



# Islamabad POST

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**Pakistan's economy stuck in 'low-growth trap': World Bank**

Detailed News On Page-08

**MQM-P suggests postponing elections**

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**Hafeez upbeat about Babar's 'bright' future**

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## CIA, Mossad chiefs in Qatar Hamas accuses Israel of violating ceasefire deal

Turkish FM Fidan and Blinken met to discuss recent developments in Gaza

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says it has successfully confronted Israeli forces who were violating a ceasefire in Gaza hours after it was extended for a brief period. A spokesman of Hamas' military wing, known as Qassam Brigades, said on Tuesday that the clashes that had erupted in northern Gaza earlier in the day between the Brigades and the Israeli forces were a result of Israel's blatant violation of the truce. However, the spokesman, who goes by his nom de guerre Abu Obaida, told Arab Media that Hamas will stick to its commitments under the ceasefire deal as long as Israel observes its obligations. The comments came after reports suggested that Israeli forces had sought to advance from their positions in northern Gaza earlier on Tuesday despite the ceasefire. The reports said the Israelis had to return to their positions after they were confronted by the Qassam Brigades. Hamas and Israel started to implement a four-day ceasefire mediated by Qatar and several other countries in early hours of Friday. The deal forced the Israeli regime to halt its aggression on Gaza that had lasted for 49 days and had claimed the lives of over 15,000 people. It also allowed Hamas to exchange Israeli captives it took during a blitz into occupied Palestine in early October with Palestinians held by Israel. Exploded ordnance in Gaza. Meanwhile, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met to discuss recent developments in Gaza ahead of a NATO summit in Brussels, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said on X. The talks come amid a humanitarian pause in the fighting in Gaza, just extended from four days to six, to enable prisoner exchanges and supplying much-needed aid to Palestinians in Gaza. The pause is in Israel's massive military offensive in

Continued on Page 06

## Iran calls on ICC to prosecute Israeli officials

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to set up a tribunal to prosecute Israeli authorities for war crimes in the Gaza Strip. Amir-Abdollahian made the appeal in a letter to the ICC chief prosecutor on Tuesday, emphasizing the need for the trial of the Israeli officials. The top Iranian diplomat went on to say that the barbaric bombing of Gaza and the ground invasion by the Israeli regime are examples of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. He further urged the ICC to adhere to its legal obligations and fulfill its duties over prosecuting the perpetrators of such crimes. Amir-Abdollahian also noted that the support of some countries for "the Zionist usurping regime" is the cause of Tel Aviv's continued brutality and violence. "Now is the time for the ICC to decide whether it wants to resist the pressure of some powers, or allow the brutalities committed by the occupying regime to remain unpunished," he said, adding that this is a test of

Continued on Page 06

## NATIONAL DAY OF ROMANIA CELEBRATED



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Jawad Sohrab Malik PM Advisor on Overseas Pakistanis, Charge d Affaires of Romania Eduard Preda, Acting Dean of Diplomatic Corps Mohammad Karmoune, Ambassador of Morocco and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Romania. - DNA

## Pak urges Kabul to hand over Gul Bahadur

Afghan diplomat summoned by Foreign office  
 ANSAR BHATTI  
 ISLAMABAD: The head of the Afghan diplomatic mission in Pakistan was summoned on Tuesday by the Foreign Office (FO) and conveyed four demands including extradition of Hafiz Gul Bahadur, whose group carried out the recent terrorist attack in Bannu. Two civilians lost their lives while 10 others, including three security forces personnel, were injured in a suicide attack in Bannu's Bakka Khel area, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Monday.

Continued on Page 06

## Imran's cypher case trial shifts back to Adiala jail

Decision taken after Adiala jail authorities fail to produce Imran Khan in court today citing "security risks"

KHAYAM ABBASI  
 ISLAMABAD: A special court Tuesday announced that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi's trial in the cypher case will be conducted in Adiala jail. In today's hearing, Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain - who has conducted Khan's trial - said: "The cypher trial will take place in jail in light of the security report by the superintendent of Adiala Jail." The order said that the next hearing of the case would take place at Adiala jail. The court also stated that the proceedings can be attended by anyone who wishes to do so including

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs Bilawal PPP's candidate for PM

BUREAU REPORT  
 KARACHI: PPP leader Faisal Karim Kundi has said that party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be the candidate for premiership in the next elections. Addressing a press conference on Tuesday, he said that the elections will tell who will win how much seats. "What was the need to go to London if a person wanted to be a 'Ladla'?" he quipped without naming former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. He said that the PML-N leaders are discussing their previous government instead of the 16-month rule. "Nawaz Sharif has left behind the slogan of 'vote ko izzat do' in Avenfield," he added.

## Govt to support ECP for ensuring free polls

PPP, PML-N enjoy same freedom ahead of election, says information minister  
 MEHTAB PIRZADA  
 ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi Tuesday said under Article 218(3) of the Constitution, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would fulfill its responsibility to conduct fair, transparent and impartial elections and the government would support it. Talking to media persons here, he said that there were a total of 280 articles in the Constitution, not only the article of elections in 90 days, it also had Article 254. "Everyone in Pakistan has freedom to express opinion, complain and criticize," Solangi added. The minister said the freedom that Pakistan People's Party and other parties had been enjoying, Pakistan Muslim League (N) also had same freedom. He said that the caretaker PM had informed the public about his visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) last night through a video message. During the visit of the Prime Minister, the agreements and memorandums of understanding would be

ADIL SHAHEEN  
 ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Tuesday adjourned the hearing concerning the removal of Imran Khan Niazi's name as the party chairman from the records till December 5. The four-member ECP bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Sikandar Sultan Raja continued hearing Khalid Mehmood's case. The counsel representing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) requested an extension until next week to submit the response as a copy of the petition had not been provided. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC),

Continued on Page 06

## India arrests Kashmiri students

DNA  
 SRINAGAR: In another low, Indian police have arrested seven Kashmiri students under the draconian anti-terror law for celebrating the country's defeat in World Cup finals and raising pro-Pakistan slogans in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to Indian media reports, the seven students of the Sher-e-Kashmir Agriculture University were charged with the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), as well as other sections of the penal code. Police said Tuesday that

Continued on Page 06

## Zulfi kick starts funding campaign in Europe

NEWS DESK  
 LONDON: PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari has kickstarted a mass mobilisation and fundraising campaign for the party in the United Kingdom and Europe. Addressing a workers' convention in High Wycombe in London along with Sahibzada Jahangir, one of the founders of PTI, Zulfi said that the mass mobilisation and fundraising has been started for the elections scheduled for February next year. "We will take part in elections at any cost. We need funds and effort from the overseas regions. The party needs funds for its legal challenges as well for the election campaign," he said.

## Caretaker Prime Minister Kakar pays tribute to UAE heroes at Karama

Wahat Al Karama is a national and cultural landmark in UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi



DNA

ABU DHABI: Caretaker Prime Minister visits Wahat ul Karama to Commemorate National Heroes of the UAE. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar visited national and cultural landmark, Wahat Al Karama in Abu Dhabi, to pay homage to the sacrifices of UAE heroes who laid down their lives in the services of their country. The Prime Minister was welcomed by Sheikh Thayeb bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the office of Development and Martyrs Families affairs at the Presidential Court. The Prime Minister attended the solemn Guard of Honour ceremony. Afterwards, Prime Minister laid a wreath at the Martyrs' Monument. The Monument comprises 31 panels leaning on one another to symbolise the unity and solidarity between the UAE's leadership, people and heroic soldiers. The Prime Minister was briefed about the memorial, which embodies the sacrifices of valiant Emirati soldiers. At the end of the tour, Prime Minister noted his remarks on the memorial's guest book, expressing his appreciation for the UAE's brave martyrs. Wahat Al Karama is a national and cultural landmark in UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi, which was established to commemorate the heroic actions of the UAE's martyrs and their sacrifices in defence of the UAE.

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# ISSI hosts conference on "Climate Change and Role of Media"

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the escalating seriousness of climate change, noting that it was already acknowledged as an "existential threat" for humanity

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), organized a Round Table discussion on "Climate Change and the Role of Media." The keynote speaker at the event was Ms. Aisha Khan, Chief Executive of the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC). Ambassador Muntaz Zahra Baloch, Foreign Office Spokesperson, and Mr. Asif Hyder Shah, Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, were among the prominent speakers. Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP in her introductory remarks stated that the acknowledgment of Pakistan's pivotal role in COP27, particularly in the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, underscores the country's proactive stance on this global issue. In this context, the role of media was pivotal in the global discourse on climate change, acknowledging its influence in shaping public perceptions, policy

priorities, and advocacy endeavors. In his welcome address, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the escalating seriousness of climate change, noting that it was already acknowledged as an "existential threat" for humanity. He recalled that the UN Secretary General had recently pointed to the shift from "global warming" to "global boiling," and had underscored the need for immediate, dramatic action to handle the climate crisis. In the wake of this global warming trajectory, Pakistan had faced severe impacts which left no room for complacency. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood asserted that addressing the menace of climate change required a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach, positioning it at the forefront of national priorities. He highlighted the importance and urgency accorded to this issue in the National Security Policy (2022-26), which called for mobilizing a cohesive national response and building

a climate-resilient Pakistan. The Director General also highlighted Pakistan's proactive role on the international stage, raising awareness about the global dimensions of the climate threat faced by the country. Emphasizing the pivotal role of the media, he acknowledged its unique capacity to educate the public on the causes, impacts, and potential solutions of climate change through accurate and evidence-based reporting. He specifically highlighted the significant reach of the Pakistani media, noting its potential to raise awareness, influence public policy, and inspire individuals, businesses, and governments to embrace climate-friendly practices and technologies. In her remarks, Ms. Aisha Khan emphasized the crucial need to comprehend the meaning of climate change to fully grasp its impact and effects. Regrettably, in Pakistan, the term "climate change" had not resonated with ordinary people. Its usage in diverse contexts had led to a lack of clarity, overshadowing its significance in critical areas such as food security, water security, energy security, and more. Ms. Aisha Khan also highlighted the pervasive confusion surrounding the term and stressed the vital role of the media in resolving this issue. As a widely accessible source of information, the media could play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between the common man and the multifaceted threats and challenges posed by climate change. It served as the missing link, ensuring a clearer understanding and awareness of the issues at hand. With reference to the upcoming COP28, she highlighted the issues that would be deliberated upon and stressed the importance of a pragmatic approach to ensure forward movement on issues pending for long.



## Peshawar in grip of smog

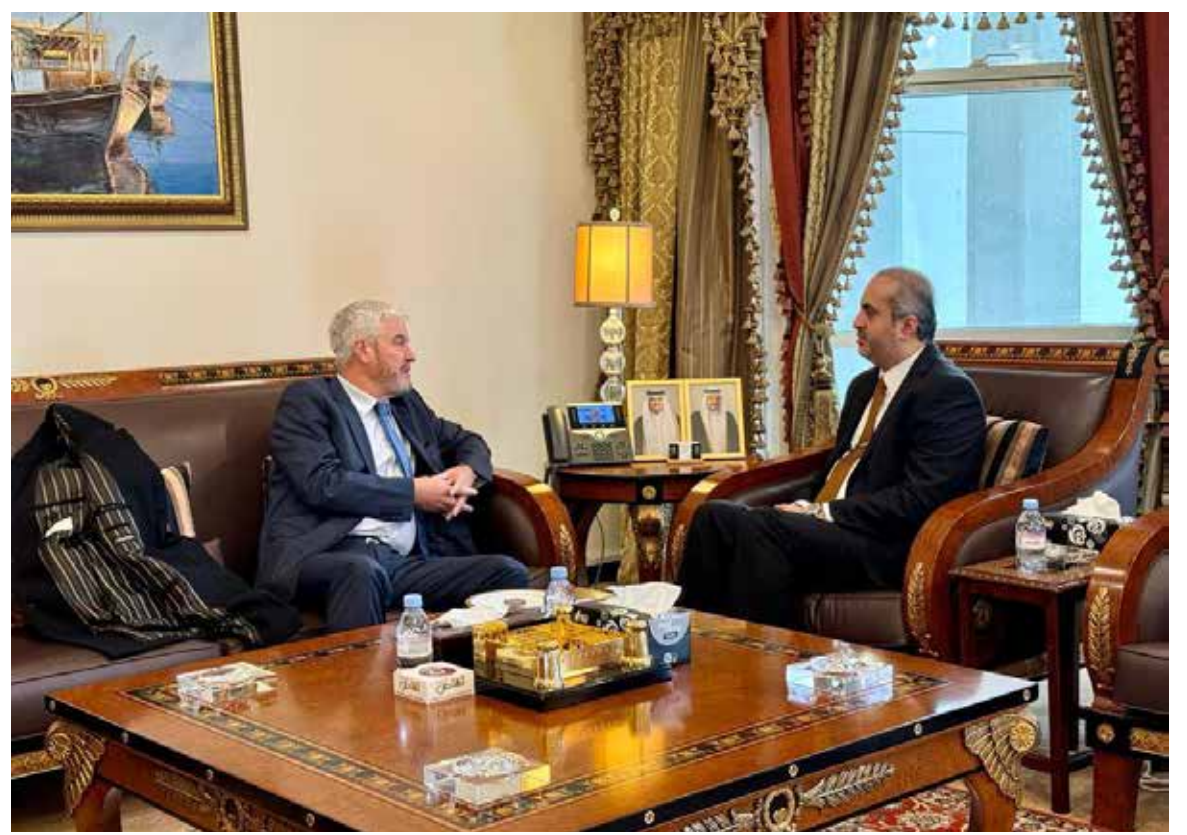
PESHAWAR: The provincial metropolis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar, has also come into grip of smog due to the emission of poisonous smoke and increasing dust in the prevailing winter season, affecting denizens with seasonal diseases including chest infection, respiratory congestion, flu and fever. Among the affected of smog, the majority of people are children and elders, most vulnerable to infectious diseases, said health experts. More than 1000 patients are being registered on a daily basis with chest and pulmonology wards of three main teaching hospitals of Peshawar nowadays, experts added. According to a report of KP Health Department, more than 9000 patients have visited different hospitals in Peshawar with complaints of chest infection and high fever in the last week. The majority of patients are complaining of chest infection with severe fever and headache and are advised antibiotics along with other medicines including anti-allergy and cough syrups. "In case of fog and smog, people are advised to take some precautionary measures as were taken during corona of covering their face with a mask," advised Dr Taj Muhammad, Senior Chest Specialist and office bearer of Pakistan Chest Society. Dr. Taj also advised elderly people to spend most of their time indoor and avoid visiting outside, especially at peak times of coldness. He said increasing coldness coupled with smog has made chest infection as viral in the region.—APP

## KP women commission, Frontier university combat gender violence

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women in collaboration with Frontier College for Women & University officially launched the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence campaign. The campaign will take place from November 25 to December 10 and aims to raise awareness about gender-based violence and highlight the efforts of the Commission to address this issue. This year, the commission launched its campaign from Frontier College for Women & University on November 27, 2023, according to a press release. The theme for this year's campaign is "UNITE!"

Invest to prevent violence against women and girls," which emphasizes the urgent need for collective action and investment in prevention strategies. The campaign launch event witnessed the presence of esteemed government officials and representatives from various NGOs who came together to support this vital cause. The event marked the beginning of a series of educational programs and workshops organized by the KPSCW. These initiatives aim to promote understanding and empathy, address the root causes of gender-based violence, and foster a culture of respect and equality. In addition to

these educational programs, KPSCW will collaborate with local communities to organize events, seminars, and outreach programs throughout the 16-day campaign. These initiatives aim to create a sense of unity and collective responsibility in the fight against gender-based violence, ensuring that everyone plays an active role in promoting safer and more equitable communities. The Secretary KP women commission Ms. Robin Haider Bokhari in her opening remarks, said that the theme of the year aligned with the mandate of the commission, as her organization is working to eliminate the violence against women.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Ali bin Mubarak Al Khater, welcomed in his office, Manuel Frederico Pinheiro da Silva, Ambassador of the Portuguese Republic to Pakistan. They engaged in fruitful discussions on matters of mutual interest. — DNA

## BISP workshop for beneficiaries concludes

DNA

SARGODHA: The first phase of a three-day digital training workshop under the auspices of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) held at the regional office concluded here on Tuesday. Talking to APP here on Tuesday, Benazir Income Support Program Deputy Director Safdar Mehmood said that 25 women initially benefiting from the programme underwent comprehensive training. The second phase of a 30-day long training workshop has also started in which more 25 women beneficiaries would get digital training on BISP programme. The training will continue till December 22, he added.

Safdar Mehmood said that the training aimed to empower women by enhancing their financial management skills, teaching them to save money, create budgets, and achieve financial literacy. The training covers a range of topics, including awareness of rights and responsibilities, identification of currency notes, utilization of mobile accounts, savings strategies, investment knowledge, and awareness about various types of financial fraud, he said. UNICEF official Uzair Ahmed Khan detailed insights into the fundamental objectives of the training during the session.

## NFSR ministry explores further Pak-China coop in buffalo

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Pakistani Ministry of National Food Security and Research visited the Royal Cell Company in Nanning, China, and had a meeting to discuss potential collaboration. Royal Cell Company presented its programs in Pakistan, which included the establishment of the first officially certified foot-and-mouth disease-free ranch and a buffalo embryo production experimental center. Teng Cuijin, the Chairman of Royal Cell Company, expressed their plans for further expansion in Pakistan, stating, "The visit of the delegation aims to attract more investment for the establishment of disease-free

ranches in Pakistan. In addition to constructing more ranches, we aim to establish associated dairy and meat processing plants, expanding our collaboration to include dairy products including powdered milk, UHT (Ultra Heat Treated) milk and meat products such as beef jerky." The Pakistani delegation emphasized the importance of scientific research and technological cooperation between China and Pakistan, hoping that Royal Cell Company would facilitate such collaboration. Muhammad Masood Anwar, Secretary of Livestock and Dairy Development Department in Punjab, stated, "We are particularly

interested in collaborating on embryo transplantation technology. By establishing connections between research institutions in Punjab Province and Guangxi Province in China, we can jointly breed high-yielding buffalo varieties." The meeting concluded with a mutual agreement to foster partnerships between Pakistan and China in research, development and value addition within the buffalo industry. This collaborative effort holds immense potential for enhancing product quality, increasing production efficiency and creating new market opportunities for buffalo products from both countries.—APP

## 5, 000 officers were promoted on merit: IG

DNA

LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar has said that this year more than 15000 police officers and officials have been given departmental promotions according to merit and rules, promotion and service structure of many forces including CTD, Special Branch, PHP has been upgraded, 5000 more promotions will be given on the merit after approval of Pasban project. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar directed that the police force should use its powers to protect the lives and properties of the citizens and serve the people. He directed to transfer the benefits of

departmental promotions to citizens through better service delivery, good behavior and positive attitude. Dr. Usman Anwar said that intelligence-based operations should be accelerated to root out organized crime and the crime process of crime eradication should be accelerated. He expressed these views while addressing officers promoted from Head Constable to ASI at the Central Police Office today. A ceremony was held at the Central Police Office in honor of Lahore Police officials who were promoted from Head Constable to ASI, in which IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar pinned new ranks to 63 policemen who were promoted

as ASI. The children, families and relatives of the promoted ASIs specially attended the ceremony. Among those promoted, the officials of various wings including Operations, Investigation, Organized Crime Unit, Elite Force, Security Division of Lahore Police were included. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar congratulated the promoted ASIs and their relatives, expressed compassion to the children. IG Punjab directed the officials promoted to the post of ASI to perform their duties more diligently. Senior police officers including DIG Investigation Lahore Imran Kishwar, SSP Admin Lahore Atif Nazir, AIG Discipline Ahsan Saifullah were present on the spot.

## Education vital for progress of country: Minister

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi has said that education plays a vital role in the progress of a country. Addressing a conference on the topic of "Revolutionizing higher education: reconciling required & acquired learning" held at International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) here on Tuesday, the Education Minister said that the digital revolution has changed the learning methods, while hurdles of time and place for education are no longer an issue. He emphasized the use of technology in teaching and learning. The Minister opined that education is the best way to make society strong, stable, and prosperous. Madad Ali Sindhi was of the view that education must be a top priority of our nation. This international conference is being organized by the Faculty of Education of IIUI in collaboration with IQRA University and Intentional Centre of Excellence. Around 50 papers are being presented by national and international scholars in the conference. The participants of the conference debated on reimagining a traditional degree path and integrating skill-based education in higher education, which may help in address the issue of how to change lives by addressing long-standing educational issues such as inequality, learning poverty, economic insecurity, and the exclusion of youth from the job market who are not in degree programmes. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC), said that no country may progress unless it invests in education. He said that Youth have the potential to change the fate of a nation. He added that Pakistan has won maximum scholarships for Europe in previous year. "Things have changed, we have to buckle up and catch up with the rest of the world" said Dr. Mukhtar adding that technology and AI based learning are the prime choices to excel. He referred to the global pandemic saying that it exposed the conventional education, while he also appraised of the response of HEC. He called for equal opportunities for all three sectors of education mentioning primary, vocational and higher education. Rector IIUI, Dr. Samina Malik in her address said that training of the teachers in the light of contemporary requirements of teaching is a prerequisite for a successful education system. She opined that innovative approaches and modern modes of teaching are necessary to compete the rest of the world.—DNA

## Ashrafi emphasizes economic growth via Arab-Islamic collaborations in Pakistan

He mentioned that, following Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar's directives, the caretaker government extensively collaborated in the affairs of SIFC

ADIL SHAHEEN

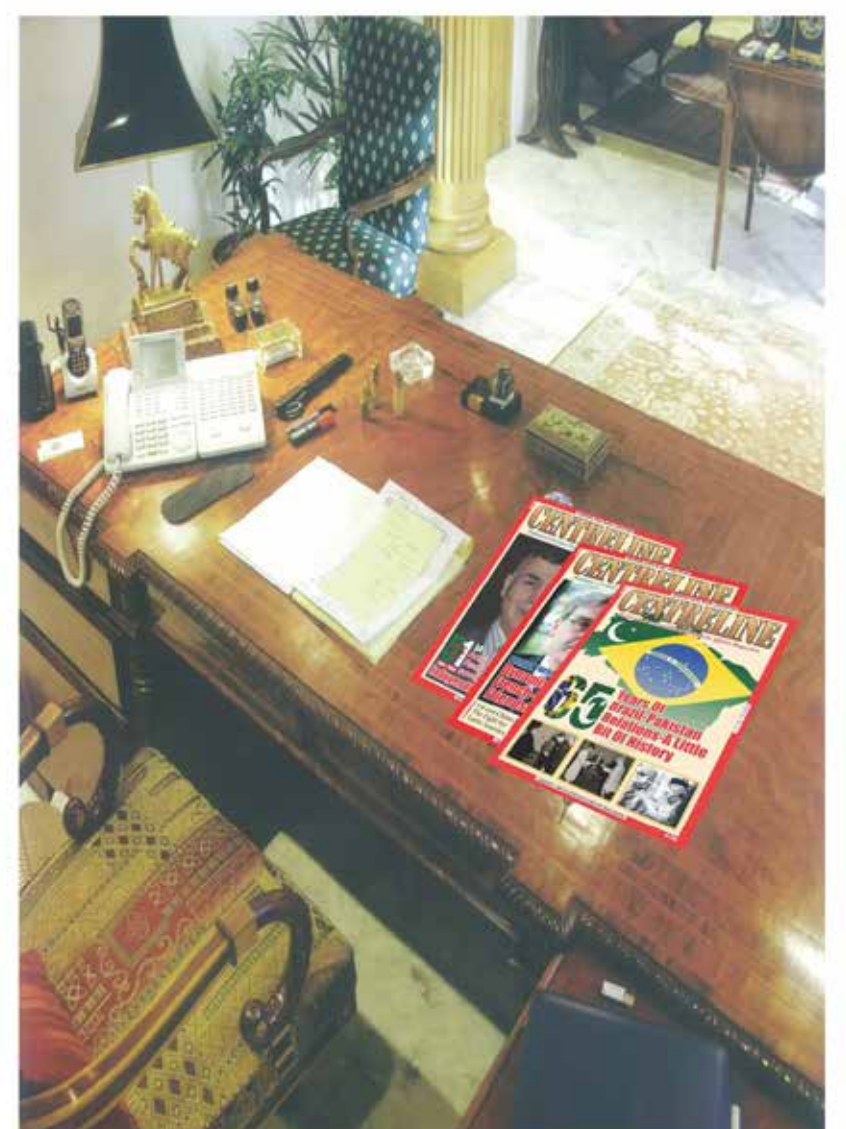
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in the Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi Tuesday highlighted the improving economic situation in Pakistan attributing progress to the collaborative efforts of Arab and Islamic nations, along with the positive impact of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Speaking to national and Arab media, he expressed that encouraging developments were emerging from Saudi

Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and other amicable nations, following the substantial financial agreements with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Ashrafi, who also serves as the chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, acknowledged that foreign investment in Pakistan was made feasible through the trust of friendly countries and the dedicated efforts of Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir. He mentioned that, following Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar's directives, the caretaker government extensively collaborated in the affairs of SIFC, leading to significant advancements during its tenure in

cooperation with amicable nations. Furthermore, he highlighted the restoration of Pakistan's trust with Islamic countries, attributing this accomplishment to the endeavors of the Commander-in-Chief of the Nation. Ashrafi emphasized that Pakistan could not afford to repeat past mistakes and animosities, stating, "Islamic brother countries desire a resilient Pakistan." He highlighted that the SIFC played a pivotal role in attracting investments to Pakistan, with significant participation from important businessmen and groups of friendly nations post-governments. He assured that overseas

Pakistanis could now invest confidently, underscoring the government's responsibility to facilitate and support them. In response to a query, Ashrafi affirmed that Pakistan, as a core member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), maintained an unequivocal stance on the Palestine issue. He emphasized that any solution acceptable to Palestine would find acceptance in Pakistan. He noted the current leadership of the OIC under Saudi Arabia, praising the commendable roles of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan. He acknowledged the con-

tributions of Turkey, Iran, and Qatar, highlighting that the collective pressure from OIC members, including the people, played a crucial role of Europe, America, and Britain, in influencing Israel to cease hostilities. At this time, he asserted that all Islamic nations were in unanimous agreement regarding the extension of the ceasefire and advocated for the establishment of a sovereign and autonomous Palestinian state, designating Al-Quds as its capital. Addressing a query, Ashrafi emphasized Saudi Arabia's pivotal role within the Muslim Ummah, asserting widespread trust in the nation.



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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria National Day

Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia National Day

Nov 11/Poland Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day

Nov 18/Oman National Day

Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania National Day

Nov 28/Albania Flags Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



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Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



## Emergency

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



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CAA.....9281092



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MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



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TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Speakers call for collective efforts to address economic challenges

PML-N leader and former federal minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that heroes like Maulana Zafar Ali Khan will always be remembered in history for his great services for the creation of Pakistan. He said that all political leaders should play a role for the development of the country instead of pulling each other's legs

### MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized a ceremony to commemorate the 67th anniversary of Pakistan Movement leader Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah and former Federal Minister Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry were the chief guests. Islamabad Bar Council Vice Chairman Raja Aleem Khan Abbasi, National Press Club Secretary Finance Ms. Nayyar Ali and others addressed the ceremony and paid tribute to Maulana Zafar Ali Khan for his outstanding services for the Pakistan Movement. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah said that the life of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan is a torchbearer for all of us as he always raised the voice of the oppressed before the oppressors. He said that brave and truthful personalities like Maulana Zafar Ali Khan are a great asset of our national heritage and there is a need to educate the young generation about their valuable services for the country. He said that the economy of Pakistan is currently going through a difficult period and emphasized that all political parties and leaders make collective efforts to get the country out of the current troubles. President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari that Maulana Zafar Ali Khan played a leadership role in the Pakistan Movement and as a prominent journalist and poet he awakened the spirit of freedom among the Muslims of the sub-continent through his pen. He said that Pakistan needs the personalities like Maulana Zafar Ali Khan to overcome the economic challenges. He said that youth is 60 percent of our population who need better guid-



ance to play an active role in making the future of Pakistan bright & prosperous. PML-N leader and former federal minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that heroes like Maulana Zafar Ali Khan will always be remembered in history for his great services for the creation of Pakistan. He said that all political leaders should play a role for the development of the country instead of pulling each other's legs. He hoped that the future of Pakistan is bright, God willing we will get out of the current problems soon. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, while paying tribute to the services of

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan for Pakistan Movement, said that the business community, lawyers and journalist community are important stakeholders of this country and all should work together to get Pakistan's economy out of the current problems. Islamabad Bar Council Vice Chairman Raja Aleem Khan Abbasi said that Maulana Zafar Ali Khan was the father of journalism who never adopted journalism as a profession, but used it for a cause. He said that journalists and lawyers are not accountable to anyone, but they are accountable to their own conscience, so both communities should make collective efforts

for the development and prosperity of Pakistan. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that we are forgetting our ancestors, which should be a cause of concern as those nations that forget their ancestors and heroes do not survive in history. He stressed the importance of educating youth about the country's history and its heroes. He said that Maulana Zafar Ali Khan was one of the founding members of the Muslim League and due to his high journalistic skills, he had made the Zamindar newspaper the most popular newspaper in the subcontinent.

## National seminar on cervical cancer elimination

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark event aimed at advancing public health immunization initiatives and combatting cervical cancer, the Federal Directorate of Immunization organized a National Seminar on Cervical Cancer Elimination and the Introduction of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine in Pakistan. The seminar, held on November 28th, 2023, was graced by the esteemed presence of Dr. Nadeem Jan, the Federal Health Minister as the chief guest. Dr. Nadeem Jan stated that "Cervical cancer is a significant public health concern globally, and Pakistan is no exception to the challenges posed by this preventable disease. Recognizing the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to combat cervical cancer, the Government of Pakistan through this seminar aims to bring together government health dignitaries, experts, policymakers, healthcare professionals, partner organizations, think

tanks and other stakeholders from across the country to share insights, discuss best practices, and formulate strategies to eliminate cervical cancer". Dr. Jan further stated that, "Cervical cancer is a preventable and treatable disease, and the introduction of the HPV vaccine is a crucial step towards reducing its prevalence in Pakistan. Federal Directorate of Immunization is dedicated to implementing evidence-based strategies and fostering partnerships with organizations like Gavi, World Health Organization, UNICEF, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, JHPIEGO and others to ensure the success of this specific public health immunization initiative." Mr. Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, Secretary Health while sharing his thoughts at the occasion mentioned that "The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine stands as a pivotal tool in safeguarding the health and well-being of Pakistani young girls. HPV is a common virus that can

lead to cervical cancer, a potentially life-threatening condition. Administering the HPV vaccine to young girls helps protect them from the most common types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer. By targeting this vulnerable population, the vaccine serves as a preventive measure against a disease that is not only highly prevalent but also largely preventable. Hence, empowering them to lead healthier lives and contributing to the global effort to eliminate preventable cervical cancers. Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Kazi, Director General, Health, Ministry of National Health Services & Regulations stated that the introduction of the HPV vaccine holds great promise in preventing HPV infections, which are a leading cause of cervical cancer. He thanked the Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan and all other participants for their invaluable contributions to this critical dialogue.

## PNCA hosts inspiring art workshop



### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) recently orchestrated an enriching art workshop as a pivotal component of the ongoing "Off-Grid Goes OnGrid" exhibition. Led by the esteemed artist Ms. Geytee Ara, the workshop attracted over 60 art enthusiasts, including students, converging for an immersive exploration of artistic techniques and expression. Renowned for her seasoned expertise in artistic methods, Ms. Geytee Ara took the attendees on a profound journey, elucidating the intricacies of silhou-

ette drawing and the foundational principles of still life. The workshop, serving as an educational platform, provided participants with invaluable insights and hands-on experience, fostering a deeper comprehension of these art forms. The workshop witnessed a diverse assembly of individuals comprising students, emerging artists, and avid art enthusiasts. Under the mentorship of Ms. Geytee Ara, attendees not only acquired practical skills but engaged in a vibrant exchange of ideas, cultivating an environment conducive to creative dialogue and artistic exploration. The Paki-

stan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), esteemed for its steadfast dedication to preserving and promoting Pakistan's diverse artistic heritage, remains unwavering in its commitment to nurturing artistic brilliance and fostering cross-cultural understanding. As a beacon of creativity and innovation in the country, PNCA continues to push the boundaries of artistic expression and collaboration. The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) stands as a premier cultural institution devoted to the promotion and preservation of Pakistan's diverse artistic legacy.

## 59 percent Japanese to pick Pak as tourist destination

### DNA

ISLAMABAD :Fifty-nine percent of Japanese have a strong intent to visit Pakistan making the country a preferred tourist destination, a survey by the Pakistan embassy in Japan has revealed. The embassy conducted a comprehensive survey aimed at gauging the interest of Japanese citizens in visiting Pakistan, said a statement from Tokyo issued here. The survey administered on social media engaged 527 Japanese participants and sought to unveil perceptions and attitudes toward visiting Pakistan. Twenty percent of the respondents said that they had already visited Pakistan, emphasizing the existence of a segment of Japanese travelers who have explored the country. "This statistic not only defies stereotypes but also underscores the untapped potential of Pakistan as a tourist destination," the embassy said. The survey said the response signified Pakistan's untapped market for tourism, presenting a valuable opportunity to attract a larger number of Japanese tourists. However, the survey also identified a cohort of 21 percent who identified apprehensions regarding security as a major hurdle in their plans. The embassy emphasized the need for targeted efforts to promote Pakistan's tourism offerings to attract Japanese tourists.

## 200 percent increase in property taxes unlawful

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, on Tuesday criticized the decision to increase water and sanitation charges and property tax by Municipal Corporation, terming it illegal. The decision to increase water charges, sanitation and property tax by 200% is illegal and immoral; therefore, he said residents and the business community of Islamabad reject it. He warned that if the tax is increased, the citizens and traders will strongly resist it, for which the administration and concerned departments will be responsible. Shahid Rashid Butt, while addressing an emergency meeting of the residents of F-6 Sector and business people, said that water is not available and people have to buy it, the sanitation management is abysmal, and there are piles of garbage everywhere in the city. He questioned how they can ask the people to pay more taxes when services have not improved but deteriorating rapidly. The business leader said that if the income of the people has not increased and nothing has become cheaper, then it is immoral to burden the masses with taxes. The elected officials are authorized to make such decisions. Bureaucracy has taken this decision by overstepping the mandate, causing great anxiety among the people and people in business. He said this decision would increase the rents of houses and offices in Islamabad, which are already sky-high. Islamabad Industrial Area has become a graveyard of industries, and if this decision is implemented, the remaining sectors will die. Mr. Butt said that investors will move their money out; thousands of people will be unemployed while the government will have to bear heavy revenue losses. Shahid Rashid Butt said that why and how tax can be collected from the communities which CDA has declared illegal and where it has not provided any facilities. If an organization goes bankrupt, it is due to their employees; he said trying to burden the public is reprehensible and will not be allowed.

## Pakistan earns US \$157m from travel services' export in Jul-Sep

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$157.075 million by providing different travel services in various countries during the first three months of the current fiscal year 2023-24. This shows growth of 27.72 percent as compared to the US \$122.890 million worth same services provided during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year 2022-23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the months under review, personal travel services increased by 26.19 per cent, from US \$122.240 million last year to US \$154.255 million during July-September 2023. Among these personal services, the exports of health-related expenditure rose by 529.17 per cent while the education-related expenditure increased by 49.19 per cent. In addition, the other personal services witnessed a growth of 23.69 per cent. Meanwhile, the exports of business services grew by 281.08 per cent, from US\$ 0.740 million to US\$ 2.820 million, the PBS data revealed. It is pertinent to mention here that the exports of services during July-September 2023 were recorded at US\$ 1,707.31 million against the exports of US\$ 1,717.21 million in July-September 2022, showing a nominal decline of 0.58 per cent. The imports of the country surged by 18.10 per cent, growing from US\$.-APP

### AIOU

## announces results of HSSC, FA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Tuesday announced results of HSSC and FA programs offered in the spring semester 2023 and results had been uploaded to the CMS portal. The students who complete their program will receive completers soon, said a press release issued here. Moreover, the university also announced the assignments schedule for Matric and FA programs offered in autumn semester 2023 and details have been uploaded on its website. According to the schedule, 4th December is the submission deadline for the first assignment, December 28, for the second assignment, January 29, 2024, for third and, February 16, 2024, is the last submission date for the fourth assignment. The submission deadline for two course assignments of matric and F.A programs is December 28, 2023, and February 16, 2024, respectively. The students can get names, addresses, and other information of their respective tutors on CMS portal at <http://enrollment.aiou.edu.pk> or from any nearest regional campus. The students will be responsible for late assignment submission, and assignments reaching after the due dates will not be accepted. It is worth mentioning here that Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood directed the heads of the Examination Department, Admissions Department, Regional Directors, and other departments to take steps to strengthen the student support system. --APP

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## Briefs

## NEPRA holds hearing into KE's distribution, supply licence application

ISLAMABAD: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Tuesday conducted public hearing into K-Electric (KE's) application for grant of distribution and supply licence for next 20 years which has already expired in July 2023. The hearing was presided over by Chairman NEPRA Waseem Mukhtar while member Balochistan Mathar Niaz Rana, member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Maqsood Anwar, member Punjab Ms Amina Ahmed and member Sindh Rafique Ahmad Shaikh were also present. Briefing the authority, Chief Financial Officer of KE, Muhammad Amir said that the company's distribution and supply licence had expired in July and they had applied for its extension. Six-month extension in licence had been granted by the authority, he added. He said that since privatization of KE in 2005, the company showed remarkable performance in generation, distribution, reduction in transmission and distribution losses. Some 1,957 megawatt (MW) has been added to the generation system besides reducing T & D losses from 34.2 per cent to 15.3 per cent. The KE had made investment of Rs 474 billion after privatization, he added. Sharing the future investment plan, he said the KE would invest Rs 544 billion in generation, transmission and distribution system in future. Giving the breakup, he said a sum of Rs 251 billion would be invested in generation, Rs 125 billion in transmission and Rs 168 billion in distribution system. He went on to say that share of Renewable Energy in generation would also be enhanced to 30 per cent by 2030.—APP

## PRA Rwp uncovers Rs 36 mln tax evasion case

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) Rawalpindi Commissionerate on Tuesday conducted a raid at Umar Abdullah International/Manpower Recruitment Agent located in a commercial market and sealed the office for non-payment of tax amounting to Rs 36 million. According to a PRA spokesman, the office of Umar Abdullah International, a registered Manpower Recruitment Agent has been sealed for non-payment of tax. Earlier, several notices were also issued to Umar Abdullah International for payment of tax. PRA Rwp Commissionerate also attempted tax recovery by attaching the company account twice. Umar Abdullah International was sealed in the presence of Enforcement Officer Arslan Tariq. The operation was carried out on the instructions of Chairman PRA, Javed Badr and Commissioner Toqeer Ahmad Sajra. Operation against tax defaulters including restaurants, food points and manpower recruitment agents would continue under zero tolerance policy, the PRA spokesman informed.—APP

## Alvi pays tribute to martyred troops of N.Waziristan, Pasni terrorist incidents

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday paid tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in separate terrorist incidents that took place in North Waziristan and Pasni this month. The president talked to the families of Sepoy Shahzeb, Sepoy Muhammad Sohail, and Lans Havaldar Basit Inan and paid tribute to the valour of the martyrs. "The sacrifices of martyrs will not go in vain and terrorism will be eliminated from the soil of the country," he said. The president extended condolences to the family of the martyred troops and prayed to Allah Almighty to grant an elevated place to their souls.—DNA

## Health Minister opens nationwide polio drive

Repeated immunisations have protected millions of children from polio, allowing almost all countries in the world to become polio-free, except for the two endemic countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan inaugurated the third nationwide polio vaccination campaign of the year on Monday, urging parents and caregivers to open their doors to vaccinators to get their children immunized. "Poliovirus has paralyzed five children this year, all these children deserved a healthy life and future. We cannot allow a vaccine-preventable disease to continue to harm our children like this," he said.

Highlighting that protecting children's well-being was a collective responsibility, Dr Jan said: "Every country that has eliminated polio so far has done so with the support of communities, parents, religious leaders, and social organizations. We need the same in Pakistan, for communities to join the government in its fight against polio." The campaign inauguration was held in Islamabad Model School, I-8/1, where schoolchildren presented a short tableau in cultural costumes of provinces and the minister officially launched the campaign by giving polio drops to children under five. Dr Shahzad Baig, Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre for Polio Eradication, said: "Polio cases are fewer than they have ever been, yet the virus has shown up in sewage samples in several major cities this year, indicating that



some population pockets that have missed out on the vaccine. The Programme is continuously reviewing and reassessing its strategies and campaigns. We will ensure that we find these missed populations and vaccinate them." Over 44.3 million children under

five years of age will be vaccinated in 159 districts during this third and last national campaign of 2023, which is being held in phases across the country.

Note for the Editor: Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by poliovirus mainly affecting chil-

dren under the age of five years. It invades the nervous system and can cause paralysis or even death. While there is no cure for polio, vaccination is the most effective way to protect children from this crippling disease. Each time a child under the age of five is vac-

inated, their protection against the virus is increased. Repeated immunisations have protected millions of children from polio, allowing almost all countries in the world to become polio-free, except for the two endemic countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

## Saifullah Abro removed from Chairmanship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant turn of events, Senator Saifullah Abro has been removed from his position as the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Power following a motion of no confidence. The motion, submitted under Senate Rules, garnered unanimous support, leading to Senator Abro's removal from the prestigious role, said a press release issued here Tuesday. The no-confidence motion against Senator Saifullah Abro was moved by Senators Bahramand Khan Tangi, Manzoor Kakar, Sana Jamali, Hafiz Abdul Karim, and Dilawar Khan. The meeting, convened at the Parliament House and chaired by Additional Secretary Hafeezullah Sheikh, witnessed the unanimous election of Senator Azam Nazir Tarar as the new Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Power. Senator Tarar has been entrusted with the responsibility to lead the committee towards a path of progress and efficiency. Among the notable attendees at the meeting were Senators Azam Nazir Tarar, Saifullah Abro, Saifullah Khan Niazi, Haji Hidayatullah, Manzoor Ahmed Kakar, Sana Jamali, Dilawar Khan, Haji Hidayatullah, Muhammad Ali Shah Jamot, and Fida Muhammad. Their participation signifies the collective commitment to the Senate's functions and responsibilities.

## ADB approves \$180 mln for water supply improvement

"This project will help make municipal services in these two cities more sustainable, resilient, and less carbon-intensive," said ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$180 million loan to improve water supply and solid waste management services in Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur cities of Punjab province. Expected to benefit as many as 1.5 million people, the Developing Resilient Environments and Advancing Municipal Services in Punjab Project will curtail excessive groundwater extraction and urban environment degradation by expanding and modernizing urban water supply in Rawalpindi and solid waste management systems in Bahawalpur, according to

ADB press statement received here on Tuesday. "This project will help make municipal services in these two cities more sustainable, resilient, and less carbon-intensive," said ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov. "By helping to deliver reliable water supply and improving waste management, we expect to significantly improve the lives of people in Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur," Zhukov added. In Rawalpindi, the project will help build new surface water intakes and a water treatment plant with a capacity of 54 million liters a day. It will lay transmission and distribution pipes to serve 82,000 households with metered connections. The financing will

also upgrade water pumps and transmission mains to augment surface water supply and establish three pilot district metering areas to enhance operational efficiency. In Bahawalpur, solid waste collection will be improved through the procurement of waste collection equipment and a new fleet to expand service coverage, to be supported by the new fleet management information system. The project will construct a facility for recycling as well as a flood-proof landfill while the existing dump site will be rehabilitated. The financing will also enable the provision of personal protective equipment for informal sector workers. "Aside from improving infrastructure services, ADB's project will help enhance the opera-

tional efficiency, inclusivity, and financial sustainability of Rawalpindi Water and Sanitation Agency and Bahawalpur Waste Management Company," said ADB Urban Development Specialist Xijie Lu. "We also aimed to be innovative, with some of the project's components featuring renewable technologies, cost-recovery interventions, and behavioral change and communication elements," Lu added. ADB will also administer a \$1 million technical assistance provided by the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund, to strengthen the capacity of the Rawalpindi Water and Sanitation Agency to address leakages in the city's water supply network.

## Women in Political and legal context in Pakistan

NAYRA ESHAL

Women form about 48.54% of the total population of Pakistan. The role of women cannot be denied as far as the constitution of a democratic society is concerned. Their inclusiveness in the decision-making of the political parties is imperative for nurturing the democratic process. Currently, a few women are seen as active in political parties. There's a need to create a conducive environment for ensuring their participation in political processes. From time to time there are legislations relating to women's rights. The basic purpose of this is to make the world realize that there are laws for safeguarding the rights of women and to secure them from any kind of exploitation. For instance, in 2006 the Pakistani government passed the Women's Protection Act, removing rape from the jurisdiction of Islamic law and placing it under the country's criminal code. Similarly, there are ample legislations aimed at empowering women and strengthening on enabling them to be considered as a respectable segment of society. The factors that are responsible for lacklustre growth in portraying the soft image of women in Pakistan are enumerated as extremism, political violence, sexism, misogyny, lack of opportunities, and limited education and training avenues. Despite all these constraints, there are a few women of substance that merit mentioned as Benazir Bhutto was the first woman prime minister of a country in the Muslim world. Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousaf Zai was also a Pakistani lady. Note: The writer is currently pursuing a degree in BS (Psychology) from NUST and can be reached at nayra.eshal@gmail.com

## Govt to provide free SIMs, female abayas to hujjaj: Minister

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed Tuesday said that the government would provide free of cost mobile SIMs with roaming internet packages, female abayas having a Pakistani flag on the backside and 13 Kg suitcases to pilgrims performing hajj this year. Talking to a private news channel, minister said that it was a historic step that caretaker government has declared a significant reduction of one lac in government Hajj expenses, adding, further 50,000 will also be reduced in coming few days after which hujjaj will get back their money in their accounts. He said a new mobile application has been designed to assist pilgrims, which will provide navigation support and enable constant communication between pilgrims and relevant officials. Initially available in English and Urdu, the application will later incorporate various regional languages, he said, adding, app will also provide digital training programs to every pilgrim. Minister also disclosed a project that ministry of Hajj with the collaboration of ministry of education have planned to convert city mosques into schools to enrolled out of school children where Imam of mosques will play a leading role. Minister said that mosques will play their role as a community centers in every city areas, adding, Imams will resolve community issues as well after offering prayers. He said that ministry of hajj is taking all four provinces on board and enhancing the connectivity of mosques. While describing another project, minister for religious affairs said that his ministry with the collaboration of health ministry has another project in which medical clinics will also be part of mosques. Lady health workers and other essential staff of doctors will also be provided in all masjid where they will facilitate to citizens visiting inside the mosque of areas, he added.—APP

## NDRA launches special helpline for disable persons

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to enhance accessibility and convenience for people with disabilities, the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has introduced a dedicated helpline and a home-based identity card issuance service. This initiative will make the process of obtaining a national identity card (NIC) seamless and hassle-free for individuals with disabilities, a public relations officer talking to APP on Tuesday said. He said that the newly launched Special Helpline 1777 will serve as a one-stop resource for persons with disabilities, providing comprehensive information and guidance on NADRA's services, including the home-

based NIC issuance process. The dedicated staff will be available to assist callers with any queries or concerns they may have. The home-based NIC issuance service will cater to individuals with disabilities who are unable to visit NADRA registration centers due to mobility or other physical limitations. NADRA officials will visit their homes to collect necessary documents, capture biometric data, and issue NICs, ensuring that everyone has access to this essential identity document, he added. This initiative is a testament to NADRA's commitment to inclusivity and its dedication to empowering persons with disabilities. By bringing identity card services to their doorsteps, NADRA is removing barriers and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in society with convenience, he concluded.

## ANF seizes 34 kg drugs in three operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its ongoing crackdown against drug trafficking managed to recover 34 kg of drugs and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He said 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from a resident, arrested near Murree Expressway, Islamabad. In another operation, 28.8 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Baleli check post, Quetta while an accused was also arrested during the operation.—APP

## Impact of various climatic factors on wheat growth

By adopting sustainable farming practices, conserving water resources, and promoting climate-smart agriculture, we can contribute to minimizing the impact of climate change on our agricultural sector

UM E RUBAB

Wheat is the major food crop as well as one of the main agricultural products in Pakistan. Out of 121 wheat growing countries, Pakistan ranks 8th in terms of area and production but 29th in terms of yield per unit area. Wheat is a leading food grain of Pakistan and occupies a central position in the agricultural policies of the country. It contributes 13.8 percent to value added in agriculture and 3.2 percent to GDP. Wheat production largely depends upon weather conditions, especially adequate rainfall, sowing time, soil moisture contents and temperature. These factors are directly related to the yield and quality of the grains produced. Rainfall is one of the most important factors that affect annual wheat production in

Pakistan. In time or effective rainfall i.e., before sowing and shooting to the grain formation stage is greatly beneficial. In the same way, rain after sowing and before germination and at the time of full maturity negatively affects crop growth and ultimately reduces the yield. In semi-arid regions, wheat sowing typically requires around 50-75 millimetres of rainfall for proper seed germination and establishment. This amount of rainfall helps provide the necessary moisture for the seeds to sprout and develop into healthy plants. However, it's important to note that rainfall requirements may vary depending on factors such as soil type, temperature, and specific local conditions. If the amount of rainfall exceeds a certain threshold, it can have negative effects. Farmers need to monitor rainfall levels and ensure proper drainage to mitigate these negative effects. Sowing time is the also

most important parameter affecting the growth of the crop. In semi-arid regions of Pakistan, the ideal sowing time for wheat seeds is typically from late October to mid-November. Sowing the seeds at the right time ensures that the crop can take advantage of favourable weather conditions, such as cooler temperatures and sufficient moisture. This allows for better germination, establishment, and growth of the wheat plants. Sowing too early or too late can result in reduced yield due to unfavourable weather conditions or inadequate moisture availability. Therefore, farmers in Pakistan carefully consider the optimal sowing time to maximize wheat yield. Air temperature is also considered important climatic variables that affect plant life. Plants' growth is restricted to certain limits of air temperature. The main dry matter process i.e., photosynthesis is also temperature dependent.

Hence three temperature values for plant growth are of particular importance. They are; Biological Zero: is the minimum temperature below which plant growth stops; for wheat crops, it ranges between 0°C and 5°C. Optimum Temperature: at which maximum plant growth occurs. For wheat crop its value is 25°C. Maximum Temperature: above which the plant growth stops. For wheat crops its value is 30-32°C. Soil temperature also affects the growth of the crop. Plants' roots are very sensitive to the soil temperature. Soil temperature influences the germination of seeds, the functional activity of the root system, the incidence of plant diseases and the rate of plant growth. The daytime soil temperature is more important than the nighttime temperature because it is necessary to maintain the internal crop water status to match the evaporation rate. The optimal soil temperature for the

growth of wheat plant roots during the vegetative stage is below 20°C and is further lower than that for the shoots. There are many other climatic factors like humidity, seed rate, and fertilizer application were found as contributing factors toward higher wheat yield. As citizens of an agricultural country like Pakistan, we must take immediate action to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. Our agricultural sector is heavily dependent on favourable climatic conditions, and any disruptions can have severe consequences on food production and livelihoods. By adopting sustainable farming practices, conserving water resources, and promoting climate-smart agriculture, we can contribute to minimizing the impact of climate change on our agricultural sector. Let's work together to protect our environment and ensure a sustainable future for agriculture in Pakistan!



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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti  
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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off 11: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

## Myanmar's military: The generals are in trouble

When Myanmar's military launched a coup almost three years ago, snatching back the limited portion of control they had ceded to elected civilian leaders, it looked like the same old story. Once again, the generals were crushing the democratic aspirations of their people. To widespread surprise, perhaps most of all the military's, they failed to stamp out the resistance. What began as a courageous campaign of civil disobedience led to tens of thousands of civilians joining armed groups, including people's defence forces (PDFs) set up by the national unity government formed from the remnants of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. Critically, long-running conflicts between the military and ethnic armed groups also reignited, with some aligning with the democratic opposition and helping to train PDFs. Then, last month, the Three Brotherhood Alliance – comprising three ethnic armed groups – launched a massive offensive against regime targets in northern Shan state. Their stunning success, capturing large swathes of territory including military bases and border crossings, prompted a further wave of attacks by groups around the country. The alliance also spelled out its commitment to unseating the junta and restoring democracy.

With the military hitting back, the UN has described the recent fighting as the largest and most geographically extensive escalation since the coup. It is a humiliating blow to the army, and an enormous boost to opposition morale. For the first time, many people in Myanmar are envisioning a future – however distant – without the generals. Strikingly, most believe that China – which supplies the Brotherhood Alliance members with arms to maintain stability along its borders – must have offered tacit approval. Beijing is thought to have been angered by the military ignoring its complaints about organised crime bases preying on Chinese nationals. It may also have its eye on future access to resources. While there is now a nascent sense of hope among the anti-military forces, they know that the army tends to launch major attacks around this time of year and is likely to intensify its scorched earth tactics. Schools and hospitals have long been targets. And India, which is increasingly concerned about the border, continues to work with the junta to secure its own interests. Tens of thousands have crossed into Mizoram since the civil war began. Many also fear that if the military cynically offers a deal, perhaps even replacing its chief, Min Aung Hlaing, the international community will try to push the opposition into an agreement. There is no appetite for a return to the old cycle: people have been cheated enough times. Yet few imagine they can remove the generals easily or quickly, if it can be done at all. And while anti-military forces have broadly agreed to a future federal system, and some see positive signs for long-term collaboration between communities, profoundly differing priorities and conflicting interests could easily lead to a fracturing. Even if the generals can eventually be ousted, the country would face a deeply uncertain future. But for now, the pressure on the military must be stepped up. Britain, which previously set the pace in imposing sanctions on the regime, has fallen behind.



## Feudal rule: King Charles, Duchy dominance

Financially speaking, the royal family has rarely had it so good. After the coronation of King Charles in the summer, the Treasury announced a whopping 45% increase in the king's public funding from 2025, taking it from £86.3m to just under £125m. More than enough to be getting on with, one might think, as millions struggle to get by after years of economic stagnation and now an acute cost of living crisis. But as the Guardian's latest investigation into the cost of the crown reveals, lavish state largesse is being supplemented by the exploitation of another income stream in a manner that is unseemly, disingenuous and in urgent need of reform. As a result of an obscure hangover from feudal times, King Charles's estate, which raises "private" income for the monarch, is being annually topped up by the assets of thousands of northerners who die without leaving a will, and with no known next of kin. Taken from citizens whose last known address lies within the medieval boundaries of the Lancashire county palatine, the moneys are boosting the balance sheets of the Duchy of Lancaster – the lucrative property empire inherited by Charles from Queen Elizabeth II on her death. In the last 10 years alone, more than £60m in such funds, known as bona vacantia, has been amassed. Across the rest of Britain – except in the Duchy of Cornwall, where the Prince of Wales enjoys similar privileges to the king – bona vacantia money goes automatically to the Treasury. Perhaps mindful that treating the assets of deceased people from Preston or Oldham as a royal windfall might not be a good look, Duchy of Lancaster officials have long claimed that, after costs are deducted, the money goes to charity. But extensive research by the Guardian has established that a significant amount is being secretly used as "free money" to refurbish parts of the king's vast property portfolio, pushing its rental value up. Funds have been diverted to spruce up townhouses, rural cottages, and even a Yorkshire barn used to facilitate pheasant and partridge shoots. This is, to put it plainly, outrageous. Occupying a highly contentious grey area between the private and the public, the property portfolios of the duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall are liable neither for corporation nor capital gains tax. Worth a fortune, these commercial organisations have no need of an extra competitive edge provided by moneys from the unclaimed estates of former miners living in the Lake District, or retired nursery managers in Burnley. As the mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, has stated, a public consultation should swiftly be launched to explore alternative arrangements for these assets. The current sharp practice has to stop, replaced by a system that is transparent and open to critical scrutiny, and commands popular consent. In apparent response to separate questions raised by the Guardian regarding its charities' investment portfolios, the Duchy of Lancaster has announced a move to an ethical investing strategy by the end of the year. Good news. But reform of an unethical feudal anomaly should swiftly follow. In 1936, when times were also extremely hard, the former Labour leader, Clement Attlee, observed of the duchies:

## Mysteries surrounding CPEC

Dr. Abdus Sattar Abbasi

The very first speaker was a provincial caretaker minister for health, for him CPEC could deliver the best of health services, he urged both countries to get benefit from expertise of each other in the areas their respective expertise. He gave some examples of specialized health facilities in both countries having potential for the counterparts to get benefit out of those healthcare providers. He also emphasized on faculty exchange programs to learn from the experience of each other. There is absolutely no harm in establishing such exchange programs rather it is a natural outcome of any program of this scale between two nations

I received a call with an invitation to join a round table conference (RTC) titled "New stage of high quality CPEC development" in a local hotel in Lahore. The phrase was attractive so I decided to join and comprehend new stage for CPEC. I had quite a few questions for the speakers especially the chief guest the Consul General of China at Lahore. But I chose to hold my queries because as the discussion unfolded, I found the CPEC surrounded in numerous mysteries even after ten years to the inception of the project. The very first speaker was a provincial caretaker minister for health, for him CPEC could deliver the best of health services, he urged both countries to get benefit from expertise of each other in the areas their respective expertise. He gave some examples of specialized health facilities in both countries having potential for the counterparts to get benefit out of those healthcare providers. He also emphasized on faculty exchange programs to learn from the experience of each other. There is absolutely no harm in establishing such exchange programs rather it is a natural outcome of any program of this scale between two nations. However, the fundamental purpose of CPEC is to strengthen economic dimensions of the country. Despite having health portfolio, I was expecting from the speaker to give insight from the vision of the sitting government to get maximum benefit from the mega economic project. He then left immediately after his speech with the excuse of an important official engagement, which also suggests how important the CPEC is for the existing power corridor.

Mr. Li Chen the CEO of Orange Line Metro Train (OLMT), thoroughly explained achievements of his organization in terms of serving passengers which currently remain around two hundred thousand per day. When he was explaining the details of number of jobs created by the project (around seven thousand) and number of indigenous industries (around fifty) developed to supply spare parts to the Orange Line Metro Train, it seemed that probably he is defending his position through these figures due to extensive pressure on sustainability of the project. On one hand there is continuous debate on the subsidy extended to the OLMT by the government on the other there is lack of considerations by the government for viable solutions to reduce the gap between the income

and the expenditure of the project. Despite environmental attractiveness and convenience for millions of commuters, fact remains that long-term success of any project depends on sustainable operations. One of the important concerns remains that still OMLT operates less than its capacity. Second apprehension is the rationalization of the fare and third is the commercialization of stations. These are certain opportunities to reduce the gap to ensure more revenue from existing infrastructure. A chief executive officer of a renowned private organization was also among the speakers. His enthusiasm about the potential of CPEC was amazing, however, he underscored that if Chinese authorities desire to witness swift progress of the project they need to liaise directly with the vibrant private sector of Pakistan instead of operating under military umbrella which instantly distances successful private operations from coordinating with the Chinese counterparts. It was quite a frank comment inviting decision makers to ponder upon the apprehensions of the private sector. Concerns such as these clearly indicate the trust deficit which exists among different stakeholders of the society. Initially there was hue and cry from political fronts about different routes of the Corridor. But now observing anxieties from the private sector players indicates a strong need for the inclusion of all segments of the society to make CPEC a real success. It is a proven fact that only government to governments engagements cannot guarantee success to any collaboration without people-to-people engagements while private sector businesses are the key for grassroots alliances in bilateral initiatives. Therefore, both China and Pakistan need to develop a framework to facilitate private sectors of both countries to join hands fearlessly for potential venture determined by the market forces of demand and supply. I think, this will bring a huge improvement in collective ownership of people of both countries for projects envisioned through different initiative under the bigger umbrella of CPEC as we are observing in the field of education through different scholarships and exchange programs across Pakistan and China where several educational institutions are taking initiatives at their own to develop ties with their counterparts in either country. The next speaker was a retired senior officer from Pakistan Navy with expertise in maritime affairs. He nicely explained backward and forward integration for successful sea port operations. According to him building a port is half of the job done,

for sustainable port it is important to have safe and reliable network of roads and efficient railway infrastructure to facilitate transportation of goods to the sea port. Then smart automation of a port without human intervention is the key for the success of any port nowadays. The next challenge for port authorities remains maritime facilities and safety of cargo operations. It is a cycle of efficient and affective integrated operation from the land to the sea which ensures success of any seaport. Therefore, we still have to go quite a long way to make Gwadar a successful seaport. The last speaker was the Counsel General of China in Lahore, the chief guest of the event. He shared highlights of "The Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation" with representation from more than 150 countries of the world. He then started explaining his approach being representative of government and people of China. He summarized his duties as a two-pronged strategy; first, strengthening friendship between two countries and second, protection of rights of people of China. He assured his commitment to maintain and fortify already ever strong bonding between China and Pakistan as all-weather friends. He particularly emphasized to ensure that funds channelized through CPEC are utilized optimally to achieve strategic objectives of the project. Diverse discussion in the RTC clearly indicate gap among priorities and focus at governmental and public level domains on both sides. There are clear apprehensions of Chinese side to trust their counterparts in Pakistan without military support or state guarantees which limits the potential of CPEC and hinders swift progress of the project. Because when there is active engagement of masses in any economic or development project that extends benefits of the expansion to the common man and in return inculcates ownership of the project among people thus ensures convenient implementation of plans. On the other hand, continuous shelter of the state develops doubts about actual benefits of the project thus distances people from the policies and execution of the project. Therefore, it will be a better option to take CPEC in the public domain to eliminate current mysteries surrounding the project.

The writer is the Consultant, Pakistan Research Center, HeBei Normal University China Associate Professor Management Sciences and Head Center of Islamic Finance COMSATS University (CU) Lahore Campus, Pakistan drabdussattar@cuilahore.edu.pk

## Wilders' victory shows Europe must stand up to far-right threat

Chris Doyle

It was the Netherlands that gave us Rembrandt and Vincent van Gogh and that invented the CD and the DVD. But now it has plumbed the depths of the political ecosystem to favor a man, Geert Wilders, who for a long time has ranked as one of the world's worst Islamophobes and Muslim haters. This is a country known for its extraordinary liberalism in nearly everything; and yet so many voters have chosen a man who wants to ban the Qur'an and mosques. So, will Wilders, the leader of the Freedom Party, which is known as the PVV, become the next Dutch

What has happened to the Netherlands? This is a country that once ruled the seas, that founded an empire that stretched from the Caribbean to Indonesia and that founded New Amsterdam, which became New York. It was the Netherlands that gave us Rembrandt and Vincent van Gogh and that invented the CD and the DVD. But now it has plumbed the depths of the political ecosystem to favor a man, Geert Wilders, who for a long time has ranked as one of the world's worst Islamophobes and Muslim haters. This is a country known for its extraordinary liberalism in nearly everything; and yet so many voters have chosen a man who wants to ban the Qur'an and mosques. So, will Wilders, the leader of the Freedom Party, which is known as the PVV, become the next Dutch prime minister at the head of arguably the most far-right government in Europe? In last week's elections, he shocked European politics by getting 37 seats, comfortably ahead of the other parties and more than double the PVV's existing tally of 17. Somehow, Wilders will have to cobble together a coalition of 76 seats to achieve a majority in the 150-seat Dutch parliament. It may take a long time. It was almost a year before a coalition was formed after the last elections in 2021. To what extent did others act as enablers for Wilder's ascent to possible power? Some blame Dilan Yesilgoz-Zegerius, who leads the conservative-liberal VVD. By stating that she could work with the PVV, she legitimized the party and made it worthwhile voting for them as an avenue to influence government policy. The VVD came third with 24 seats, so it could be a coalition partner. However, beyond the VVD, things look tough for Wilders. He needs at least three other parties to join him to make it over the line. There is a possibility that the PVV might become the junior partner in a coalition. Dutch politics used to be so dull. It was all about building consensus. Nobody ever seemed to be too controversial. But like all major populists, Wilders embraces controversy. He craves it even. He has that populist charisma and the ability to bring slogans and soundbites into every speech. Should he take up a post in government, he will revolutionize Dutch politics, not just on the EU and immigration, but also by ripping up key climate change pledges. His success is further evidence that the Dutch are more concerned about immigration

than any other EU nation. Being anti-immigration and anti-Muslim is at the core of everything Wilders stands for. His success is further evidence that the Dutch are more concerned about immigration than any other EU nation, as polls indicate. He has even been in legal trouble for his vicious attacks on Moroccan immigrants. The Netherlands, for him, is divided into the indigenous population and those of immigrant stock. He wants "zero asylum-seekers." During the 2017 election campaign, he labeled some Dutch Moroccans "scum." In 2016, he was convicted of discrimination for claiming that, if he won, there would be "fewer Moroccans." What does this mean for Dutch Muslims? They constitute about 5 percent of the Dutch population. Muslim women wearing headscarves fear discrimination. Wilders pledged to ban women wearing hijabs from entering public buildings. But more than that, he also had in the PVV's manifesto a ban on all Islamic schools, Qur'ans and mosques. Dutch Muslims will have to work with the allies they have. Wilders is not adored internationally, beyond states with far-right leaders. The UK banned him from entering the country in 2009 due to his extreme views on Islam. Many in Europe will be alarmed. Some will see this as a warning to be more anti-immigrant, whereas others will escalate their political attacks on far-right parties. Arab states were rightly quick to condemn Wilders' statement that the Palestinian people should be relocated to Jordan. The Netherlands could now have a challenging relationship with such states, as well as the wider Islamic world. Wilders has adopted some horrifying rhetoric toward Palestinians. He backs illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. He implies that he would support the forced transfer of millions of Palestinians. Alarming, Wilders seems to have had a Gaza poll bounce. Between Oct. 7 and the elections, support for him rose from 12 percent to 23 percent. The far right in Europe is anxious to ingratiate itself with Israel's leaders. They love this form of crude identity politics. It also plays to the dominant trend of anti-Muslim prejudice. The Netherlands could now have a challenging relationship with Arab states, as well as the wider Islamic world. Many see this as a sign that Eu-

rope is heading into the grip of the far right. This certainly looks like it will please President Vladimir Putin of Russia, who is always happy to see the EU and NATO divided and undermined, as Wilders wants to end military support to Ukraine. Many far-right European politicians, such as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Marine Le Pen in France and Matteo Salvini in Italy, could not wait to congratulate their fellow Islamophobe. Le Pen might fancy her chances in the next French presidential election in 2027. Elsewhere, the Freedom Party of Austria is faring well. However, only last month, the Polish elections saw the ejection of the far-right Law and Justice party. In Britain, the current right-wing government looks likely to lose the coming general election. What this perhaps indicates is the dangerous degree of polarization in many democracies – and not just in Europe. In those democracies that depend on the building of consensus, such as the Netherlands, this poses huge challenges for the stability of governments. Is Wilders going to do a Meloni? The neo-fascist Italian prime minister, while still extreme and hostile to immigrants, is widely viewed as having moderated her tone since coming to power. If Wilders wishes to govern, he has to hold a coalition together. He accepts he may not be able to do everything he would like. He would like a "Nexit" – for the Netherlands to join Britain in leaving the EU. This is unlikely. He also wants to end the free movement of labor, which EU membership does not allow. Many will hope Wilders cannot form a coalition. This may be the case and he could end up playing the political martyr from the sidelines, proclaiming that he has had victory stolen from him and the people. Yet, even if he does not become prime minister, he has still shaken Dutch and European politics to the core. European politicians need to wake up to this far right threat – it is no longer fringe. They must challenge it, not cave into it. This brand of politics is not based on solutions to the continent's challenges, but rather on appealing to base emotions. True leaders need to stand up and be counted. Anti-Muslim parties and politicians should be shunned in just the same way as politicians who espouse anti-Black or antisemitic messages are.

–Sourced by Arab News



## Briefs

## Hamas accuses Israel of...

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Palestine's Gaza following a cross-border attack by Palestinian group Hamas on October 7. Israeli restrictions on fuel supplies to Gaza are hampering aid deliveries and humanitarian access required under an UN resolution, an EU commissioner, Janez Lenarcic, has said. Lenarcic, who is in charge of crisis management - was speaking as the EU countries and aid organisations scrambled to provide relief to Gaza's population of 2.3 million under a truce agreed by Israel and Hamas. "We are calling for the increase of fuel supplies to the (Gaza) strip," Lenarcic told journalists in Brussels. The precise extent of this contamination is unknown, but in the 2014 war alone, it is estimated that approximately 7,000 items of abandoned or unexploded ordnance remained in Gaza, according to Humanity & Inclusion, a mine action charity.

## Iran calls on ICC to prosecute...

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The Hague-based organization's judicial independence and impartiality. The Iranian foreign minister also stated that it is expected that the ICC avoids double-standards and does not allow the perpetrators of such crimes to go unpunished. He concluded by saying that Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues its diplomatic, international, and legal activities in support of the oppressed people of Palestine. Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas waged the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians. According to the Gaza-based health ministry, so far over 15,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes, most of them women and children.

## Imran's cypher case trial shifts...

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The court also noted that five family members of the suspect would be allowed to attend the proceedings. Judge Zulqarnain adjourned the hearing till December 1. Last week, the court ordered authorities to present the former prime minister and Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Islamabad's Federal Judicial Complex (FJC) today. However, today the Adiala jail authorities failed to produce the former prime minister before the special court citing "security risks" in their report despite the orders to present him at the FJC. The orders were issued in the first hearing of the cypher case that held outside the Adiala prisons after IHC decision to nullify the August 29 notification for a jail trial. Judge Zulqarnain of the special court has been conducting the trial in jail citing security concerns since Khan was indicted on the charges last month.

## Limited journalists allowed in...

FROM PAGE 01  
(PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif's appeals in Avenfield and Al-Azizia cases today (Wednesday). In July 2018, the three-time former prime minister was handed a 10-year jail sentence in the Avenfield reference for owning assets beyond known income and one year for not cooperating with the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), which was to be served concurrently. Meanwhile, in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference, the politico was sentenced to seven years in jail in December later that year. Nawaz - who left for London in November 2019 for medical treatment following the Lahore High Court's approval - returned to Pakistan on October 21 after a four-year self-imposed exile.

# Saudi envoy, PFF chairman unveil football promotion plans

PFF NC chairman held a productive meeting with ambassador of Saudi Arabia at Islamabad to discuss collaborative efforts to enhance football standards in both nations

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalisation Committee (NC), Haroon Malik held a productive meeting with ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki at Islamabad to discuss collaborative efforts to enhance football standards in both nations. During the meeting, the two leaders appreciated the previously signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between PFF NC chairman Haroon Malik and President of the Saudi Football Federation, Yasser Al Mischal, in Saudi Arabia, which will prove a game-changer in Pakistan football. A consensus was reached, emphasizing the commitment of both football federations to strengthen their collaboration. The collective endeavour aims to expand learning opportunities, fostering the



exchange of knowledge and expertise between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in the realm of football.

The agreement reflects a shared dedication to advancing football development and standards in

both countries through collaborative knowledge-sharing initiatives. Speaking on the occasion, the Am-

bassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan said that this is a great initiative by the Saudi Football Federation that will not only benefit Pakistan football in the long run but also provide opportunities for players and coaches to enhance their skills, ultimately excelling at higher levels. We hope that Pakistani players and coaches will derive maximum benefit from this MoU, contributing to the emergence of football superstars in Pakistan." PFF NC chairman Haroon Malik also expressed gratitude to the Saudi government and the Saudi Football Federation for their pioneering initiative. He said, "This MoU, a first of its kind, is a testament to the hard work and sincere efforts of the PFF Normalisation Committee, which is dedicated to elevating Pakistan football to new heights. With more initiatives like these, we aim to modernize Pakistani football, enabling footballers to achieve recognition and success at least at the Asian level."

## Man Utd braced for Galatasaray cauldron

LONDON: Thirty years after Manchester United left Galatasaray with their Champions League hopes in tatters on one of the most notorious nights in the club's history, they will return to 'hell' for another do-or-die clash with the Turkish team. United sit bottom of Champions League Group A and will be eliminated if they lose to Galatasaray in their penultimate fixture on Wednesday. It is a predicament that brings back painful memories for United players and fans who ran the gauntlet of hate in Istanbul back in 1993. Finally crowned English champions the previous season, United were confident of a long run in their first European Cup campaign since 1969. A surprise 3-3 draw against Galatasaray in the second round first leg at Old Trafford put that ambition in peril, but even then United were not fully aware of the cauldron that awaited them in Turkey. United were greeted at the airport by thousands of Galatasaray fans, one waving the infamous banner that said 'Welcome to Hell', while others threw missiles and menacingly drew their fingers across their throats. Alex Ferguson, United's manager at the time, described the intimidation as being "exposed to as much hostility and harassment I have ever known". The nightmare was only just beginning as United, clearly unsettled by the volcanic atmosphere in the Ali Sami Yen Stadium, failed to get the result they needed. Galatasaray held on for the draw, knocking out United on away goals and sparking an appropriately chaotic finale. United's star striker Eric Cantona was attacked by a Turkish police officer wielding a truncheon after being sent off following the final whistle. When United midfielder Bryan Robson tried to come to Cantona's rescue, he was left with six stitches in a cut arm after being thrown down concrete steps that led to the dressing room. The hatred was unbelievable. Even the police started to pick fights with us. - Agencies

## 23 foreigners to feature in Serena Hotels-CAS Int'l Squash C'ship

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: As many as 23 foreigner players will be seen in action in the Serena Hotels-Chief of Air Staff (CAS) International Men and Women's Squash Championships as main round will be starting from Thursday (Tomorrow) at Mushaf Squash Complex Islamabad. Sharing the silent features of international championships, Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) honorary secretary Air Commodore (r) Amir Nawaz said

that apart from 25 Pakistani players, a group of 23 international men and women players from Malaysia, Egypt, Hong Kong and Spain would also be in action in both championships. He said that with the collaboration of Serena Hotels, PSF has arranged CAS-International Squash Championship for Men & Women at Islamabad which carries the prize money of US \$ 12000 for Men and US\$ 6000 for Women. The main round will be commence from 30th November while championship finals

will be played on 4th December. Amir Nawaz said that Pakistan Squash Federation has been putting tremendous efforts for revival of international squash in the country. In the Men's event, World No 64 Ibrahim Elkabani from Egypt is seed number 1 along with World No 72 Muhammad Asim Khan from Pakistan will be second seed while in Womens event, World No 77 Chan Yiwen from Malaysia will be top seed along with World No 114 Nour Khafagy from Egypt will be second seed.



## Ronaldo's gesture: urges referee to reverse AFC penalty

RIYADH: In a captivating AFC Champions League encounter between Al Nassr and Persepolis, Cristiano Ronaldo took centre stage, influencing a pivotal moment that saw the referee reverse a penalty decision in the Saudi Pro League side's 0-0 draw with the Iranian outfit. The 38-year-old football icon, formerly of Manchester United and Real Madrid, found himself at the centre of controversy when Chinese referee Ma Ning initially awarded a penalty after Ronaldo appeared to be brought down by Persepolis' Soroush Rafiee. Displaying his trademark determination, Ronaldo vehemently contested the decision, wagging his finger and shaking his head. The persuasive influence of Ronaldo prompted the referee to consult VAR, leading to a surprising reversal of the penalty decision after reviewing the incident on the pitch-side monitor. The turn of events added a dramatic twist to the Group E clash in Riyadh.



Despite playing most of the match with 10 men following Ali Lajami's 17th-minute red card, Al Nassr secured a crucial point, allowing them to top Group E and advance to the knockout stages. Ronaldo's impact extended beyond the penalty controversy; he unfortunately left the field with a neck injury sustained during a collision with Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand. The numerical advantage and Ronaldo's injury posed challenges for Al Nassr, but Persepolis failed to capitalise, resulting in a hard-fought 0-0 draw. In a separate AFC Champions League fixture, Saudi champions Al Ittihad secured a vital 2-1 victory against AGMK FC, with Moroccan Abderrazak Hamdallah scoring twice. This win places Al Ittihad in a favourable position to clinch group victory in their final match. Group C saw Sepahan emerge victorious with a 1-0 win over Iraq's Air Force Club, despite being reduced to nine men. Farshad Ahmadzadeh's early goal and resilient defence secured the three points. As the AFC Champions League progresses, the final two rounds of East Zone matches will soon kick off, setting the stage for the knockout stages in February. The West Zone group stage concludes next week, with the quarter-finals, semi-finals, and two-legged final scheduled for March, April, and May, respectively. - Agencies

## Azam fine waived off

DNA

KARACHI: Azam Khan's 50 per cent fine imposed by match officials has been reviewed and waived off by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). The Karachi Whites wicketkeeper-batter was fined 50 per cent of his match fee for being found guilty of committing a level-I offence during his side's National T20 Cup 2023-24 match against Lahore Blues at National Bank Stadium, Karachi. Azam was found to have violated Article 2.4 of the PCB Code of Conduct For Players and Players Support Personnel for repeated failure to comply with the instruction or directive of an Umpire during a Match. Players and team officials are not permitted to wear, display or otherwise convey personal messages on their equipment unless approved in advance by both the player or team official's cricket association and PCB Cricket Operations Department. "The Karachi Whites wicketkeeper-batter was fined 50 per cent of his match fee for being found guilty of committing a level-I offence during his side's National T20 Cup 2023-24 match against Lahore Blues at National Bank Stadium, Karachi."

## Phillips claims four as NZ restrict Bangladesh

SYLHET: Spinner Glenn Phillips returned with figures of 4-53 as New Zealand restricted Bangladesh to 310-9 before bad light forced early stumps on the opening day of the first Test. Phillips, chosen ahead of Rachin Ravindra, picked the crucial wickets after opening batsman Mahmudul Hasan hit 86 off 166 balls to give Bangladesh a platform for a strong total. The hosts, who opted to bat first after winning the toss, dominated New Zealand in patches but lost wickets in important phases, with Kiwi bowlers Ajaz Patel (2-76) and Kyle Jamieson (2-52) celebrating success. Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto and one of his predecessors, Mominul Haque, each made 37 runs for Bangladesh. They put up 53 runs and 88 runs with Mahmudul for the second and third wicket pairs respectively, before their untimely dismissals. Patel bowled opener Zakir Hasan for 12 to give New Zealand their first breakthrough before Phillips made Najmul his maiden Test wicket in the morning session. Kane Williamson ran back from mid-on to complete the catch. Ish Sodhi and Glenn Phillips struck in successive overs just before the tea break to halt Bangladesh's progress further. Daryl Mitchell took a low catch at slip as Sodhi dismissed Mahmudul, ending his dogged innings. Mahmudul hit 11 boundaries in his fourth Test half-century. His dismissal came within five balls of Phillips forcing Mominul to give a catch to wicketkeeper Tom Blundell. Experienced Mushfiqur Rahim fell to Patel for 12 as Williamson took his second catch of the day. Jamieson, the only New Zealand pacer with some success, had Mehdi Hasan caught by Mitchell for 20. Wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan struck a few quick boundaries before Phillips swung momentum further New Zealand's way. The off-spinner claimed the wicket of debutant Shahadat Hossain, who made 24 before hoisting a catch to Henry Nicholls at short midwicket. Glenn Phillips then ended Nurul's innings at 29 six overs later. Taijul Islam, eight not out, and Shoriful Islam, 13 not out, survived the day after Jamieson made Bangladesh nine down with the wicket of Nayeem Hasan, the pacer's second of the day. The two-match series marks the beginning of a new cycle for the World Test Championship for New Zealand as well as Bangladesh. - Agencies

# Babar will perform better without captaincy pressure

Babar services as a batter for Pakistan cannot be forgotten. However, not being captain will release pressure on him and help him flourish his game solely as a batter: Hafeez

SPORTS DESKS

LAHORE: The Director of the Pakistan men's cricket team Mohammad Hafeez has stated that former captain Babar Azam will flourish as a batter and perform at his best without the pressure of captaincy. Mohammad Hafeez, who recently replaced Mickey Arthur as the Director of the Pakistan team, shared his views during a press conference ahead of Pakistan's tour of Australia.

"Babar Azam's services as a batter for Pakistan cannot be forgotten. However, not being captain will release pressure on him and help him flourish his game solely as a batter," said Hafeez. "Captaincy definitely adds pressure onto a cricketer. Babar Azam has already been making excellent contributions to Pakistan cricket, and I think he will further enhance his performance to help Pakistan achieve success," he further added. Hafeez also clarified that Babar Azam



has a good relationship with other team-mates and newly appointed Test cap-

tain Shan Masood, which will help the team perform as a unit against Australia.

He further opened up about his role as director of the national team. "The role of the team director is to give the plan to the team. I want us to play modern-day cricket, which we have been lacking," added Hafeez. "The mindset of the team is clear, and we will try to bring better results together." Pakistan is scheduled to play a three-match Test series against Australia commencing from 14 December 2023 to 7 January 2024. The team will depart from Lahore on 30 Novem-

ber and will kick off the Test series with the first Test in Perth from 14-18 December 2023. Pakistan squad for the tour of Australia: Shan Masood (c), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wk), Saud Shakeel and Shaheen Shah Afridi.

## Govt to support ECP for...

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finalized, then the media would be informed in that regard, he added. The minister said he had a relationship of respect with Bilawal Butto Zardari and Asif Ali Zardari and he could not comment on their statements.

## ECP adjourns hearing...

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Sikandar Sultan Raja stated that, as per ECP records, a copy had been furnished to PTI. The case's hearing is postponed until Wednesday, but the lawyer urged for a further adjournment to next week, citing their engagement in intra-party elections. The Election Commission member questioned the procedure for inter-party matters. Subsequently, the lawyer was instructed by the Election Commission to submit the power of attorney. Petitioner, Khalid Mehmood Khan, has submitted a plea seeking the removal of the Chairman of Tehreek-e-Insaf from his party position. The argument put forth is that the PTI Chairman, having been penalized in the Toshi Khana case, should be ousted from the role.

## Pak urges Kabul to hand...

FROM PAGE 01  
The military's media wing added that a motorcycle-borne suicide bomber, affiliated with Hafiz Gul Bahadar Group and later identified as an Afghan national, targeted a security forces convoy. The representative of the Afghan Embassy in Pakistan was called on Tuesday into the foreign office to issue a strong protest over Sunday's suicide attack. This was the 16th suicide attack in Pakistan which was carried out by the Afghan national. Although the foreign office did not issue any handout, citing sources a Pakistani newspaper reported that Pakistan conveyed its serious concerns to the Taliban diplomat over the repeated use of Afghan soil. Sources revealed that the Afghan representative was conveyed the four key demands. Those demands include full investigation into the Bannu attack and stern action against perpetrators and abettors. Pakistan also demanded immediate "verifiable actions" against all terrorist groups and their sanctuaries, according to sources. Similarly, the Afghan Taliban representative was told to apprehend Hafiz Gul Bahadar and hand him over to Pakistan. Islamabad also reiterated its demand from the Kabul regime to prevent the use of Afghan soil for terrorism against Pakistan.

## India arrests Kashmiri students

FROM PAGE 01  
The students were arrested following "anti-India sloganeering and intimidation of others who did not agree with them" after the match. Hosts India were favourites to capture the one-day cricket crown in the November 19 final but they lost to Australia in a six-wicket defeat. Police said the Kashmiri students at the agriculture university were arrested last week after a complaint filed by another student, who came from outside the territory. "They started abusing me and targeting me for being supporter of my country and also threatened me to shut up otherwise I would be shot (sic)," the police case file seen by AFP notes, quoting the complainant. Many people in IIOJK support any cricket team playing against India - including arch-rival Pakistan - and fireworks were set off in the main city of Srinagar to celebrate Australia's victory. The arrests were criticised by Mehbooba Mufti, Kashmir's former chief minister. "Why is there so much fear, restlessness and paranoia only because some students celebrated Australia's victory?" Mufti told reporters on Tuesday. "You... want to destroy their lives for cheering the team of their choice and for expressing happiness when that team plays well. I condemn it," she said.



## Briefs

## Turkiye foils terrorists fleeing to Greece

EDIRNE : Turkish border forces arrested 13 suspected members of terror groups trying to flee to Greece, local authorities announced on Tuesday. The suspects were nabbed by local gendarmerie forces in the northwestern Edirne province, which borders Greece, the governor's office said in a statement. Among them were five suspected members of the PKK terror group and eight members of the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO). In its more than 35-year terror campaign against Turkiye, the PKK — listed as a terrorist organization by Turkiye, the US, and EU — has been responsible for the deaths of over 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants. FETO and its US-based leader Fethullah Gulen orchestrated the defeated coup of July 15, 2016 in Turkiye, in which 252 people were killed and 2,734 wounded. Ankara also accuses the terror group of being behind a long-running campaign to overthrow the state through the infiltration of Turkish institutions, particularly the military, police and judiciary.—APP

## Niger junta repeals migration-slowing law

NIAMEY: Niger's junta has revoked an anti-migration law that had helped reduce the flow of West Africans to Europe but which was reviled by desert dwellers whose economies had long relied on the traffic, it said on Monday. The law, which made it illegal to transport migrants through Niger, was passed in May 2015 as the number of people traveling across the Mediterranean Sea from Africa reached record highs, creating a political and humanitarian crisis in Europe where governments came under pressure to stop the influx. Niger's junta, which took power in a July coup, repealed the law on Saturday and announced it on Monday evening on state television. The junta is reassessing its relations with former western allies who condemned the coup, and is seeking to shore up support at home, including in the northern desert communities that had benefited most from migration. The number of migrants moving through Niger, a main transit country on the southern fringe of the Sahara Desert, dropped sharply over the years because of the law, but the change drained the lifeblood from towns and villages that had fed and housed migrants and sold car parts and fuel to traffickers. In return, the European Union launched the 5 billion euro Trust Fund for Africa in 2015, aimed at eradicating the root causes of migration, but many felt it was not enough. Unemployment soared in places like the ancient city of Agadez, a popular gateway to the Sahara.—APP

## Russia proposes ban on grain exports

MOSCOW: Russia might impose a ban on grain exports if their stocks fall to 10 million tons, Izvestia daily has reported, citing a government document. The government working group on non-tariff measures in foreign trade recommended the Agriculture Ministry monitor grain stocks on a monthly basis, Izvestia cited the protocol of the working group's meeting. If the monitoring shows stocks decrease to a "critically low level" of 10 million tons the ministry should propose the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Economy introduce a temporary ban on grains export. The Agriculture Ministry confirmed to Izvestia such scheme had been proposed by the government sub-committee, however, it pointed out Russia has ample grain reserves given large stocks from last year and a big harvest in 2023. Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has said that another 3,000 of his fighters were ready to go to fight in Ukraine as part of new units of the Russian Defence Ministry.—APP

## U S, FAO mark completion of \$1.3 million farming project

The program's "achievements are far-reaching," said Ambassador Blome, noting that it "helped establish fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, and irrigation systems benefitting more than 25,000 people

DNA

PESHAWAR: U.S. Ambassador Donald A. Blome participated in a closing event of a five-year, \$1.3 million U.S. Embassy-funded sustainable farming program today. The Alternative Livelihoods Options Project, which was implemented by the FAO with the assistance of the KP government, has helped 3,700 farmers, including over 600 women, increase their incomes by teaching them improved agricultural practices and increasing their access to new, alternative crops. The program's "achievements are far-reaching," said Ambassador Blome, noting that it "helped establish fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, and irrigation systems benefitting more than 25,000 people." He also commended the 624 women leaders who participated in the project. "You inspire us and give us hope for a better tomorrow," he said. Ambassador Blome thanked Director General Khan, Secretary Marwat and the FAO for their assistance in carrying out the project. After the ceremony, Ambassador Blome met farmers who participated in



the project and planted a tree at FAO premises. Secretary, Agriculture Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Muhammad Javed Marwat, General, Agricultural Extension Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; and Farukh Toirov, Head of Officer UN Food and Agriculture (FAO), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, also spoke at the event.

## Poland's new govt sworn in Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki's government unlikely to win vote of confidence in parliament

## NEWS DESKS

WARSAW: Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki's government was sworn in at the Presidential Palace in Warsaw. Morawiecki has two weeks before his government faces a vote of confidence in the Sejm, or lower house of parliament. He said over the weekend, however, that he gives himself only a 10% chance of winning it. Most of the ministers in the outgoing Law and Justice (PiS) government have not received a proposal from Morawiecki to enter the new government with the exception of Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak. In their place are

people previously unconnected with politics or from the second or third ranks of PiS. PiS has 194 votes in



the Sejm but no coalition partner to give it a majority. In contrast, an alliance of the Civic Coalition (KO), the Third Way — a coalition of the Polish People's Party (PISL) and e Poland 2050 party —

and the New Left party has a majority with 248 votes and has said it intends to form a government headed by former Prime Minister Donald Tusk. To win a majority, PiS would have to attract 37 opposition members of parliament (MPs). PiS came first in the Oct. 15 election but fell short of a majority. President Andrzej Duda, a PiS ally, gave him first shot at building a new government. Opposition MPs said they had received letters to join coalition talks, but Morawiecki's appeal has gained no support. Representatives of the three opposition groups meanwhile signed a coalition agreement. The co-chairman of the New Left party, Włodzimierz Czarzasty, said the agree-

## ICC ends Kenya post-election violence probe

NAIROBI: The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced that it is halting an investigation into violence that broke out after Kenya's 2007 presidential elections which led to charges against six suspects accused of crimes against humanity. The 2007-2008 post-election violence inflicted a devastating toll, claiming over 1,200 lives as the nation grappled with political and ethnic unrest. The ICC announced the conclusion of the investigation, noting the decision was reached after a careful consideration of the specific facts and circumstances surrounding the case. It noted that it will not pursue additional cases of alleged criminal responsibility. "After assessing all the information available to me at this time, I have decided to conclude the investigation phase in the situation in Kenya. I have reached this decision after considering the specific facts and circumstances of this situation," said ICC Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan. "Accordingly, the office will not pursue additional cases into the alleged criminal responsibility of other persons." The investigation in Kenya began in 2010 following allegations of widespread crimes against humanity committed in the context of post-election violence in 2007 and 2008. It led to charges against six suspects in two separate cases.—DNA

## Indian rescuers clear debris, save trapped workers

SILKYARA : Indian rescuers led by "rat miners" drilled through rocks and debris on Tuesday to reach 41 construction workers trapped in a collapsed tunnel in the Himalayas for 17 days. The process of pulling out the 41 low-wage workers from India's poorest states, one at a time on wheeled stretchers through a pipe 90 cm (3 feet) wide, was due to begin soon, officials said. "Work of laying pipes in the tunnel to take out workers has been completed," Uttarakhand state chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said on the X social media platform, thanking the Hindu deity, Baba Baukh Nag Ji, as well as the millions of Indian who prayed for the men and the tireless rescuers. "Soon, all the laborer brothers will be taken out." The men have been stuck in the 4.5km tunnel since it collapsed on Nov. 12. They have been getting food, water, light, oxygen and medicines through a pipe but efforts to dig a tunnel to rescue them with high-powered drilling machines were frustrated by a series of snags. Government agencies managing the unprecedented crisis turned on Monday to "rat miners" to drill through the rocks and gravel by hand from inside a 90 cm (3 feet) wide evacuation pipe pushed through the debris after machinery failed. The miners are experts at a primitive, hazardous and controversial method used mostly to get at coal deposits through narrow passages, and get their name because they resemble burrowing rats.—APP

## Italy, SA discuss investments in automotive

ROME: Italy is discussing joint investments with Saudi Arabia in the automotive, mining, oil and gas, defense, hydrogen and space sectors, Industry Minister Adolfo Urso said on Monday. Since taking office in October 2022, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has sought to forge closer ties with the Gulf, shrugging off the concerns of previous coalitions over human rights in the region. Urso is visiting the Arabian peninsula until Tuesday, with meetings in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. "Italy and Saudi Arabia are committed to developing a regulatory and industrial framework that favours and accelerates strategic autonomy in the critical raw materials sector," Urso said in a statement after a meeting in Riyadh with Khalid Al-Saleem, president of the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, which helps oversee the development of Saudi Arabia's energy industry. "We explored the possibility of partnerships and joint investments especially in the mining sector, both in our respective countries and in third areas, such as the African continent." Top representatives of companies including Pirelli, Maire Tecnimont and Prysmian attended the meeting, the minister added.—APP

## Tokyo stocks trade lower

TOKYO :Tokyo stocks opened slightly higher on Tuesday but soon dipped into negative territory as investors awaited clues for central banks' rate policies. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index was down 0.04 percent, or 14.41 points, at 33,433.26 in early trade, while the broader Topix index slipped 0.17 percent, or 4.08 points, to 2,377.68. Traders will be eyeing this week's data releases including the Conference Board's reading of US consumer confidence due later in the day, said National Australian Bank strategist Rodrigo Catril. The dollar fetched 148.11 yen in early Asian trade, down from 148.64 yen in New York. Shunra Yasuda of Tokai Tokyo Research Institute said a higher yen "against the dollar will likely weigh on the market, after falls in US markets where profit-taking took place." In Tokyo, Toyota was down 0.61 percent at 2,753 yen, Panasonic was off 1.09 percent at 1,536 yen, and shipping firm Mitsui O.S.K. Lines was down 1.27 percent at 4,105 yen.—APP

## FSK ready to join allied armies in NATO alliance

BELGRADE: The Kosovo Security Force (FSK) is ready to join other allied armies in the NATO alliance, President Vjosa Osmani said Monday. "To get to this point, a lot of blood has been shed so that Kosovo has its own army. Therefore, I am convinced that each and every soldier wears this uniform more proudly and is ready to give his life for the motherland if necessary," Osmani said at an event at the Adem Jashari Barracks in the capital Pristina. The event was attended by Prime Minister Albin Kurti, Defense Minister Ejup Qameti and military and diplomatic representatives. The guests examined some of the military equipment on display at the barracks. Osmani added that the FSK is a proven force and is serving in peacekeeping missions with allied armies in various countries around the world. Kurti emphasized that the government focused on the Ministry of Defense and doubled its budget in less than three years. "We almost tripled the investments in armaments and more than quadrupled the number of our officers and soldiers trained abroad. In less than 32 months, we sent 1,459 soldiers and officers abroad," he said. The FSK traditionally opens its barracks across Kosovo to the public on Nov. 27. The FSK was established in 2009 to provide crisis management operations in Kosovo and beyond the border and to serve in civil defense operations in the country and in natural disasters and other emergencies.—Agencies

## NATO chief 'confident' US will keep arming Ukraine

BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that he was "confident" the United States would keep up weapons deliveries to Ukraine, despite a political blockage in Washington. The United States has provided over \$40 billion in security aid to Ukraine since Russia's invasion and pledged to back Kyiv for as long as necessary. But opposition from hardline Republicans has thrown into question the future of US assistance. "I'm confident that the United States will continue to provide support because it is in the security interest of the United States to do so and it's also in line with what we have agreed," Stoltenberg said at a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels. Concerns have ratcheted up over the future of Western backing for Ukraine as Kyiv's top general has admitted that the fierce fighting has ground to a "stalemate". The European Union is currently also struggling to agree a plan for its own long-term support for arming Ukraine in the face of opposi-



tion from Hungary. "I urge allies and allies are also committed to continue to deliver support," Stoltenberg said, pointing to 10 billion euros (\$11 billion) pledged recently by Germany and the Netherlands. "Even though the frontline has not moved so much, the Ukrainians have been able to inflict heavy losses on the Russian forces." Latvian Foreign Minister Krisjanis Karins said Ukraine needs more "long-range missiles so that they can impede Russia's logistic capabilities". "It's in our direct interest to continue supporting Ukraine to make sure that Russia does not win this war and that Ukraine can win the war," he said. Ukraine's top diplomat Dmytro Kuleba will join the meeting on Wednesday and NATO members are set to agree on a plan for reforms aimed at helping Ukraine towards eventual membership in the alliance. Ukraine is pushing to join NATO, but the US-led alliance has so far refused to issue a formal invitation despite promising that Kyiv will be in its ranks one day. —Agencies

## Philippine govt, communist rebels agree on peace talks

Philippine government and the country's communist rebels have agreed to resume talks aimed at ending decades of armed conflict

## FOREIGN DESKS

COPENHAGEN: The Philippine government and the country's communist rebels have agreed to resume talks aimed at ending decades of armed conflict, one of Asia's longest, Norwegian mediators announced Tuesday. High-ranking delegations from both sides met in the Norwegian capital last week and agreed to a "common vision for peace" that sought to address key obstacles, according to Norway's foreign ministry. Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said the deal was signed at "an important signing ceremony" on Thursday but was only made public Tuesday. The Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, have fought successive Philippine governments since

1969. The rebellion, which opposes the Philippines' close ties with the US and wants left-wing parties to be part of the government, has left about 40,000 combatants and civilians dead and has stunted economic development in the impoverished countryside. The military

says a few thousand Maoist insurgents are continuing to wage the insurgency. Past administrations had engaged in on and off peace negotiations with communist rebels. Former President Rodrigo Duterte ended peace talks in March 2019, accusing the rebels

of attacks on police and military outposts. The US, the European Union and the Philippine government consider the NPA as a terrorist organization because of its attacks targeting civilians. Last year, Ferdinand Marcos Jr. took office as the new president and appeared more open to peace talks. He granted amnesty last week to several insurgent groups, including NPA, for offenses including rebellion, sedition and illegal assembly, but not those suspected of kidnapping, killing, terrorism or similar serious crimes. Marcos' namesake father declared martial law in the Philippines in 1972, imprisoning thousands of suspected rebels and communist supporters, until he was ousted in a 1986 popular uprising. The Philippine government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, the umbrella group representing the rebels, said in their

joint statement that they "recognize the need to unite as a nation in order to urgently address these challenges and resolve the reasons for the armed conflict." They "agree to a principled and peaceful resolution of the armed conflict." "We envision and look forward to a country where a united people can live in peace and prosperity," the statement said. The text was the result of several informal discussions between the sides held in the Netherlands and Norway since the beginning of 2022. "I was happy to hear the parties' decision to finally end the more than 50-year-long conflict in the Philippines," said Barth Eide, who witnessed the signing. He said that "extensive work" remained and that Norway "looks forward to continuing to assist the parties toward a final peace agreement."





**Briefs**

**MQM-P suggests postponing elections**

DNA

KARACHI: MQM-Pakistan leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has expressed concern over the constitution's inability to safeguard itself and ordinary Pakistanis, emphasising the need for increased clarity. Speaking to media, Siddiqui urged a focus on protecting local governments and suggested postponement of general elections until district governments are established. He highlighted the economic crisis caused by resource misallocation and called for relief for common people, asserting that a government emerging after the upcoming elections should prioritise facilitating common citizens.

**'PML-N will provide opportunities to youth'**

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz said on Tuesday efforts would be made to bring more young populace and minorities to the forefront of politics. She made these remarks while heading a session in which members and officials of Muslim Students Federation (MSF) and minority wing participated. Maryam expressed satisfaction over the performances of the MSF and minority wing regarding the election that would take place on Feb 8. It was decided in the meeting to speed up the election activities across the country and also to mobilise the youth in the four provinces including the federation, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. She said, "PML-N will increase the role of youth and minorities in politics while mentioning that the youth are the capital of the country and their development will lead to the progress of the country."

**Imran Riaz's pre-arrest bail confirmed**

DNA

LAHORE: A district and sessions court in Lahore confirmed on Tuesday the pre-arrest bail of senior journalist Imran Riaz Khan, as the Investigation Officer (IO) failed to produce any substantial evidence to support the case registered against him. FIA Cyber-crime Wing had filed an FIR against Imran Riaz Khan for allegedly defaming and maligning the police department, its officers, including Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab, and other national institutions. The accusations were based on tweets from his Twitter account, where he was alleged to be making derogatory remarks and spreading false information.

## Pakistan's economy stuck in 'low-growth trap': WB

World Bank Vice President visits Pakistan, launches policy notes on key reform areas

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank's Regional Vice President for South Asia, Martin Raiser, is in Pakistan to reaffirm the Bank's commitment to support the people of Pakistan. He launched a series of Policy Notes that outline critical policy shifts required for a productive, sustainable, resilient, and healthy Pakistan. The policy notes—focusing on child stunting, fiscal sustainability, private sector growth, energy, learning poverty, agriculture, and climate change—are the culmination of several months of outreach and engagements conducted across the country under the "Reforms for a Brighter Future - Time to Decide" banner. They are intended to help inform the public policy dialogue in the context of the upcoming elections.

"Pakistan's economy is stuck in a low-growth trap with poor human development outcomes and increasing poverty. Economic conditions leave Pakistan highly vulnerable to climate shocks, with insufficient public resources to finance development and climate adaptation," said Martin Raiser. "It is now time for Pakistan to decide whether to maintain the patterns of the past or take difficult but crucial steps towards a brighter future."



The policy notes argue that Pakistan needs to: 1. Address its acute human capital crisis—including the high prevalence of stunting and learning poverty—by adopting a coordinated and coherent cross-sectoral approach to basic services involving both provincial and federal governments. 2. Improve the quality of public spending and take serious measures to expand the revenue base, ensuring that the better off pay their share. 3. Pursue business regulatory and

trade reforms and reduce the presence of the state in the economy to increase productivity, competitiveness, and exports.

4. Remove distortions that undermine the performance of the agricultural and energy sectors, including through subsidy reform and privatization of electricity distribution companies.

"Almost 40% of children in Pakistan suffer from stunted growth, more than 78% of Pakistan's children cannot read and understand a simple text by the age of 10. These are stark indicators of a silent human capital crisis that needs priority attention," said Martin Raiser. "With additional spending on water and sanitation of around 1% of GDP per year and better coordination at the local level, stunting could be halved over a decade with significant positive impacts on growth and incomes. This is just one example of the huge economic benefits a coherent and decisive reform strategy could have".

During his visit he will meet government officials at the Federal and Provincial levels, and representatives from the private sector and academia. He will also visit the DASU and Tarbela Hydropower Projects, as well as project sites in Sindh and Punjab.

### Bilal Pasha 'commits suicide': Police

BANNU: Bannu Cantonment Board chief executive officer Bilal Pasha has allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself, the police said on Tuesday. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Cantt Azmat Khan, Pasha was suffering from mental stress for several days which led to his suicide. The police said that they found Pasha's body covered in blood inside his residence where he shot himself. They added that his body had been moved to the District Headquarters Hospital, Bannu. District Police Officer Ismail Khan said that they had examined the incident from every aspect which revealed that Pasha committed suicide. He added that the investigation revealed that Pasha was transferred from Bannu to Rawalpindi. Following the funeral prayers, which were held at the premises of cantonment board, the body was sent to Pasha's hometown Khanewal for burial. - Agencies

### Ukraine spy chief's wife ill in suspected poisoning

KIEV: The wife of Ukraine's spy chief, Lt Gen Kyrylo Budanov, is being treated in hospital for suspected poisoning with heavy metals. Marianna Budanova had fallen ill, the source said, giving no further information about whether anyone else was being treated. Several Ukrainian media outlets earlier published similar information. Ukraine's military intelligence has not publicly commented on the reports. The reports did not say whether or not Russia was thought to be behind the alleged attack. Ukraine's Ukrainska Pravda news website said several other intelligence officials had also been poisoned. However, there were no suggestions that Gen Budanov may also have been targeted. The general, who leads the Main Directorate of Intelligence (DIU) of Ukraine's defence ministry, has played a key role in planning and sometimes executing major military operations against Russian forces, following Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022. News website Babel, which on Tuesday was the first to report the alleged poisoning, said Mrs Budanova had been taken to hospital after feeling unwell for a "prolonged period of time". Citing its own sources in Ukrainian intelligence,

## PTI to conduct intra-party polls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The core committee of the PTI has okayed the conduct of intra-party elections within the time frame given by the ECP. PTI's approval comes days after the electoral body ruled that its intra-party polls were not transparent, ordering the party to hold new elections if it wishes to retain its "bat" symbol. The party was, therefore, asked by the commission to hold fresh elections within 20 days in a reserved verdict announced on November 23. In the verdict, the ECP stated that the PTI failed to hold free and fair intra-party elections, adding that the polls were objectionable and controversial. "PTI's intra-party elections cannot be accepted," stated the verdict, directing it to hold polls and submit the record within seven days. The party's Central Media Department said its members discussed crucial issues including the country's current political climate, the party's organisational

### Imran pulls out of chairman PTI race 'PTI denies party leaders' statement'

ISLAMABAD: In a rather surprising development, PTI Chairman Imran Khan will not be contesting the intra-party elections for the top post — ending his tenure at the key position since the party's formation more than two decades back. Talking to a private news channel, PTI Senior Vice-President Sher Afzal Marwat confirmed that Imran — the only prime minister to be voted out via no-confidence motion in April last year — would not partake in the intra-party polls. The PTI's Core Committee on Monday gave formal approval to hold the intra-party polls within the time frame of 20 days given by ECP. - DNA

activities, the ongoing treatment of PTI leaders and workers, as well as the intra-party polls during the core committee meeting. The party strongly condemned the arrest of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Senior Vice President and former MNA Junaid Akbar and demanded his immediate release as well as the cessation of the registration of 'false FIRs/cases against organisers of peaceful conventions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PTI forum also reiterated the demand for foolproof security arrangements during Chairman Imran Khan's court appearance. A PTI spokesperson said that PTI chairman Imran Khan has an important message for the leaders and workers on the occasion of his court appearance.

"The government's attempts to endanger the security, security and life of Chairman Imran Khan in the past are not hidden from anyone. His safety and security is of utmost priority: millions of workers from across the country want to go to court to welcome their beloved leader," he claimed.

### Ukrainska Pravda later quoted its own sources as saying the poisoning had been confirmed after tests

gence, Babel said she was now completing a course of treatment and would be monitored by doctors. No detail has been given of the type of heavy metal suspected in Mrs Budanova's poisoning. However, the unnamed official made clear the substances were "not used in any way in everyday life or military operations". Ukrainska Pravda later quoted its own sources as saying the poisoning had been confirmed after tests. She had most likely been given poisoned food, it reported, but was now "feeling better" after completing an initial course of treatment. Separately, Ukraine's Union news agency quoted its source as saying that Mrs Budanova was being treated in a hospital in Ukraine, not abroad. Mrs Budanova - born in 1993 in Kyiv - has a master's degree in psychology. She later became involved in politics, working as an adviser to the mayor of Kyiv. In 2022, she told Elle magazine that she had also worked as a volunteer in Kyiv's military hospital in 2015-17. In September, Lt Gen Budanov, 37, told the War Zone website that he and his wife had been staying in his office "since the February invasion" in 2022 for safety reasons. "She's [Marianna] actually a professor at our national police academy. She's teaching legal psychology. It's not a problem for her as it might have been for someone else." - Agencies

## PPP dialogue committee to begin meetings with politicians

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The members of the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) dialogue committee, constituted to initiate talks with other political parties and politicians, have been assigned important tasks as polls draw near. They have been tasked with scheduling meetings with national and provincial personalities for possibilities of seat adjustment as the country moves towards general elections scheduled to take place on February 8 next year. The meeting of the dialogue committee of the PPP, on Monday, was held with the party's Secretary General PPP Syed Nayyar Hussain Bokhari as chair, while other attendees included PPP President Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Muhammad Bacha and PPP Information Secretary Faisal Karim Kundi, while Qamar Zaman Kaira and Sajid Turi participated through video link. In the first meeting of the committee for Punjab and KP, the overall political situation of the country and the upcoming elections were discussed in detail. Through mutual consultation, it was decided to hold separate meetings of the negotiation committees of the four provinces. Under the leadership of former president

Asif Ali Zardari, the PPP has decided to contact political parties and politicians for dialogue both before and after the general elections, scheduled to take place on February 8 next year.

The formation of the committee was okayed by the senior politician last week on November 25 to conduct dialogue with political parties and personalities under a well-planned strategy. The development was announced after Zardari formed a committee, comprising his party's members, to get in touch with parties and politicians with the aim of fostering dialogue as the country approaches general polls in 2024.

The move by the PPP came as the Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) accelerated its efforts to form alliances with political parties in the run-up to the general polls, particularly in Sindh, which is considered a PPP stronghold. The PML-N members had recently arrived in the country's southern-most province to initiate talks on forming alliances and seat adjustments with Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) to stand against the PPP as an allied force in Sindh and fetch crucial votes.

### Abro ousted as chairman of Senate body

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant turn of events, Senator Saifullah Abro was removed from the position of the chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Power through a motion of no-confidence moved by senators. The motion was moved by senators Bahramand Khan Tangi, Manzoor Kakar, Sana Jamali, Hafiz Abdul Karim, and Dilawar Khan, under Senate Rules. It was accepted after garnering unanimous support leading to Senator Abro's removal from the prestigious role, an official statement issued by the Senate notified.

The meeting, convened at the Parliament House and chaired by Additional Secretary Hafeezullah Sheikh, witnessed the unanimous election of Senator Azam Nazir Tarar as the new Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Power. After Abro's removal, Senator Tarar has been entrusted with the responsibility to lead the committee towards a path of progress and efficiency.

Among the notable attendees at the meeting were Senators Azam Nazir Tarar, Saifullah Abro, Saifullah Khan Niazi, Haji Hidayatullah, Manzoor Ahmed Kakar, Sana Jamali, Dilawar Khan, Haji Hidayatullah, Muhammad Ali Shah Jamot, and Fida Muhammad. Their participation signifies the collective commitment to the Senate's functions and responsibilities. This transition in leadership marks a pivotal moment in the committee's direction and promises a renewed focus on addressing crucial energy-related matters in the country.

### Baltic nations' FMs pull out of OSCE meeting

DNA

SKOPJE: The foreign ministers of the three Baltic states have said they will boycott a meeting by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe being held this week in North Macedonia, in objection to the participation of Russia's foreign minister.

The foreign ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania issued a joint statement Tuesday saying they "deeply regret the decision enabling the personal participation" of Russia's Sergey Lavrov. "It will only provide Russia with yet another propaganda opportunity," Lavrov said Monday he planned to travel to Skopje for the OSCE foreign ministers' meeting, a trip which would mark his first visit to a NATO member country since Russia invaded Ukraine. In September, he was in New York to attend the United Nations' annual gathering of world leaders. The 57-nation OSCE was set up during the Cold War to help defuse tension between East and West. North Macedonia currently holds the organization's rotating presidency and its foreign minister invited Lavrov to the two-day meeting starting Thursday.

## Asian Development Bank approves \$180 million loan for Punjab

Project Developing Resilient Environments and Advancing Municipal Services in Punjab Project, according to the ADB, will benefit close to 1.5 million people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday approved a \$180 million loan for the improvement of water supply and solid waste management services in Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur. The project Developing Resilient Environments and Advancing Municipal Services in Punjab Project, according to the ADB, will benefit close to 1.5 million people. The project curtails excessive groundwater extraction and urban environment degradation by expanding and modernising urban water supply in Rawalpindi and solid waste management systems in Bahawalpur. "This project will help make municipal services in these two cities more sustainable, resilient, and less carbon-intensive," said ADB Director General for Central and

West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov. "By helping to deliver reliable water supply and improving waste management, we expect to significantly improve the lives of people in Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur."

In Rawalpindi, the project will help build new surface water intakes and a water treatment plant with a capacity of 54 million litres/day. Under the project, 82,000 households with metered connections will be connected with transmission and distribution pipes. The financing will also upgrade water pumps and transmission mains to augment surface water supply and establish three pilot district metering areas to enhance operational efficiency.

In Bahawalpur, the project will help improve solid waste collection via the procurement of waste collection equipment and a new fleet to expand coverage along with a

new fleet management information system. The project will construct a recycling facility along with a floodproof landfill and rehabilitate the existing dump site. The financing will also enable the provision of personal protective equipment for informal sector workers.

"Aside from improving infrastructure services, ADB's project will help enhance the operational efficiency, inclusivity, and financial sustainability of Rawalpindi Water and Sanitation Agency and Bahawalpur Waste Management Company," said Asian Development Bank Urban Development Specialist Xijie Lu.

"We also aimed to be innovative, with some of the project's components featuring renewable technologies, cost-recovery interventions, and behavioral change and communication elements." ADB will also administer a \$1 million technical assistance provided by the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund, to strengthen the capacity of the Rawalpindi Water and Sanitation Agency to address leakages in the city's water supply network.



BRUSSELS: Caretaker Foreign Minister, Jalil Abbas Jilani meets with EU Commissioner for international partnership, Jutta Urpilainen. They discussed ongoing development cooperation engagement between Pakistan-EU. - DNA