a peaceful settlement of lingering Kashmir dispute in accordance with the Security Council resolutions and Kashmiri people's wishes. Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the world body in New York, Munir Akram told the General Assembly's Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee that since 1946, 80 former colonies have gained independence but there are still peoples who are denied the right to self-determination, most prominently the people of occupied Jammu & Kashmir and Palestine. The right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people, the Pakistani envoy said, was explicitly recognized in UNSC resolution 47 and several subsequent resolutions, which prescribed that the final disposition of the State of Jammu & Kashmir should be decided by its people through a free and fair plebiscite held under UN auspices. These resolutions were accepted by both India and Pakistan, he said, adding that under Article 25 of the UN Charter, both parties are obliged to implement these resolutions. In his remarks, Ambassador Akram also said that durable peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through the two-state solution and the establishment of a viable. —APP

## Pakistan new Ambassador calls on Russian Deputy FM

Ambassador Jamali resolved to build on the positive momentum in the bilateral relations in order to expand cooperation in all areas of mutual interest

DNA

MOSCOW : Pakistan's new Ambassador to Russian Federation HE Mr. Muhammad Khalid Jamali called on Deputy Foreign Minister



Mr. Andrey Rudenko to present a copy of his credentials at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting Ambassador Jamali stated that he was honored and delighted to lead the embassy of Pakistan in Russia at a time when the relations between the two countries were on a steady positive trajectory. Ambassador Jamali conveyed that developing excellent relations with the Russian Federation was one of the priorities of Pakistan's foreign policy and shared that during his farewell meeting with President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi the latter had instructed him to strengthen bilateral relations with Russia. Ambassador Jamali resolved to build on the positive momentum in the bilateral relations in order to expand cooperation in all areas of mutual interest.

## Australian Indigenous rights vote fuels racism

FOREIGN DESK

SYDNEY : A referendum aimed at elevating the rights of Indigenous Australians has instead triggered a torrent of racist slurs and abuse, with toxic debate spreading online and in the media. The October 14 vote will decide whether to finally recognise First Nations peoples in the constitution. Their ancestors were in Australia for 60,000 years before British colonial rule began in the late 1700s. The reform would give Indigenous communities the right to advise parliament — a so-called "Voice" — to help address entrenched inequalities including poorer health, weaker education, and higher rates of incarceration. But recent surveys indicate support for the referendum has plummeted over the past year and will likely fail.

The debate has stirred uncertainty about the reform's scope and impact. It has also stoked racial tensions. "It has involved personal attacks, labelling of people as 'un-Australian' and perpetuating racially based stereotypes," Australia's Race Discrimination Commissioner Chin Tan told AFP. "I am disappointed that the way some people have engaged in the debate has stoked racial tensions and caused harm to First Nations peoples." Racist conduct had gone largely unchallenged in the public domain, he said. "Racism should never be accepted as part of the exchange of ideas in public debate." Voters have to choose one way or the other, and recent surveys indicate the "yes" camp is at just over 40 percent and the "no" side at nearly 60 percent. It is a near reversal of the situation a year ago. Opponents have criticised

the proposal for a lack of detail and for creating unnecessary bureaucracy. But opposition leader Peter Dutton, one of the leading campaigners against the Voice, also warned it would "re-racialise" Australia. Referendum supporters accused Dutton of disinformation and scare-mongering. Indigenous-related racism reports have spiked since July, according to University of Technology Sydney criminology professor Chris Cunneen, who leads a project that documents such incidents. The share of racism complaints in the "Call It Out" register related to the referendum had climbed to about 30 percent since July, he said. In previous months, the rate was eight percent. "We have also seen an increase in reports of racism online on social media and in the media during the same period," Cunneen said.

"Combined these make roughly more than half of all reports." A national mental health helpline for First Nations peoples, 13YARN, painted a similar picture. It recorded a 108-percent increase in callers reporting abuse, racism and trauma from March-June compared to a year earlier, a spokesperson said. University of Queensland communications professor Timothy Graham examined thousands of Voice-related posts on X, formerly Twitter. He found a "catastrophic breakdown of public communication about the referendum across the entire Australian media ecology." "X/Twitter is overrun with confusion, misinformation, and incivility — this occurs in what can only be described as a vicious feedback loop between politicians, partisan media, and social media,"

## Japan sees hottest September since records began

The UK, too, has matched its record for the warmest September since records began in 1884

TOKYO : Japan has seen its hottest September since records began 125 years ago, the weather agency said, in a year expected to be the warmest in human history. The scorching September's average temperature was 2.66 degrees Celsius higher than usual, the Japan Meteorological Agency said on Monday. This was "the highest figure since the start of statistics in 1898", the agency said in a statement. This year is expected to be the hottest in human history as climate change accelerates, with countries including Austria, France, Germany, Poland and Switzerland each announcing their warmest September on record. French weather authority Météo-France said the September temperature average in the country will be around 21.5 degrees Celsius, between 3.5C and 3.6C above the 1991-2020 reference period. The UK, too, has matched its record for the warmest September since records began in 1884. The average global temperature in June, July and August was 16.77 degrees Celsius, surpassing the previous 2019 record, the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said in a report. In September, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told world leaders the climate crisis had "opened the gates to hell". In his opening address at the Climate Ambition Summit, Guterres evoked this year's "horrendous heat" but stressed: "We can still limit the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees," referring to the target seen as needed to avoid long-term climate catastrophe. —Agencies

## Armenia ratifies ICC founding treaty, angering Russia

YEREVAN : Armenian lawmakers approved a key step towards joining the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Tuesday, a move that is expected to escalate tensions with the ex-Soviet country's historic ally Moscow.

Russia had warned Armenia against voting to ratify the founding treaty of the ICC, after the international court in March issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin over the war in Ukraine and the illegal deportation of children to Russia. The vote illustrated a growing chasm between Moscow and Yerevan, which has grown angry with the Kremlin over its perceived inaction over Armenia's long-standing confrontation with Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani forces last month swept through the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh — where Russian peacekeepers are deployed — and secured the surrender of Armenian separatist forces that had controlled the mountainous region for decades. —Agencies

## China's Evergrande resumes HK trading

DNA

HONG KONG : Shares in Chinese property giant Evergrande soared as trading resumed on Tuesday, following a suspension last week when the heavily indebted company announced its boss was under criminal investigation. In early trading on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, prices jumped more than 60 percent before dropping to ten percent and then rising again. The resumption follows an application notice filed late Monday, though there was no such request for the firm's electric vehicle unit. A separate statement said trading for Evergrande Property Services would also re-start at 9 am (0100 GMT) Tuesday. Evergrande has become a symbol of China's ballooning property-sector crisis, which has seen several high-profile firms engulfed in a sea of debt, fuelling fears about the country's wider economy and a possible global spillover. Media reported last Wednesday that Evergrande boss Xu Jiayin was being held by police, in the latest twist for the property behemoth. The firm then confirmed Thursday that Xu was suspected of "illegal crimes" following the suspension of its shares from trading. No specific reason was given for the decision to suspend trading, which also affected the company's property services and electric vehicle units. Evergrande estimated it had debts of \$328 billion at the end of June. —Agencies

## Nigeria unions call off strike over living costs

ABUJA : Nigeria's labour unions on agreed to call off a planned strike in protest over rising living costs after the government offered a package of measures to cushion the impact of its economic reforms. Since he came to office in May, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has ended a fuel subsidy and liberalised the naira currency in reforms officials say are painful but necessary to help revive Africa's largest economy. The measures have tripled fuel costs and inflation is now at 25 percent, prompting the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to call for an indefinite strike from Tuesday. But after talks on Sunday and Monday, unions and the government agreed to a suspension of labour action. "The NLC and TUC accept to suspend for 30 days the planned indefinite nationwide strike," the unions and government said in a joint statement. On Sunday, Tinubu had appealed to Nigerians to be patient for his reforms meant to create benefits. Investors have generally applauded his reforms. As part of its package with unions, the government offered a 35,000 naira (\$45) a month pay increase for six months for federal employees, a temporary suspension of VAT on diesel and social security cash transfers to the poorest Nigerians. —DNA

## Turkey's inflation hovers near 60%

ISTANBUL: Turkey's annual inflation rate held steady near 60 percent last month, official data showed Tuesday, offering the first evidence that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's economic policy U-turn was working. The TUIK state statistics agency said consumer prices rose 61.5 percent over the 12-month period ending in September. The annual rate stood at 58.9 percent in August and 47.8 percent in July. The month-on-month increase in prices also slowed to 4.8 percent in September from 9.1 percent in August and 9.5 percent in July. Inflation was spearheaded by a 30.3 percent monthly jump in the cost of education in the new school year. But the price of items such as clothing only rose by 2.6 percent on the month. The data suggest that Turkey's inflation rate is starting to peak after Erdogan signed off on a series of interest rate hikes that have taken the policy rate to 30 percent from 8.5 percent in four months. "The small (by Turkey's recent standards) rise in inflation to 61.5 percent last month, from 58.9 percent in August, provides the first signs that the inflation spike is close to levelling off," Capital Economics analyst William Jackson said. Erdogan had been a lifelong supporter of the unorthodox economic theory that high interest rates cause — rather than cure — inflation. But he reversed his approach after surviving a difficult May election that coincided with the worst economic crisis of his two-decade rule. He handed Turkey's economic reins to a group of technocrats with experience on Wall Street and broad support among foreign investors. Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek is credited with convincing Erdogan that Turkey would enter a systemic crisis unless he radically changed course. The annual inflation rate touched 85 percent last October, the highest level since Turkey began its transformation to full-fledged market economics in the 1990s. The rate began to slow once the so-called "base effect" kicked in — high levels of inflation began to look small compared to even higher ones recorded 12 months earlier. —DNA



Beirut : Ambassador Salman Athar called on H.E. Hassan Diab, former Prime Minister of Republic of Lebanon. The Ambassador talks on bilateral relations as well as of various initiatives of the Embassy to promote ties. DNA

## Tunisian president rejects EU financial aid

Kais Saied says offer contradicts European Union's previous agreement signed in July with Tunisia to secure border

FOREIGN DESK

TUNIS : Unisian President Kais Saied has rejected financial support announced by the European Union in September, saying the amount is small and goes against a deal signed three months ago. Saied's move could undermine the "strategic partnership" from July that includes measures on combating human traffickers and tightening borders, and which came during a sharp increase in boats heading to Europe from the North African nation.

The European Commission last month said it would disburse 127 million euros (\$133 million) in aid to Tunisia as part of the deal to fight illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. "Tunisia rejects what the EU announced, not because of the small amount ... but because the proposal conflicts with the memorandum of understanding signed in July," Saied said. The July deal included a pledge of 1 billion euros in aid to Tunisia to help its battered economy, rescue state finances and deal with the migra-



tion crisis. The smaller amount announced by Europe 10 days ago, however, has frustrated Tunisian authorities struggling to improve public finances and raised fears among credit rating agencies that the government could default on foreign debts in coming months. The dispute between the two parties has coincided with the arrival of record numbers of migrants from Tunisia and North Africa to Italy's island of Lampedusa. Tunisia last week postponed a visit by a delegation from the European Commission to discuss the details of the

migration agreement. Last month it also denied the entry of five members of the European Parliament's foreign affairs committee for meetings over the political situation in Tunisia, saying it would not allow interference in its affairs. Some European countries, including Germany, oppose the immigration deal, saying it does not address human rights issues and the political situation after Saied seized power, shut down the Tunisian parliament and began ruling by decree in what the opposition says was a coup.

## Briefs

### Malala to deliver Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture

LONDON: Pakistani Nobel laureate and human rights activist Malala Yousafzai will become the youngest speaker to deliver the 21st Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture in Johannesburg, South Africa. Verne Harris, Chief Executive of the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), made the announcement on X, formerly Twitter. "Scheduled for 5 December 2023, this lecture holds special significance as it coincides with the tenth anniversary of Madiba's passing," he said. The Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture is one of the foundation's flagship programmes to pay homage to its founder - Mandela. Mandela became South Africa's first black president in 1994. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for his efforts to promote racial reconciliation in his racially scarred nation. "Malala embodies the type of leadership we believe the world needs across all levels of society. In the face of current global challenges, which can seem daunting, she stands as an inspiring symbol of hope for a just and equitable future," said Harris.

Malala was shot in the head by the Taliban gunmen in October 2012 as she was returning from her school in Swat valley. She became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize at the age of 17 in recognition of her efforts for children's rights and girls' education. - Agencies

### Trump turns up at NY fraud trial to blast 'scam'

NEW YORK: Former President Donald Trump has attacked a judge and prosecutor in a day of courtroom drama as he attended the opening of a fraud trial that could threaten his business empire. As the trial got underway, the former president occasionally glanced in the direction of Judge Arthur Engoron as he addressed the court.

Moments beforehand, in a tirade outside court that echoed across the chamber, Mr Trump had called the judge a "rogue adjudicator". Ms James was not spared either in his remarks to reporters at the top of the courtroom steps. "It's a scam, it's a sham. Just so you know, my financial statements are phenomenal," Mr Trump added. "There was no crime - the crime was against me." Given the former president's personal attacks, observers expected a tense atmosphere in the cramped confines of the court. But the three key figures in legal drama had minimal direct interactions. - Agencies

### Pak to launch 5G services by Aug 2024

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is gearing up for the introduction of 5G mobile phone connectivity in the country, with plans for a rollout slated for August 2024, said the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication on Tuesday. This marks a pivotal moment in technological advancement as Pakistan moves closer to joining the ranks of countries with 5G capabilities.

This announcement comes as a response to the growing demand for faster and more advanced telecommunication services. Officials, in this regard, have unveiled a comprehensive business plan for the launch of 5G services in the country. Moreover, the demand of telecom operators for free 5G spectrum allocation has been rejected. Instead, the government has opted to facilitate operators in reducing costs associated with infrastructure development. To ensure the successful deployment of 5G services, the Ministry of Information Technology has decided to hire an international consultant.

# Borrell dismisses concern about EU's support for Ukraine

"The EU remains united in its support to Ukraine ... I don't see any member state folding on their engagement," Borrell told a news conference in Ukrainian capital

NEWS DESK

KYIV: The European Union's foreign policy chief on Monday led a delegation of top diplomats on an unannounced visit to Kyiv and dismissed concerns about political tension in the bloc over its long-term support for Ukraine's fight against Russia. Though largely symbolic, the informal meeting between EU and Ukrainian diplomats demonstrated the EU's "clear commitment" to Ukraine in its 19-month-long war, Josep Borrell said. "The EU remains united in its support to Ukraine ... I don't see any member state folding on their engagement," Borrell told a news conference in the Ukrainian capital. The gathering was the first time EU foreign ministers have met outside the bloc - and in a war zone, according to Borrell. The talks took place after the weekend election victory in EU member Slovakia of former Prime Minister Robert Fico, whose pro-Russian agenda has increased the question marks about the EU's continued support for Kyiv. The small eastern European country could bring more tension to the EU's discussions on Ukraine, as has happened with Hungary's at-times cool attitude toward Kyiv. Budapest has maintained close relations with Moscow and argued against supplying arms to Ukraine or providing it with economic assistance. Slovakia operates a key rail line used to transport western military hardware to Ukraine. The EU, the United States and the United Kingdom have provided massive military and financial support to Ukraine, enabling it to stand up to the Kremlin's attack. The assistance is crucial for Ukraine's weakened economy and has so far been open-ended. But uncertainty has set in over how long Kyiv's allies will keep sending aid worth billions of dollars (euros). U.S. President Joe Biden on Sunday reassured allies of continued U.S. financial support for the war effort, after Congress averted a government shutdown by adopting a short-term funding package that dropped assistance for Ukraine in its battle against Russia. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday that Biden had rallied more than 140 countries to



condemn Russia's invasion and built a coalition of more than 50 countries to provide aid to Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia's finances are deteriorating in part over sanctions. "There is a strong, very strong international coalition behind Ukraine," Jean-Pierre said. And if Russian President Vladimir Putin "thinks he can outlast us, he's wrong." Many U.S. lawmakers acknowledge that winning approval for Ukraine assistance in Congress is growing more difficult as the war grinds on. Borrell, at his news conference, insisted the EU is devoted to "sustained engagement" with Ukraine. "Our resolve ... is firm and will continue," he said. He ticked off a list of ongoing commitments the 27-nation EU has made and hopes to make, including proposed military aid of 5 billion euros (\$5.3 billion) next year, a target to train some 40,000 Ukrainian troops and possible joint arms industry ventures between EU and Ukrainian defense companies. Other signs of the EU's commitment include help with cyber defense, a demining program to enable Ukraine's postwar recovery and the reform of Ukrainian

law enforcement to crack down on corruption, Borrell said. But the EU's "strongest security commitment" for Ukraine is to grant it membership of the bloc, he said. Ukraine is bent on becoming a member of the EU, and EU officials have encouraged that course, even though it could take years amid a war of attrition with no end in sight. "With every village, with every meter that Ukraine liberates, with every meter in which it rescues its people, it is also paving its way to the European Union," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock told reporters in Kyiv. "Both Ukraine and the European side are determined to move forward at maximum speed, taking into account all the reforms that Ukraine has carried out, is currently carrying out and will continue to implement," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said. Kuleba also offered reassurances about the country's allies after the U.S. Congress left Ukraine aid out of its funding package. Kuleba told reporters that Ukraine held discussions with representatives of both parties in Congress to ensure more help will arrive. "The decision was taken as it was, but we are now working with both sides of the Congress to make sure that it does not repeat again under any circumstances," Kuleba said. "The question is whether what happens in the U.S. Congress last weekend is an incident or a system. I think it was an incident," he added. Kuleba said he also urged the foreign ministers "to provide maximum support to their defense companies in building cooperation with Ukrainian defense companies." Such cooperation recently became a frequent topic in the talks between Ukraine and its partners. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that he did not doubt that Washington "will continue to be directly involved in the conflict." At the same time, Putin is waging that international support for Kyiv will sooner or later begin to flag. Peskov said the fatigue will eventually bring "fragmentation" of Ukraine's foreign assistance. U.K. Defense Secretary Grant Shapps insisted Monday that the U.S. was "a long way" from withdrawing its support from Ukraine, and he reaffirmed the British commitment.

### PTI's MLA Chaudhry Maqbool Gujjar de-seated

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: After rigging in the election to LA-35 Jammu-II was proved, the election tribunal de-seated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MLA Chaudhry Maqbool Gujjar and ordered a re-election. The election tribunal cancelled the notification of the success of Chaudhry Maqbool Gujjar. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate Chaudhry Ismail had challenged the results in the election tribunal, alleging that the returning officer changed the results. The judgment said that the counter files of eight polling stations were found to be empty, which is a violation of Section 60 of the Election Act. "All this process makes the results questionable. The election in LA-35 Jammu-II should be annulled and there should be a re-election," it added. "The election commission should take action against the officials involved in rigging," it recommended. Chaudhry Jameel Jagal Advocate pursued the case on behalf of Chaudhry Muhammad Ismail.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan Aybek Osmanov met with the Director General of the PNCA Ayub Jamali. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest and to enhance cultural cooperation between the two countries. - DNA

### Vice Admiral Naveed Ashraf appointed Chief of Naval Staff

STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: The President of Pakistan has been pleased to appoint Vice Admiral Naveed Ashraf Hi (M) T Bt as Chief of the Naval Staff and promoted him to the rank of Admiral. His promotion to the rank of Admiral will be effective from the date of assuming Command of Pakistan Navy scheduled on 7 Oct 23. Vice Admiral Naveed Ashraf will succeed Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi who will relinquish the Command of Pakistan Navy. The Change of Command ceremony will be held at Islamabad. Vice Admiral Naveed Ashraf was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1989 and he was awarded Quaid-e-Azam Gold Medal on successful completion of initial naval training at Germany and Pakistan. During his illustrious naval career, the Flag Officer has served on various Command and Staff appointments. His rich Command experience of over 10 years include; Commanding Officer of a Gun Boat, a Mine Hunter, three Destroyers and Command of 25th & 18th Destroyer Squadrons. Besides, Vice Admiral Naveed Ashraf remained Commandant of Pakistan Naval Academy and had the honour to Command Pakistan Navy Fleet.

### Ashan spills the beans on Gen Faiz's role in Faizabad sit-in deal

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader and former interior minister Ashan Iqbal has revealed that Lt Gen (retired) Faiz Hameed had insisted on becoming a signatory to the Faizabad sit-in agreement signed with the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) in 2017. Speaking on Geo News programme 'Capital Talk' hosted by Hamid Mir on Monday, Iqbal said both he and the then prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi were not in favour of a senior army officer becoming a signatory to that agreement. However, he said, Gen Faiz insisted that the protesting TLP wouldn't accept the accord if he didn't become part of it as guarantor. The former interior minister said he had been in contact with the then PM Abbasi when the accord was being finalised. "When I read out the contents of the agreement to the prime minister, he also suggested that it would be better that General Sahib didn't sign it," said Iqbal. "I also conveyed to General Sahib that it wouldn't be good for him and his institution to sign the agreement given its political nature." Iqbal said that Gen Faiz had told him that other party (TLP) would not honour the agreement unless he became a guarantor of the accord.

## Political stability following elections to boost business confidence

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in its recent report that political stability after upcoming elections in Pakistan could boost business confidence and pave way for new standby arrangement with International Monetary Fund (IMF). "Political stability following general elections later this year, if achieved, will boost business confidence, as will a new standby arrangement agreed with the International Monetary Fund to support economic stabilization and rebuild fiscal buffers," says Asian Development Outlook (ADO) for September 2023. The outlook has slightly revised Pakistan's growth target to 1.9 percent for the fiscal year 2023-24 against its projections of 2 percent made in April 2023. "In Pakistan, growth is forecast at 1.9% in FY2024, slightly below the April projection, assuming continued implementation of reforms and supportive macroeconomic policies, recovery from flood-induced supply shocks, and improving external conditions," it added. The report revised down the country's growth estimate for FY2023 to 0.3% (0.6% forecast in April). According to

report, the revised projection assumes a modest rebound in demand, with private consumption and private investment growing by about 3% and 5%, respectively. Fiscal and monetary tightening will crimp demand, as will inflation staying in double digits. On the other hand, implementation of the economic adjustment program and a likely smooth general election should boost confidence, while the easing of import controls should support investment as fiscal tightening restrains public consumption. On the output side, better weather conditions will enable an increase in the area under cultivation and in yields, supporting recovery in agriculture. The government's relief package of free seeds, subsidized credit, and fertilizer will also help. In turn, the recovery of farm output will feed through to industry, which will also benefit from the increased availability of critical imported inputs. The recovery of output will enable exports to pick up, although imports will grow much faster, due to pent-up demand. However, the downside risks are significant, including from global price shocks and slower global growth.

## Committed to removing the Indian military from Maldives: president-elect

MALE: The president-elect of the Maldives said he will stick to his campaign promise to remove Indian military personnel stationed in the archipelago state, promising he would initiate the process. Mohamed Muiz told his supporters gathered Monday night at a celebration of his election victory that he wouldn't stand for a foreign military staying in the Maldives against the will of its citizens. "The people have told us that they don't want foreign military here," he said. It's a serious blow to India in its geopolitical rivalry with China in the India Ocean region, where the Maldives' presidential runoff election Saturday was seen as a virtual referendum on which of the regional powers would have the biggest influence on the archipelago. Outgoing President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who was elected president in 2018, was battling allegations by Muiz that he had allowed India an unchecked presence in the country. Muiz's party, the People's National Congress, is viewed as heavily pro-China. Muiz's main campaign theme was about an alleged threat to the Maldives' sovereignty by some Indian military personnel on an island, part of the party's yearslong "India out" strategy. Solih insisted that the Indian military's presence in the Maldives was only to build a dockyard under an agreement between the two governments and that his country's sovereignty won't be violated. The number of Indian troops in the Maldives is unknown. Critics say the secrecy behind the agreement between the two governments regarding the placement of military personnel and their role has led to suspicion and rumor. Known activities of the Indian military include operating two helicopters donated by India and assisting in the rescue of people stranded or faced with calamities at sea. Former President Abdulla Yameen, leader of the People's National Congress, made the Maldives a part of China's Belt and Road initiative during his presidency from 2013 to 2018. The initiative is meant to build railroads, ports and highways to expand trade - and China's influence - across Asia, Africa and Europe. Yameen was transferred Sunday from prison to house arrest, already fulfilling one of Muiz's campaign promises before he officially takes office on Nov. 17. The Maldives is made up of 1,200 coral islands in the Indian Ocean, located by the main shipping route between the East and the West. - Agencies

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