



General Asim Munir appointed as new Army Chief

- General Sahir Shamshad Mirza as CJCS

President approves summary sent by PM for key appointments

The newly appointed COAS and CJCS met President and PM



ISLAMABAD: In a major development, President Dr Arif Alvi Thursday gave a nod to the appointment of Lieutenant General Asim Munir as the next chief of army staff of Pakistan while Lt General Sahir Shamshad Mirza has been appointed as the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), ending days of speculations. Following a meeting with PTI Chairman Imran Khan, President Alvi signed the summary sent earlier today by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif marking an end to the uncertainty surrounding the key appointment. Lt Gen Munir, who was also Pakistan's chief spy, will take over from outgoing COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa on November 29, who retires on the same day after a six-year term. COAS Gen Bajwa, who was appointed as the army chief in 2016, will retire on November 29. He was initially set to hang up his boots in 2019, but the PTL-led government gave him a three-year extension. Meanwhile, Lt General Shamshad will assume charge as joint chiefs of staff committee on November 27 as General Nadeem Raza will retire before Gen Bajwa. Later in the evening, both Lt Gen Munir and Lt General Shamshad met PM Shehbaz separately after the confirmation of their appointment as the new chief of army staff and joint chief of staff committee. Both the

generals also met President Alvi. The Ministry of Defence would formally issue a notification about the top military appointments. Munir was the most senior general on the list of nominations sent to the prime minister by the military for the army chief's position. Munir is from the 17th course of the Officers Training School in Mangla and was commissioned in the 23rd Battalion of the Frontier Force Regiment. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general in September 2018 and was subsequently appointed as the head of Pakistan's all-powerful Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI, spy agency. Munir was then transferred and appointed as corps commander of the XXX Corps in Gujranwala. He has previously also served as director general of Military Intelligence and commander of the troops deployed in the Northern Areas of Pakistan. Likewise, Lt Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza, who was also named as a CJCS is a three-star general in the Pakistan Army who is currently serving as a commander for Rawalpindi Corps. Sahir, the recipient of Hilala-e-Intiaz (Military) has served in senior leadership positions in his career, including director-general military operations (DGMO), Chief of General Staff, and Adjutant General at the General Headquarters. (Agencies)

South Korea's Yoon eyes arms exports as 'future growth engine'

SEOUL: South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol has pledged to step up efforts to boost weapons exports and secure cutting-edge defence technologies as he aims to build the country's weapons industry and make it the world's fourth-largest arms exporter. Yoon on Thursday hosted a meeting on promoting defence exports for the first time since taking office in May, designed to explore ways to shift the mainstay of the industry from domestic supplies to exports. "The defence industry is a new future growth engine and the pivot of the high-tech industry," Yoon told the meeting held at Korea Aerospace Industries, South Korea's sole warplane developer

located in the southeastern city of Sacheon. "With the intensifying competition for technological supremacy, we need to secure technological competitiveness to develop game-changing weapon systems for future wars." Yoon called for better conditions for defence contractors to carry out research and investment and the establishment of an ecosystem that capable of fostering a more export-oriented industry structure. The meeting came four months after South Korea clinched its biggest-ever arms deal with Poland, estimated at up to 20 trillion Korean won (\$15bn), including the exports of tanks and howitzers. (Agencies)

Iraq to redeploy army along border with Iran, Turkey

BAGHDAD: Baghdad said Wednesday it planned to redeploy federal guards along its border with Iran and Turkey, after repeated bombardments from both neighbouring countries against opposition groups in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region. The announcement appeared to respond in particular to Iran, which had publicly urged such a move. Authorities have decided to "establish a plan to redeploy Iraqi border guards... along the border with Iran and Turkey", a statement said, issued after a government security meeting overseen by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani. The initiative will be "in coordination with the government of the Kurdistan region and the peshmerga ministry", the statement added, referring to the Kurdish regional forces whose chief

was also present at the meeting. Iraqi Kurdistan's borders are currently guarded by the peshmerga, who however work in the area under the direction of the federal defence ministry in Baghdad. Iran has blamed outside powers and exiled Kurdish groups for stoking a wave of protests sparked by the Sept 16 death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd who died after being arrested by Tehran's morality police. Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian warned earlier Wednesday that Tehran would continue to act against "threats" from abroad. Iran's military operations inside Iraqi Kurdistan will continue until Baghdad's national forces are stationed on the border and "we will no longer need to act to defend our territorial integrity", he said. (Agencies)

Missile attacks leave 70% of Kiev without power

- German air defence system should be given to Ukraine instead: Poland -

- Ukraine races to restore power after outages in Kyiv, other cities

- Officials met in UAE to discuss prisoner swap, ammonia export

- Moscow denies targeting Kyiv. US weapons stockpile affected by war: AP

- Russia passes law banning 'LGBT propaganda' among adults

MOSCOW/KIEV: The death toll following wave of Russian missile attacks against Ukraine has risen to 10, with 70 percent of people in Kyiv still without power. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told the UN Security Council that 70 missiles were fired in total, affecting hospitals, school, transport systems and residential areas. It is nine months to the day that President Vladimir Putin launched his special military operation in Ukraine. He had intended to swiftly capture Kyiv and install a puppet regime as the Ukrainian population and military capitulated. More than two thirds of the Ukrainian capital was still without power on Thursday morning and a swathe of residents had no running water, a day after Russian missile strikes caused Kyiv's biggest outages in nine months of war. Energy Minister German Galushchenko said three nuclear power stations that were switched off because of the attacks, were expected to be back on line later on Thursday, and this would help ease supply problems. "The situation is difficult throughout the country," he said in televised comments, adding that power generation would gradually increase throughout the day. Representatives from Russia and Ukraine met in the United Arab Emirates last week to discuss the possibility of a prisoner-of-war swap that would be linked to a resumption of Russian ammonia exports, which go to Asia and Africa, via a Ukrainian pipeline, three sources with knowledge of the meeting said. The sources said the talks were being mediated by the Gulf Arab state and did not include the United Nations despite the U.N.'s central role in negotiating the



ongoing initiative to export agricultural products from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports. Ammonia is used to make fertilizer. However the talks aim to remove remaining obstacles in the initiative extended last week and ease global food shortages by unblocking Ukrainian and Russian exports, they added. Russia's parliament on Thursday passed the third and final reading of a law that expands an existing ban on promoting "LGBT propaganda" to children by banning it among people of all ages. Under the new law any event or act regarded as an attempt to promote homosexuality - including online, in film, books, advertising or in public - could incur a heavy fine. The fine will be up to 400,000 roubles (\$6,600) for individuals and up to 5 million roubles (\$82,100) for legal entities. Foreigners could face 15 days of arrest and subsequent expulsion from the country. Meanwhile, the Russian defence ministry says Moscow's troops did not target Ukraine's capital in Thursday's wave of devastating attacks, blaming Ukraine and Kyiv's foreign partners for "the fall of missiles" in the capital. On Wednesday, Kyiv's mayor said that civilian infrastructure was hit by an air strike that killed at least

six people and caused blackouts across the country. With the US aiding Ukraine in the war with Ukraine, the Pentagon is rethinking its weapons stockpiles. Much of Ukraine's firepower is being supplied through US government-funded weapons pushed almost weekly to the front lines. But, US defence production lines aren't scaled to supply a major land war, with some lines, like the Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, previously shut down. On Wednesday, the Biden administration announced an additional round of aid that will provide 20 million more rounds of small arms ammunition to Kyiv. Polish leaders say that the air-defence system which Germany offered to Poland would be best given to Ukraine to help it protect itself against Russian strikes. Earlier this week, Germany offered Warsaw Eurofighter planes and Patriot defence systems to help defend Poland's airspace after a stray missile exploded in a border village. Poland's Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak initially said he received Germany's offer with "satisfaction." However, following Wednesday's air strikes the Polish leader said it would be better if the defence systems were placed in western Ukraine. (Agencies)

Pakistan to send armed helicopter unit to Mali mission: UN



UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan and Bangladesh will each be sending an armed helicopter unit to the UN peacekeeping operations in Mali, which faces serious problems as several countries have withdrawn or announced plans to pull out their personnel, a UN spokesperson said Wednesday. Spokesman Farhan Haq said that India will supply a utility helicopter unit to the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, known as MINUSMA, and all three are expected to be deployed by March next year. "These provide much-needed support to our forces and are critical for early warning and rapid response to protect civilians," the spokesman told reporters at the regular noon briefing at UN headquarters in New York. "The UN continues to discuss with member states the deployment of new assets and plans to fill longer-standing gaps in addition to those resulting from recent announcements" of withdrawals, he said. Set up in 2013, MINUSMA has 17,622 personnel helping the Malian government combat terrorists operating in the country. (Agencies)

Saudi Arabia closes schools, delays flights after heavy rains

JEDDAH: Heavy rains in the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah on Thursday delayed flights, forced school suspensions and closed the road to Mecca, Islam's holiest city, the Saudi Press Agency reported. Jeddah, a city of roughly four million people positioned on the Red Sea, is often referred to as the "gateway to Mecca," where millions perform the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages each year. For the latest headlines, follow our Google News channel online or via the app. Images posted to social media on Thursday showed standing water snarling traffic in Jeddah

and partially submerging some vehicles. The city's King Abdulaziz International Airport said that "due to weather conditions, the departure of some flights has been delayed" and urged passengers to contact carriers for up-to-date schedules. The official Saudi Press Agency reported before dawn that schools in the city would be suspended as rains were forecast to continue throughout the day. Schools were also closed in the nearby towns of Rabigh and Khulais "to preserve the safety of male and female students," SPA said. (Agencies)

Teachers, lecturers join postal workers strike in UK

LONDON: Most schools in Scotland were closed Thursday as thousands of teachers walked off the job, joining scores of postal workers and university lecturers in industrial action to demand better pay and working conditions to cope with the country's cost-of-living crisis. The teachers' strike in Scotland, which shuttered every school on the Scottish mainland, was the first such one in the region in 40 years. Union members want a 10% pay rise, but Scottish authorities say they couldn't afford that. Elsewhere across the U.K., picket lines were set up outside postal offices and universities in one of the biggest coordinated walkouts this year. In universities, some 70,000 academic staff were striking Thursday and again on Nov.

30 in the biggest action of its kind in higher education. The action will affect an estimated 2.5 million students. The University and College Union said lecturers and other academic staff have suffered a decade of below-inflation pay rises, with a 3% increase announced in the summer. Meanwhile, workers at the Royal Mail will walk out for 48 hours on Thursday and again on Black Friday and Christmas Eve over a long-running pay dispute. Britons have faced days of travel misery and overflowing garbage bins in recent months as unions representing multiple industries launched successive strikes. Lawyers, nurses, postal workers and many others have walked off the job to seek pay rises that match soaring inflation. (Agencies)

About Khyber Mail The Khyber mail was first published in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1932. A newspaper in English by the eminent journalist Sheikh Sana Ullah. From 1932 to 1989 it has survived as leading English newspaper in the region by the sons of Sana Ullah i.e. Sheikh Zaka Ullah, Sheikh Inayat Ullah and Sheikh Saleem Ullah. The publication was shut down in 1989 due to various reasons. The current owner Rizwan Inayat son of Sheikh Inayat Ullah and grandson of Sheikh Sana Ullah, has restarted the family heritage but meeting with the requirement of the century, by giving the readers current happenings around the world with one touch anywhere any time and updating the reader to pace up with the world.

Mehmood Khan says efforts on to ensure equal access to quality education

* Staff Reporter*

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has said that the provincial government has undertaken well-organized steps to align the education sector with contemporary needs and to ensure equal access of students to quality education. Launching of education card for the current academic year is a continuation of those efforts under which tuition fee of students are being waived in all government colleges. In his statement issued here from the Chief Minister Secretariat on Thursday, the chief minister termed the Education Card a unique project of the provincial government which will prove to be an encouraging initiative in promoting higher education in the province. The education card scheme is expected to benefit 244,000 students enrolled in government colleges throughout the province. The scheme includes waiver of the entire tuition fee and will cost approximately Rs one Billion to the provincial exchequer. The Chief Minister stated that investment in human capital is of paramount importance and is one of the pivotal agendas of the incumbent government adding that visible steps have been taken in this regard to ensure promotion of Higher Education in the province. The Chief Minister reiterated that the reforms and ini-



tiatives of the provincial government have started yielding positive results and public trust in government educational institutions has been restored. Mahmood Khan clarified that a number of steps have been taken to ensure that the educational institutions in the province are made fully functional. In this regard, 76 colleges have been upgraded whereas 37 new colleges have been established in the province to provide uniform access to educational opportunities. The establishment of Pak-Austria Fachhochschule Institute

of Applied Sciences and Technology at Haripur is another milestone achieved by the provincial government towards promotion of education in the sector of applied sciences as per contemporary needs. Similarly, he said that the establishment of university campuses in various districts of the province has also ensured greater access to higher educational facilities adding that Rs 8 Billion have been allocated in the budget of current fiscal year for various developmental projects in the Higher Education Sector.

Anti-polio drive to begin from Nov 28

PESHAWAR: The seven-day anti-polio campaign would start in the provincial capital from November 28 during which children under the age of five year will be administered polio drops. In this regard, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Shafiullah Khan. The meeting reviewed the preparations for the drive during which as many as 866,603 children would be administered polio drops. The meeting was also attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief) Muhammad Imran Khan, Administrative Officers, District Health Officer Dr. Mohammad Idris, Deputy District Polio Officer Dr. Naveed Khurshid, Deputy District Polio Officer Dr. Saifullah and other concerned officers. The meeting discussed various aspects of anti-polio campaign and was informed that 2,496 teams have been formed to immunize anti-polio drops to 866,603 children. The meeting was further informed about security arrangements for

polio teams. Deputy Commissioner, Shafiullah Khan appealed the parents to give their children anti-polio drops to save them from permanent disability and to cooperate with the anti-polio teams so that the polio virus can be eradicated from provincial metropolitan. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Bajaur, Fahad Wazir also chaired a meeting to review progress of ongoing anti-polio campaign. The meeting among others was attended by representatives of health, district administration and police department. On the occasion, meeting was briefed about the progress and the targets being achieved during anti-polio campaign. Addressing the meeting, deputy commissioner directed concerned department to develop a liaison for achieving targets of anti-polio drive and stressed deputed teams for maximum coverage. He said "Polio eradication is a national cause and each and every member of society should play its role for polio free Pakistan." (APP)

Police ask people not to arrange dance parties in weddings

PESHAWAR: Station House Officer (SHO), Shahpur, Abdul Aali has urged upon the people of his area not to invite transgender or female dancers for celebrations in wedding ceremonies as it sometimes leads to fights and conflicts, particularly among the youth. In this regard, the SHO held a meeting with the elders of Shahpur and asked them to avoid arranging dance parties in marriage ceremonies so that chances of untoward incidents could be averted. The SHO told the elders that most often fights and conflicts occur during the dance parties of weddings that sometimes lead to violent fights, injuries, and even deaths among people. These con-

flicts, he said also result in rivalries, claiming the lives of people. Moreover, he said, people, especially the youth use drugs and alcohol during the dance parties which leads to disruption in the peaceful atmosphere of the area and sheds a bad impact on the minds of other youth. He said our religion islam also prohibits us from arranging such activity that affects the minds of youth, especially the children. He said there were so many incidents of transgenders being beaten and tortured during such dance parties. He urged upon the area elders to spread this message and persuade their people to avoid inviting transgenders and dancers to wedding ceremonies. (APP)

GOLD PRICE IN PAK

Gold Rate	24K Gold	22K Gold	21K Gold	18K Gold
Per Tola Gold	Rs. 146200	Rs. 134016	Rs. 127925	Rs. 109650
Per 10 Gram	Rs. 125300	Rs. 114857	Rs. 109638	Rs. 93975
Per Gram Gold	Rs. 12530	Rs. 11486	Rs. 10964	Rs. 9398
Per Ounce	Rs. 355200	Rs. 325598	Rs. 310800	Rs. 266400

FOREX RATES

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	229	231.25
China Yuan	31.27	31.52
Japanese Yen	1.78	1.84
Saudi Riyal	63.8	64.4
U.A.E Dirham	65.8	66.4
UK Pound	286.5	289.3
Euro	247	249.5
Australian Dollar	150.22	151.47
Canadian Dollar	166.97	168.32

Emergency Numbers

Organization	Phone No
Rescue 1122 HQrs	091-2264224-25
Rescue 1122 Mardan	0937-9230770
Fire Brigade Cantt:	091-9212534
Fire Brigade City	091-2566666
Police Emergency	091-9212222
Edhi Ambulance	091-2214575
Red Crescent Ambulance	091-2210836
Emergency Ambulance	091-2590846
Civil Defence, Peshawar	091-9212176
Lady Reading Hospital	091-9211430
HMC Peshawar	091-9217140-46
KTH Peshawar	091-9216340-8
Irnam Hospital	091-9216115
Mission Hospital	091-2212371
Al-Khidmat Hospital	091-2215945
Fauji Foundation Hospital	091-9212771-4
Frontier Foundation Blood Services	091-5703463
Hamza Foundation, Peshawar	091-5841632
Sui Gas, Peshawar	091-9213016
Wapda Complaint Peshawar	091-9212041
PIA, Peshawar	091-9213351
Airport Inquiry	114
Railway Inquiry	117

UET Civil Engineering Dept to hold two days conference on "disaster management"

PESHAWAR: The Department of Civil Engineering, UET Peshawar is holding the 2nd two-day international conference on "Recent Advances in Civil Engineering and Disaster Management (ICCEDM-2022)" from 15th to 16th December, 2022 at UET Peshawar. The conference is aimed to promote research in the field of disaster mitigation and disaster management for floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters in Pakistan. It will specifically focus on latest research-based technological trends in

addressing indigenous problems such as the recent devastating floods took place in Pakistan, and incorporating the outcomes in the national building codes of Pakistan and civil engineering practices. While the conference will have more than 100 research papers and eight key note speakers from different countries, the best research paper and best poster awards will also be given to the authors and presenters in the conference. Further information is available on <https://tinyurl.com/ICCEDM-2022>. (PR)

Appointment of Ghulam Ali as governor welcomed

PESHAWAR: The appointment of new governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ghulam Ali has been welcomed by the cross sections of the society here on Thursday. JUI-F spokesman, Haji Jalil Jan said that Ghulam Ali was as seasoned politician, who would focus on development and resolution of problems of the province especially merged tribal districts. In a statement here, he hoped that the new Governor would take along all the stakeholders for speedy development and progress of all merged tribal districts. PML-N Nowshera President, Hamaza Khan also welcomed

the decision of the prime minister for appointing a senior politician as governor KP and expressed the hope that under Ghulam Ali's leadership a new era of development would start in the erstwhile Fata. Jumat e Islami Leader and Member Metropolitan City, Nasira Ebadat while welcoming appointment of the Ghulam Ali as new Governor said that there were several problems in merged areas related to provision of education and health services and under his leadership all the socioeconomic problems of tribesmen would be addressed on priority basis. (APP)

Lok mela will kick off today

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) is all ready to kick start KP pavilion at the mega annual cultural Lok Mela in Islamabad. The event will continue for ten days, from 25th November to 4th December, in which all the provinces including Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir will decorate their pavilions to showcase the culture and traditions of all the ethnicities residing across the country. This year the government has decided to dedicate the event to the flood victims and a part of the income generated through the festival will be donated to them. This morning a meeting was held at the Conference Hall of Tourism

Authority regarding the Lok Mela with Director General Tourism Mr. Bakhtiar Khan. While addressing the meeting DG Tourism said, "The aim of participating in the Lok Mela is to present a soft image of the province to the world and to promote culture and tourist destinations of the province to attract local and foreign tourists to visit our province." KPCTA will establish 30 stalls at the KP Pavilion established at Lok Mela showcasing the cultural and traditional handicrafts of artisans from different districts as well as Marged districts of the province including Abbottabad, Dera Ismail Khan, Haripur Swabi, Charsadda, Mansehra, Peshawar, Chitral. (PR)

Malakand safe for tourists; law & order under control: RPO

PESHAWAR: Regional Police Officer Malakand Sajjad Khan on Thursday said that whole Malakand Division was safe for tourists and there was no law and order situation due to comprehensive measures taken by the law enforcement agencies. Consecutive police search and strike operations were made in Malakand Division and the whole region was safe and clear, the RPO added during his visit to newly constructed offices and a mosque at District Police Office (DPO) in Alpori, District Shangla. He further said that due to huge sacrifices of KP Police, peace

had been restored in the entire province, adding that they would continue their efforts and duties to maintain peace in future as well. Meanwhile, presiding over a meeting of the local elders at the DPO office he said that there was mutual trust between the public and the police which helped in ensuring peace in the region. He added that Jirga was an inalienable element of Pashtoon culture and keeping in view the importance of the alternate dispute resolution mechanism, Jirga should be strengthened to resolve the minor disputes out of court. (APP)

PESCO notifies power suspension for Peshawar

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Thursday said that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Jamrud Grid Station on November 26 and 30 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. resultantly the consumers of 11 KV Hayatabad 1,2,3,4,5, New Hayatabad, Health Care Hospital, Health Excellence North West Hospital, Kidney Center, RMI, Gulabad, PITC, Mohmand Steel, Northern Bottling, Hayatabad Surgical Hospital, Peshawar General Health Net Hospital, Shakas 1, feeders will face inconvenience. It said the power supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV Hayatabad Phase 7 Grid Station on November 26 and 30 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. due to which consumers of 11 KV University Campus, Canal Town,

Malakandher, Engineering, Regi, Gul Abad, Taj Abad, Agriculture, Mera Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahat Abad 1, CMB, Abdara, Achini 1,2, Rahat Abad 2, Sufaidheri, Old Bara Road, JAF, academy Town Circular Road, DHA, HBK, Achini Mera feeders will face inconvenience. Likewise, the power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Hayatabad Grid Station on November 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Khyber 1, 2, Hayatabad 9,10,13,14, IMS feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from 220 KV NTDC Mansehra Oghi Transmission Line on November 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumers of 132 KV Oghi and Battal grid connected with 11 KV feeders will face inconvenience. (APP)

'Arman', drama relating to clean Peshawar campaign held in KMU

PESHAWAR: The inaugural ceremony of an orientation drama relating to Clean Peshawar Campaign, 'Arman' was held in auditorium of Khyber Medical College here on Thursday. The inaugural ceremony among others was attended by Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Mehsud, Deputy Commissioner, Shafiullah Khan, Dean KMC, Prof. Mehmood Aurangzeb, teachers and students. The purpose of drama screening was to inform the viewers about the impacts of drugs in the society and the negative role of drug pushers and sell-

ers. Addressing the ceremony, commissioner told that as many as 1200 addicts have been rehabilitated after treatment in first phase of Clean Peshawar Campaign. He said "As many as 1305 addicts are having treatment and would be rehabilitated very soon adding that campaign would be extended to other districts of the province." He also expressed gratitude to actors and producers of the drama and said that it would help create orientation among people about perils of drug and unite them to make the city drug free. (APP)

Co curricular activity help improve students' mental health: Shah

PESHAWAR: Project Director of KP Local Government Department, Syed Zafar Ali Shah on Thursday participated as chief guest at the concluding ceremony of speech competition organized by Beacon House School Jamrud Campus Peshawar where urdu literature week was being celebrated in connection with co-curricular activities. In this regard, a purposeful elocution competition was held among the students of Grade One and Two on the topics of "Learn to make a row from ants" and "My father is not less than my mother". Young students took part in the competition with great enthusiasm. Syed

Zafar Ali Shah while addressing the parents and students on this occasion urged them to pay equal attention to curricular and co-curricular activities of the school children while the parents should also fully guide and encourage their wards in this regard. He said that the positive impacts of such events help in improving the mental and creative abilities of children. Zafar Ali Shah appreciated the role of Beacon House School System in improving the quality of education and said "Organizing such creative activities is proof of the institution's great sense of responsibility." (APP)



-Your Source for Alternate News-

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Insaf Taleem Card & Rs998m

In order to provide financial relief to millions of students, the KP Cabinet approved Rs 998.500 million for the launching of 'Insaf Taleem Card' in the province. It is termed as the second flagship project of the provincial government after the Insaf Sehat Sahulat Card. This decision was made during a cabinet meeting held with Chief Minister Mahmood Khan in the chair. This huge funds for the ongoing financial year will benefit the students who are enrolled in the government colleges and facing hardships in paying their annual/semester admission fee. It is believed that around 244858 students have been enrolled in 274 government colleges of KP. The launch of Insaf Taleem Card is being termed as a revolutionary step to ensure the provision of free education to the students of the colleges. Moreover, on this occasion, CM expressed his concern over the delay in recruiting the required staff for schools, colleges and other schemes.

Under the Insaf Taleem Card education up to BS will be free, admission and tuition fees of two and a half lakh male and female students of the province have been waived for one year. The decision of Insaf Taleem Card is highly appreciated by people of the province saying it would certainly help poor people in providing free education up to BS level. It is a good omen that the government was taking serious steps in the education sector. It would improve literacy rate as well as ensure quality education in the province. However, it must be ensured that the approved funds for the Taleem Card must be utilized on education rather than diverting such funds to developmental projects as it stated that at present the province was lacking funds and that's why approved funds for some sectors have now been diverted for other projects. The PTI government was thinking seriously and Taleem Card would bring a revolution.

Sustainability in age of Climate Change

— By Engr Qaiser Nawab

Furthermore, in the lead up to international conferences like COPs youth need to continue holding world leaders accountable to the recommendation so that this promising momentum can translate into real commitments. The aim of the event is to provide a platform where key stakeholders are able to listen to the experience of youth and have a discussion on a possible way forward. The Ministry of Climate Change, Poverty Alleviation and Foreign Affairs of Pakistan play a commendable role regarding spreading awareness and seeking attention to the recent climate crisis in Pakistan. The international campaign including the dedicated visits of various notables like the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, the youngest Nobel Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai, international humanitarian Angelina Jolie and many others dignitaries to the flood affected areas is one of great achievements. Further Government is also sensitizing the issue nationally and internationally by engaging various stakeholders from different parts of the world. There is a dire need to effectively engage children, youth and millennial for climate campaigns as they are the major stakeholders of using modern means of digital communication. As experienced, digital tools and social media have strong influence to engage the target population towards meaningful impact. Through the collaboration of impact technologies, one can integrate the youth, children and millennial on one single platform to support their voices and also influence policy making to combat climate disasters. I personally believe that climate change is a human right issue and protecting human rights is our joint responsibility. This right is deeply connected with the protection of the ecosystem and biodiversity in the region. I also believe that there is a greater need to integrate indigenous youth with digital mode of communica-

tion. To achieve this goal there is a need to initiate digital learning and effective use of social media to support policymakers and other stakeholders for effective decision and policy making. Keeping in view the importance of this young population in regional and global affairs, there is a need to engage them into a dialogue series and workshops on measures on how to turn the recent flood affected region into a zone of environmental innovations and technologies. These dialogues and workshops must cover a number of topics on green recovery, international support in development of the flood affected regions, ecologically-oriented regional development, afforestation activities at the flood affected bed and many others. Furthermore, there is also a need to initiate such programmes which aim to encourage sustainable living in the most affected region through building the capacity of teachers, empowering local communities and mobilizing children and most importantly the rural young people. The international community needs to initiate and continue the existing assistance for improving efficiency and implementation of innovations in Pakistan by promoting smart and digital communities with favourable infrastructure for empowering youths, women as well as vulnerable groups of people, including people with disabilities, families headed by women and labour migrants. With due support of international community, targeted programmes must be initiated that aim to combine efforts towards: development and implementation of environmental-friendly technologies, integrated implementation of the principles of a "green" economy; mainstreaming of energy- and water-saving technologies, prevention of further desertification and environmental migration, and development of ecotourism and other initiatives.

Courtesy Pakistan Observer

Unhealthy competitions

— By Muhammad Ali Alvi

No two individuals are the same. Everyone has their view of thinking and learning. Human beings not only differ from each other in their outward appearances but also their internal capacities and capabilities. Every individual is not only unique in outward appearance but also in intellect and imagination. Every individual has a skill set, intellectual ability, learning power, thinking capacity, grasping power, ability to recreate knowledge, and way of looking at the world. Similarly, hardly anyone can deny the fact that no two individuals get the same environment. They do get a similar environment to some extent at some stages of life. For example, children going to the same school, employees working at the same rank and salary for a company. But, this sameness hardly makes any difference as the overall environment in which they are born, live, and grow up is different. Now, let us scratch the differences in the environments of individuals from the basic to the complex level. Every child is born to parents with different capacities, capabilities, abilities, social status, health, wealth, home environment, and family. Every child grows up in a different environment depending upon the social status, bringing up techniques and society in which he is born. In the broader sense, we see the difference in almost every aspect. Differences and disparities in the provision of education, health facilities, employment, living standards, basic needs, and the luxuries of life, and so on. But here the most important question is how two individuals who are unique internally with their abilities, capabilities, and intellect, and externally with their appearances, and are living in a different environment, can be judged on the same parameters and pro-

duce similar results and outcomes? At the basic level, we see that some ambitious parents do not realize that despite their children being in the same age group, going to the same school, or living in the same society, they are different in their approaches and talents. They may go to the same school, read the same books, and be taught by the same teachers but they are different and they cannot produce similar outcomes. The failure to the realization of this very fact results in continuous frustration and deadlock among parents and children. Parents continue to compare their children with other children and when they lag or don't produce similar results, the frustration continues and results in mental traumas for both. All human beings are not meant to be the same, all professions are not the same. Every individual has their talent and field of work to showcase their skills. But, when one individual is made to compete with others, it not only affects his personality but also diverts his attention from what he is doing or is capable of doing to what others do. For example, a student who is good in social sciences and can prove to be an expert in this field is forced to study natural sciences because of competition with his cousins or friends. What happens as a result is horrific. A person who was meant to be an expert in social sciences, tries to drag himself in the natural sciences and doesn't find peace of mind his whole life. It not only affects the individual or his family but also the state. It deprives the state of an individual whose ideas might have helped solve many problems in the future. This very competition starts from a very early stage and it is started by parents at home, peers outside, and teachers at school when they compete one's

abilities, skills, and intellect with others and expect the same. It goes on with the one throughout one's life. This slowly and gradually transforms individuals from learners to competitors. They see every other individual as their competitor and try to achieve more than them. The unending race to achieve more and more results in restlessness, anxiety, resentment, and grudge among competitors. This applies to all individuals in different age brackets and fields. For example, a student competes with another student, a job holder with the other job holder, or a person in one profession with a person in another profession. And, this competition then takes the form of a battle. A battle of survival. Usually, two kinds of competition take place between individuals. A) Competition to achieve more than others, B) Competition to achieve what others have. The outcome of this unhealthy competition is confusion, dissatisfaction, and a state of competition in a society where all are competing with all without taking into account what they have and what they can offer. Skills, talents, and capabilities that make individuals unique and helpful are spent on competing rather than being utilized for good. If this is to be controlled then it has to be from educational institutions and parents' collaboration. Educational institutions create a competitive environment for students and parents provide support to them by asking their children to compete rather than motivating them to do their best. This is done in the name of healthy competition. A competition can only be a healthy competition if all participants are given equal importance and a share of appreciation according to their born and innate abilities.

Courtesy Pakistan Today

Adapting to a changing world

— By Muhammad Omar Iftikhar

The next generation living across the world is in for a surprise. The world's resources are near depletion and the atmosphere is becoming a challenge to survive in. The world of the 1900s has been radically changed into a dystopian horror narrative as we prepare to enter 2023. With the advent of the first industrial revolution to the fifth version of the same on the verge of beginning, the world has changed beyond imagination. The humans have moved from standing in awe as they saw the Wright Brothers fly the airplane in 1903 to working in the metaverse by interacting with digital avatars while sitting in the comforts of their homes and offices. We have transformed from cave-men to innovators; from explorers to inventors. We live in a fast-moving competitive world that is changing as we speak. Several jobs no longer exist including linotype operator, knocker-upper (those who woke up people), town crier, and be-matist (someone who calculated distance). We are indeed living in tumultuous times where informa-

tion is readily available at our fingertips. The challenge is to turn the information into actionable points so it can be turned into wisdom. This is possible when students are facilitated to learn rather than compelled to memorise. Students must understand the concepts and practices of the corporate world to analyse how to adapt to the changing times. Imagine a world where students become teachers. We are living in such an unprecedented era. The youth are often seen sharing words of wisdom and information with their elders. They gather information from the internet and research more about it. They discuss with peers and contemplate the lives ahead. Perhaps this could lead to a level playing field where the students and teachers help each other and find meaning and purpose in their lives. The era ahead of us will be of the doers—those who think, plan and act to pursue their goals. The world will belong to those who find a purpose in life, gather information on how to fulfil their goals, and deliberate upon

the strategies to achieve them. People today are more aware of how to manage the phases of trial and error and experimentation. With time, such challenges have been reduced by the wonders of modern technology. We can create 3D models of the objects we need to create in full form ranging from the computer mouse to skyscrapers, from pens to airplanes. The world is changing at such a rapid pace that the jobs we think to be exclusive for today's era will not exist in the future. These include cashiers, newspaper delivery, travel agent, social media expert, and telemarketers among others. The future is not arriving, it is now—we are living in it. Imagine a world where self-driving cars were an impossibility or online applications helping us through the day were a distant dream. Such inventions and innovations are a part of our lives. We need to adapt to changing times and make the best of the present resources.

Courtesy The Nation

Letter to the Editor

Deforestation in Pakistan
Pakistan is one of the largest countries in the world by land, area, copper, gold, gas, and several other products. Pakistan is known to the development of the world. But unfortunately, Pakistan is impacted by deforestation. According to the experts, forests should cover at least 25% of the total area of a country. But unfortunately, in Pakistan, only 45% of the total area is covered with forest. Deforestation is a major en-

vironmental concern in the world. Deforestation includes the cutting down, burning, and destructing of forests. It is the first link in a chain of environmental degradation that includes erosion, climate change, air pollution, and the loss of hardwood and fuel wood. Forests are being cut down in Pakistan at a petrifying rate. Pakistan is not self-sufficient in wood-based products and spends billions of resources for them. These resources

are also shrinking at a rate of one percent which will have dreadful effects on the people of Pakistan. The Main causes of one of the major causes of climate change in Pakistan is deforestation. Due to less supply of Sui gas, people cut down trees for cooling purposes in many areas. Thus, increasing deforestation is decreasing biodiversity.

— Nasir Alim
— Khzudar

Limitations of man
IGP Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan's call to expedite and intensify action against traffic rules violators, especially one-way violators, came as welcome news. However, the reality is that the traffic police in Islamabad are at a great disadvantage when it comes to enforc-

ing the rules of the roads. Most importantly, they lack cameras and other kinds of technology to catch violators. This means that the rule breakers can only be caught if the traffic police are physically present nearby. The number of drivers far outnumber the number of traffic police and

the latter cannot be everywhere all at once. If the city authorities are truly serious about reducing traffic violations, they need to equip the traffic police with the technology they are lacking.

— Kanwar Khayat
— Islamabad



Outgoing CJCS pays farewell call on President, PM

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadeem Raza paid a farewell call on President Arif Alvi in Islamabad on Thursday. As per details, the President commended General Nadeem Raza's services for the country's defence. He also expressed his best wishes for the retiring general. Later, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadeem Raza called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister's



House. PM Shehbaz paid tribute to General Nadeem Raza for his services to further strengthening the defence of the country and the

institution of the Army. Talking to General Nadeem Raza, the Prime Minister said that he is proud of his service to Pakistan, a respected and talented officer like him has done excellent service in the post of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. On this occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his best wishes for General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadeem Raza thanked the Prime Minister. (Agencies)

Who is Lt Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza?

RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Sahir Shamshad Mirza has been shortlisted as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC). During his career, he has been honored with the Hilal-e-Imtiaz - the highest degree of service to the state and has served in several senior leadership positions, including those of director-general of military operations (DGMO), chief of general staff, and adjutant general at the general headquarters. During his time at Military Operations, Lieutenant General Mirza was also responsible for commanding the 40th Infantry Division at Okara. As DGMO, he was a member of former chief of army staff General Raheel Sharif's core team at the General Headquarters (GHQ), which directed the military campaign against the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other terrorists in North Waziristan. He has also par-



icipated in operations directed by the United Nations in other nations and was awarded the United Nations Medal for Service in Sierra Leone for his work in that country (UNOMSIL Medal). In 1985, Mirza was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant in the 8th Battalion of the Sind Regiment. He was made a lieutenant in 1988, and then he advanced to the rank of captain in 1991. In 2019, he received a promotion that brought him to the rank of lieutenant general. (Agencies)

District admin Abbottabad organizes Khuli Kutchery at Kokal Barsin

HAVELIAN: Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Tariq Salam Marwat on Thursday said that the purpose of organising 'Khuli Kutchery' in rural areas was to solve public problems at their doorstep. He expressed these views while addressing people during an open court at village Kokal Barsin of Union Council Haveliyan Urban. The DC assured that his office was always open to the public and all staff was ready to serve the masses. Tariq

Salam Marwat said that the district administration was presenting the issues of the masses to the government institutions by organising Khuli Kutcheries in the rural areas so that they can assess the performance and problems of the various departments. He said that "we are making every possible effort" to identify their problems and solve them at the local level through the members of the municipality. (APP)

NUST gets NASA's instrument, access to GEMS Satellite for air quality data monitoring

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Science and Technology (NUST) again brought laurels to the country by receiving the most modern PANDORA instrument and access to the GEMS satellite from NASA for real-time air quality data monitoring. The NUST not only received the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) latest satellite rather became part of the most modern geostationary orbit-based satellite observations (GEMS-Geostationary Environmental Monitoring Spectrometer) of air quality as the first institute of the entire region to receive the equipment to record, collate, and calibrate real-time air quality data, the Head of Department Environmental Sciences, NUST Institute of Environmental Sciences and Engi-

neering (IESE) Dr Muhammad Fahim Khokhar told APP on Thursday while sharing the achievement. Dr Khokhar said, "Air quality has become a global issue with its impact on the society, economy, industry, diplomacy, public health and natural resources in addition to environmental science." Especially, he said Asia with its rapid increase in industrialization and population, was regarded as an important source region of global scale emission. "Thus, it is crucial to monitor the concentration of relevant gases and aerosols over Asia in high temporal and spatial resolution from geostationary orbit satellite." He said that there was no such facility available in the country to have 24/7 satellite-based data for air pollution. (APP)

ADC expresses anger over absence of officials from distt health office Tank

TANK: Additional Deputy Commissioner General Tanvir Khan on Thursday expressed his anger over the absence of several employees from duty at the district health office. The ADC found ten employees absent from the health facility when he paid a surprise visit to it in the morning and sought a report from the authorities concerned in this regard. He said that no one would be allowed to take law into hands and remained absent from duty for which they were being paid from the public exchequer. He said that the district administration was committed to extending relief to people by ensuring

instant and better service delivery by public servants. He said that improved public service delivery was one of the top most priority of the government and in this regard the officials of all government departments should share their responsibilities to achieve the objective. Meanwhile, a Claim Assessment Committee jointly headed by Assistant Commissioner Aminullah and Additional Assistant Commissioner Shohab Ahmed Khan paid visit to Naimat Khel, Road Ghara, Umar Kalay, Umar Adda, Sagara, Syedal, Ahmed Shah, Gara Bhudha, Adam Abad and Gara Hayat to assess damages caused by floods. (APP)

Strict monitoring approved to monitor teachers' working

MULTAN: Commissioner approved a 'strict monitoring system' to check teachers' working in educational institutions of the division. While chairing a meeting of Multan Educational Trust, Ishfaq Ahmad Chaudhary said it was a dire need to improve the capacity building of teachers working

in the institutions. The board recommended special privileges for the best performers in the educational productivity of the children. He said the standard of Multan Public school must be improved and added that all-out resources would be employed to meet the target. (APP)

Medical team allows injured Imran Khan to travel

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has been given the green signal to travel by the doctors of Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital (SKMCH) ahead of Rawalpindi rally. Dr Khalid Niazi and Dr Ilyas Niazi, who make up the medical team, examined the former prime minister. The doctors - while leaving Imran Khan's Zaman Park Mansion in Lahore - told the media that they have removed one leg band from the former premier's injured leg while leaving the other one loose. Dr Khalid said that ex-PM was allowed to travel, but he needs to take care of his leg and should not put much weight on it. In an address, the former prime minister said he would march with the PTI on November 26 and reveal a new plan for his real freedom movement. (Agencies)

Three robbers held

FAISALABAD: Batala colony police arrested three persons involved in number of robbery incidents here on Thursday. A police team on a tip-off raided near Siddiqia graveyard and arrested three outlaws-- Waqar, Mukaram and Waqas. The team recovered illegal weapons, cell phones, motorcycles and other articles from their possession. A case was registered against the accused. (APP)

Three bids to smuggle wheat, flour foiled

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Thursday foiled three bids to smuggle wheat and flour and seized 680 bags. According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Naseerabad police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up three drivers namely Haider with 160 wheat flour bags, Luqman with 140 wheat flour bags and Saqib with 380 wheat bags. He said that the accused were trying to "illegally ship out" wheat and flour bags out of the Rawalpindi division. (APP)

13 illegal Afghan immigrants arrested

KARACHI: As many as 13 illegal Afghan immigrants were arrested from Orangi Town area on Thursday. According to police, the illegal Afghan immigrants were arrested by Orangi Police Station. They were arrested after their failure to provide legal documents. Their criminal records were also being checked. Cases have been registered and further investigations are underway. (APP)

Folk festival to open today

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, Lok Virsa is all set to open its ten-day annual Folk Festival of Pakistan (Lok Mela) here from November 25 to December 4 at Shakarparian to entertain the people of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad with vibrant colors of Pakistan's cultural heritage. "The festival which is part of mega cultural activities of federal capital, is being organized for over four decades, while this year, a part of income generation through the festival will be contributed to Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund to help the flood affected, said Fareena Mazhar", Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division on Thursday. Addressing a press conference at Lok Virsa, she said the festival was open to a very limited number of audience during the last three years due to Covid19 pandemic. (APP)

SC orders recovery of Sindh-based missing girls

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday ordered the interior secretary and the Sindh chief secretary to recover the girls disappeared from Sindh and submit report in the first week of January 2023. During hearing of the case, a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial ordered the tops officials to speed up the recovery of the missing Baloch girls. The mother of missing Mahreen Baloch, told the court that her ex-husband Asif Baloch had got

her daughters disappeared from the last six years and that she was only looking towards the court for justice. The CJ remarked that the state is responsible for the security of citizens and tracing missing persons. Justice Athar Minallah further inquired that who is to be held responsible if the state fails to retrieve the missing persons. The Hyderabad police DIG told the court that efforts are being made to recover the missing girls. The court then adjourned the case till next hearing. (Agencies)

Who is Lt Gen Asim Munir?

RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday decided to appoint Lt Gen Asim Munir as the next Chief of Army Staff (COAS). Before he was nominated the army chief, he was serving as the Quartermaster General in the Pakistan Army. Lt Gen Syed Asim Munir is the most senior officer in the Pakistan Army after outgoing Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa, who is stepping down on November 29. After graduating from the Officers Training School (OTS) in Mangla, Lt Gen Munir was commissioned into the 23rd Battalion of the Frontier Force Regiment when he first joined the military. As a brigadier, he was in charge of the forces that were part of Force Command Northern Areas. He reported to General Bajwa, who was the Commander of X Corps at the time. Aside from this, he was given the position of Director General of Military Intelligence (MI) at the beginning of 2017, and then Director General



(DG) of the ISI in October 2018. After eight months, Lt Gen Munir was handed over the command of the Gujranwala Corps. Two years later, he was promoted to the position of Quartermaster General in the GHQ. During his time posting in Saudi Arabia, he memorized the whole Quran, earning the title of "Hafiz-e-Quran". The 17th course of Officers Training School in Mangla bestowed the Sword of Honor to Lt Gen Munir. Additionally, he has been honored with the Hilal-i-Imtiaz award. His retirement date from service is November 27. (Agencies)

India trying to mislead world about IIOJK ground situation: GA Gulzar

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) senior leader Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar has said that India was trying to mislead the world and befoul ordinary Indian people about the ground situation in the territory. Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar's statement came after the Indian Army's Northern Commander, Lt General Upendra Dwivedi recent remarks claiming that there was a perceptible improvement in the security scenario of Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370, said a press release. Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar in a special message from Central Jail, Srinagar, said the statement about normalcy in IIOJK is self-deception and a blatant lie. If normalcy has returned to Kashmir why India has turned it into a military garrison, he added. He said

if India's claims are true then it should allow international human rights organisations to visit Kashmir and assess the ground situation. He said India has also arrested dozens of human rights defenders and journalists to hide its crimes in the territory. APHC senior leader said the repeal of IIOJK's special status on 5th August 2019 is a painful tragedy as Kashmiris were deprived of all political, social, and religious rights and it was the worst attack on the unique identity and Kashmiri culture. He said over 80 thousand Kashmiris have been under constant seize since 5th August 2029. This action, which is a brazen violation of international law, has paralyzed everything in the besieged valley and people are in a state of shock and mourning. (APP)

WFP partners embark on new plan to address Pakistan's food security, nutrition needs

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Pakistan launched its new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2023-2027, which marks WFP's progressive shift from its traditional role as a provider of food assistance to a provider of support for inclusive and equitable national policy and capacity development. Chris Kaye, Country Director of WFP Pakistan, presented the new CSP at the Executive board Meeting in Rome, Italy, and said, "Building on the broad consultations with stakeholders and benefitting from the evaluation of the current CSP, WFP formulated the new CSP by putting the partnership with the government at the centre of its interventions, said a press release issued here. He added, "The work of WFP in Pakistan over the next five years will encompass livelihoods, social protection, food systems, and humanitarian re-

sponse". The strategic plan comes at a critical time when the country is reeling from the devastating impacts of the floods, disrupting the lives and livelihoods of millions. Kaye further said that the current needs and response to the flood emergency in Pakistan underpin the need for investment in strengthening the country's resilience to climate change, supporting access to nutritious food, and reinforcing food systems. The four strategic outcomes of the CSP underscore WFP's increasing focus on enabling and supporting national and provincial institutions to address the country's food security and nutrition needs. Also, the outcomes will promote equal access to resources, prepare for and respond to emergencies, and build resilience to confront the challenges posed by climate change and other shocks. (APP)

60 new dengue cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE: At least 60 new cases of dengue fever were reported in the province on Thursday with no more fatality from the virus during the last 24 hours. According to the Health Department, a total of 18,338 cases of dengue virus have been reported so far during the current year, while 45 people died of the virus and 510 patients are under treatment in different hospitals of the province. The Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department reported 26 cases of dengue in Lahore, 13 cases were reported in Multan, two each cases were reported in Rawalpindi, Mandi Bahaud-

din, Dera Ghazi Khan, Okara, three in Sargodha, four in Sheikhpura, one each in Lodhran, Narowal, Khanewal, Nankana Sahib, Vehari and Chakwal during the last 24 hours. All suspected cases of dengue have been under surveillance and their tests are being conducted. The anti-dengue squad, under the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD), destroyed dengue larvae at 1,439 places in the province. The squad conducted surveillance at 458,404 indoor and 132,400 outdoor places to detect dengue larvae during the last 24 hours. (APP)

Dar lauds PM's decision to appoint COAS, CJCS on merit

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Thursday praised the Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif's decision to appoint Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) on seniority-cum-merit bases. In a tweet, the



federal minister said the PM's seniority-cum-merit based decision to appoint Gen Syed Asim Munir as Chief of Army Staff and Gen Sahir Shamsad Mirza as Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee was praiseworthy. He prayed for Allah's blessings for Pakistan and the new appointees. (Agencies)

Sindh revenue board enhances tax collection capacity: Member SRB

HYDERABAD: The Member Sindh Revenue board (SRB) Abdul Shaikh has informed that SRB has enhanced the capacity of tax collection in the province and succeeded in collecting Rs150 billion tax in the year 2021 as compared to Rs15 billion collected in the year 2011. It became possible with effective policies of the provincial government and the cooperation of traders and the business community, he said while speaking to members of the Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) here at HCCI secretariat late Wednesday evening. He informed that around 800 industrial units were registered with SRB which was contributing towards Workers Welfare Fund (WWF). He called for close ties between SRB and HCCI adding that in its direc-

tives, the Supreme Court had made it clear that contribution under WWF was not a tax but it meant for workers' social welfare and needed to be spent accordingly. He said that all industrial units must deposit their funds under WWF. So far, notices for 2021-2022 have been issued, he informed and urged HCCI to use this platform for convincing industrial units to pay their liabilities for 2021-2022 under WWF. He said that two percent of industrial units' income was to be deposited under WWF. The HCCI President Adeel Siddiqui appreciated the SRB efforts for enhancing tax collection from Rs15b billion to Rs150 billion during the last ten years and said that SRB had become a vital organization of Sindh government for tax collection. (APP)

Sc summons Vawda in lifetime disqualification case

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan on Thursday summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) former leader Faisal Vawda against his life-long disqualification in the dual nationality case. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umer Ata Bandial heard the petition. The bench also includes Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Ayisha Malik. The supreme court gave the former MNA Faisal Vawda two choices, either to confess his mistakes and remain disqualified for lifetime under article 63(1)(1) or the court will proceed in the case accordingly under article

62 (1)(f). The court has enough evidence against Vawda to disqualify him for lifetime, and the PTI former leader Vawda has to accept his mistake in writing, the CJ added. At this, the supreme court (SC) summoned Vawda in personal capacity on Friday at 11 am. It is pertinent to mention here that ECP bench, led by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja, had disqualified PTI's Faisal Vawda for concealing his dual nationality with a direction to return the salary and other benefits he had received as a minister and National Assembly member within two months. (Agencies)

Three new low-cost housing schemes approved

LAHORE: The Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency on Thursday approved three new low-cost housing schemes, including Green Woods Housing Scheme (Forest Town) Rawalpindi, Tariq Sharif Housing Scheme Smart City Rawalpindi and Minar Housing City Housing Scheme Sheikhupura. The meeting decided to form monitoring committees for evolving an effective monitoring system that would send regular implementation reports every month. Chairing the 90th meeting of governing body, Senior Provincial Minister Main Aslam Iqbal said that it also decided to create an effective mechanism in collaboration with developers to facilitate the provision of roofs to the homeless strata. For this purpose, the laws would be amended if needed. The senior minister asked for complete details about 172 housing schemes of the agency.

He also asked for the details of the agreement with the Akhuwat organization to provide loans to people for constructing houses in low-cost housing schemes. Aslam Iqbal directed that the agency board should ensure the implementation of timelines of low-cost housing schemes with the approval. Trees would never be cut down to build a new housing scheme; he stressed and made it clear that developers had to plant trees in the allotted space in residential schemes with efficient water supply and drainage systems in every residential scheme. Negligence in providing facilities to developers of low-cost housing schemes would not be tolerated, he said and added that 20% of the quota in residential schemes had been reserved for the New Pakistan Housing Project. The meeting also approved administrative and financial matters. (APP)

PHA union protests for approval of their demands

MULTAN: Baghban Workers Union (BWU) of Parks and Horticultural Authority (PHA) continued sit-in protest for fourth consecutive day here to approve their demands. Protesters met under its leadership namely president Aqil Qureshi, general secretary Shah Wali and other office bearers in PHA premises. The employees put up demands including approval of a 50 percent special allowance and recruitment through employees' son quota following increased inflation in the country. Pro-

testers warned of keeping on strike until their demands would be accepted in letter and spirit to support the workers. Aqil Qureshi spoke on the occasion that the administration didn't contact them yet. He said gardeners burnt the midnight oil for the beautification of parks and green belts. He called for approving special allowances at the earliest to get them saved from increasing inflation. He said they would soon unveil faces that are creating hurdles for acceptance of the demands. (APP)

Railways to receive 46 new coaches from China by December end

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways would receive the first batch of 46 new coaches from China by the end of December, next month which would not only upgrade the current rolling stock but also provide modern traveling facilities to the passengers. "Out of the total 230 coaches, 46 will be provided as completely built units and the remaining 184 to be manufactured in the county by the department's engineers and technical staff under the supervi-

sion of the Chinese experts," an official told APP. He said the coaches would have the capacity to run at the train's speed of 160 kilometers per hour and the teams of Pakistan Railways were in China for the inspection of the prototypes of the coaches as well as the modern high-capacity wagons. The official said the experts of China were also proving training to the technical staff of Pakistan Railways on the manufacturing of such rolling stock. (APP)

Three killed in separate incidents

FAISALABAD: Three persons were killed while another suffered injuries in separate incidents near here on Thursday. Rescue 1122 said that Muhammad Riaz r/o Sargodha was on his way near Lyallpur Galleria on canal road when his two-wheeler collided with tractor trolley from rear side. He died on the spot, while Muhammad Ashraf suffered injuries. Rescue team shifted the injured to DHQ hospital, while the body was handed over to Madina town police. In another accident, motorcyclist Basit r/o Chak no 157-RB, Gojra was hit to death by a bus near Jamia Chishtia chowk, Sargodha road. The body was shifted to Allied hospital for postmortem. A laborer Muhammad Atif r/o Chak 509-GB Samundri was working on roof top of an under construction house in his village when he suffered fatal electric shock and died on the spot. (APP)

Gang busted

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police have busted a gang of robbers and arrested its three members besides recovering cash, a stolen motorcycle, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, the Gungmandi police arrested three accused who were wanted in various cases. He said that the police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Gungmandi Police Station on the directives of SP Rawal Babar Javed Joya conducted a raid and managed to net the gang members. As per the preliminary police record, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he added. (APP)

Seminar held

FAISALABAD: A seminar to save the young generation from narcotics was held at Government Graduate College, Tandlianwala, on Thursday. Assistant Director Anti-Narcotics Force Salman Hundal was the chief guest while Anjuman Anit-Narcotics General Secretary Anwar Khan, President Muhammad Pervez, Principal Dr Amjad Attique and a large number of students attended the seminar. Salman Hundal said collective efforts were needed to complete eradication of narcotics from the society, adding that teachers and parents as well as the society should play their active role to save the youth from drugs. He urged the students to focus on their education for their bright future. (APP)

AC seals illegal stone crushing plant

D.I.KHAN: Assistant Commissioner Paharpur Aneeq Anwar Thursday inspected various stone-crushing plants and sealed one of them. The assistant commissioner, following the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan Nasrullah Khan, visited various stone-crushing plants in different areas of Tehsil Paharpur. During his visit, the AC was accompanied by the Assistant Director of Industries and other staff. The assistant commissioner took action against stone-crushing plants and sealed the illegal crushing plant in Kotla Ludhian. He said that unregistered and illegal crushing plants would not be tolerated. He directed the Assistant Director of Industries to take strict action against unregistered and illegal crushing plants. (APP)

SC voids LHC order to inform Hamza before arrest

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday declared the Lahore High Court's (LHC) order, to inform former chief minister Punjab Hamza Shehbaz before his arrest in the Saaf Pani, Ramzan Sugar Mills and excess assets case, against the law. A three-member SC bench headed by Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan heard the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) petition against the LHC or-

der and declared it null and void. During the course of proceedings, the bench stated that there was no requirement in the law to inform the accused before the arrest. The order to inform Hamza ten days before the arrest should not be used as a judicial precedent, he added. Subsequently, the court disposed of the case on the grounds that the order of the LHC was ineffective. (APP)

211,604 emergency victims rescued in 2022 so far

LAHORE: The Punjab Emergency Service (PES) department rescued 211,604 victims while responding to 909,299 emergencies during the period from January to November, 2022, so far. Out of the total received calls, 224,940 were emergency calls, 82,999 road traffic accidents, 110,795 medical emergencies, 5,872 fire incidents, 97 building, 5,300 crime incidents, 119

drowning incidents, 33 explosions/blasts and 12,785 miscellaneous incidents. A spokesman told APP that Rescue-1122 rescued over 11.16 million victims of emergencies since its inception in October 2004. The fire rescue service responded to over 198,000 emergencies and saved losses worth over Rs. 586 billion with professional firefighting on modern lines. (APP)

Pakistan expresses concern over deteriorating HR situation in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed deep concerns over the deteriorating human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Responding to a question at her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch we have not seen any improvement in the situation in IIOJK as it remains under military siege and Indian oppression continues unabated there. She said carrying on with their spree of extrajudicial killings, last week the Indian occupation forces killed two Kashmiri youth in fake encounters in Islamabad and Shopian districts of the IIOJK. She said Indian occu-

pation forces are also engaged in killing innocent youth while in their custody. The Spokesperson said we are also deeply concerned about the welfare of Kashmiri political prisoners including APHC leaders and Human rights defenders. She said India must end its gross and systematic violations of human rights in IIOJK, revoke its illegal and unilateral actions of 5th August 2019, and free all political prisoners including the true Kashmiri leaders. Responding to another question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Chaman Border crossing has been opened after having border flag meetings with the Afghan authorities to facilitate trade and pedestrian traffic. (Agencies)

Donor Conference likely in first week of January: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said the donors conference to collect funding for reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in the flood-hit areas was expected in the first week of January. Presiding over a meeting here regarding the strategic plan for post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation at National Flood Response and Coordination Center (NFRCC), the minister said roadshows would also be held in major capitals of the world for reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. He said the strategy of 4R (Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction) and 3I (Infrastructure needs, institutional

requirements and investment) should be adopted in the rehabilitation and reconstruction plan. Various financing options should be considered to fund short-term and long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation projects, he said adding that the international community must be informed about the steps taken by the government of Pakistan so far after the flood. He said different financing options should be considered for short-term and long-term plans of reconstruction and rehabilitation while the international community should also be informed about the steps taken so far by the government of Pakistan. (APP)

Combination of 7 unique features make Swat ideal destination for winter tourists

KALAM: Known as Switzerland of Pakistan, the beautiful valley of Swat has a combination of seven distinctive features that is hard to find together in any tourist destination of Pakistan and was all set to attract an influx of tourists and adventure sports enthusiasts during the winter season. Besides being home to primitive Gandhara civilization, the Swat's unique features including ice skiing, river rafting, adventure sports, snow-clad mountain peaks, trout-fish, and the Swat motorway has made it an ideal destination for winter tourism. These distinctive characteristics, which are second to none in any other district of the country, draw adventure sportsmen, archeologists, water rafters, mountaineers, snowfall lovers, foodies, and eco-tourists throughout the year following the construction of the Swat Motorway that opened up Malakand division for winter tourism. The 150-kilometer-long freshwater of the river Swat originating from different glaciers and lakes including Mahodand and Gabral mountains offers unique opportunities for adventure sports enthusiasts to explore in a single trip along with loved ones. Fazagut, Fatehpur, Barikot, and Chakdara are most suitable for water rafting in river Swat and if developed on modern lines could attract a large number of tourists during winter. Bestowed with more than 50 high-altitude small and big lakes, Swat's Mahodand lake is an exceptional source of attraction for tourists enjoying its blue-waters and boats riding amid cold breezes and snowfalls. "I came

from Nowshera to enjoy Swat's trout fish and explore the mesmerizing natural beauty of Kalam, especially of Mahudhand lake," said Riaz Khan, a former PST teacher while talking to APP. Impressed by the beauty of Mahudand and Gabriel lakes, he said its unique charm, clean air and nearby birds chanting valleys take tourists into a lap of serenity. He advised tourists to bring warm clothes and sweaters while coming to Upper Swat these days in the wake of chilly weather. Besides its famous Deodar trees and precious wildlife, the Swat's snow-clad tall mountain ranges of Falakser, Mankial and Elum peaks offer great challenges to mountaineers and trekkers to explore especially during winter. Likewise, its extensive plains and orchards that bear fruits and vegetables carried a unique comparative advantage. Attracting Buddhists, monks and archeologists from across the world throughout the year, the Swat's archaeological treasures and ancient artifacts housed at Saidu Sharif Museum become a distinctive feature taking tourists to the glorious history of Swat. The most celebrated monk from Thailand, Arayawangso along with 20 disciples has recently visited different Buddhist sites of Swat including Saidu Sharif Museum and Stupa besides Buthkara Buddhist monastery which impressed him a lot. He said Swat was very important in terms of Buddhist history in Pakistan and must be visited by followers of Buddhism from all around the world to explore. (APP)

Foxconn offers staff US\$1,400 to leave after iPhone City violence

PARIS: Foxconn Technology Group has begun offering 10,000 yuan (US\$1,400 or RM6,286) to any workers who choose to leave, an unusual decision intended to appease disgruntled new hires who played a central role in violent protests that rocked the world's largest iPhone factory. Apple Inc's main global production partner said in an online notice the sum, to be paid out in two instalments, will help smooth the journey home for employees. Many of the 200,000-plus

workers at Foxconn's main plant in Zhengzhou hail from elsewhere in the province or country. But the intent was also to usher out recent employees that the local government helped recruit, many of whom fuelled tensions among the ranks. The company will replace departing staff, although it may take time. The payout, which in general exceeds a month's wages for Foxconn's blue-collar staff, is likely to placate some employees who on Wednesday staged a rare violent

protest that trained a spotlight on the economic and social toll of Xi Jinping's Covid Zero strategy. Hundreds of workers clashed with security personnel in the early hours as tensions boiled over after almost a month under tough restrictions intended to quash a Covid-19 outbreak. One factor behind the unrest is that workers found out they would not receive higher wages they had been promised unless they stayed at the factory through March. (Agencies)

Oil falls as supply-disruption fears ease amid Russian price cap talks

TOKYO: Oil prices fell on Thursday (Nov 24), extending losses from the previous session, as fears of supply disruption eased on news that the Group of Seven (G7) nations are considering a high price cap on Russian oil. A greater-than-expected build-up in US gasoline inventories added to downward pressure. Brent crude futures had slid 43 cents, or 0.5%, to US\$84.98 (RM385.81) a barrel by 0102 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures dropped 35 cents, or 0.5%, to US\$77.59 a barrel. Both benchmark contracts plunged more than 3% on



Wednesday on news that the planned price cap could be above the current market level. The G7 is looking at a cap on Russian seaborn oil in the range of US\$65-70/bbl, according to a European official, though European Union (EU) governments have not yet agreed with each other on

the matter. The range of US\$65-70/bbl would be higher than markets had expected, Commonwealth Bank commodities analyst Vivek Dhar said in a report. It would reduce the risk of global supply being disrupted, Dhar said. "If the EU agrees to an oil price cap of US\$65-70/bbl this week, we see downside risk to our oil price forecast of US\$95/bbl this quarter," Dhar said, adding that the forecast assumes that EU sanctions accompanied by a price cap on Russian oil would disrupt enough supply to offset ongoing global growth concerns. (Agencies)

China's property stocks rally as banks pledge US\$38bil in support

HONG KONG: Chinese property shares jumped on Thursday after the country's biggest commercial banks agreed to provide at least \$38 billion in fresh credit lines to cash-strapped developers, adding to recent regulatory support measures to revive their business. The stock prices of China Vanke, Country Garden, China Overseas Land, China Resources Land, CIFI Holdings and Greentown China rose between 3.4% and 11.1% in Hong Kong. A gauge tracking the sector, the Hang Seng Mainland Property Index, rose 5.3%. Four of China's biggest banks have agreed to provide fundraising support to property developers, including industry giants Vanke and Country Garden, in a coordinated effort to support the embattled property sector. Banks are making efforts to follow a regulatory call to bolster the sector, but most of the

new loans will go to state-backed developers, Shujin Chen, analyst with Jefferies, said in a note issued on Thursday. "Private developers that already defaulted on public debts will still struggle," she said. Beijing has been stepping up measures in recent weeks to support the property sector, which has been hit by a debt crisis. The sector has been reeling under mounting debts, defaults, slower sales and construction suspensions after the authorities initiated a campaign to rein in excessive borrowing by developers. Several developers have defaulted on their offshore debt obligations over the past year, fueling a sector-wide downturn that has weighed on the world's second-largest economy. To ease the liquidity crunch, the central bank on Wednesday issued a notice outlining 16 steps to support the sector. (Agencies)

Rupee weakens further, loses 19 paise

KARACHI: Impending political uncertainty in the country has reflected in the Pakistani rupee, causing it to fall further by 19 paise against the US dollar during early trading in the interbank market on Thursday. Following a brief resurgence on Tuesday, the Pakistani rupee retreated against the US dollar during interbank trading on Wednesday, with a depreciation of 39 paise to Rs223.81 against the greenback. By contrast, on Tuesday, the interbank market saw the rupee extending gains by 0.11% to rise to Rs223.42, putting an end to the US dollar's seven-day winning streak. In November, a streak of modest gains by the rupee against the US dollar was snapped on the last trading day of the second week of November and since then, it has lost around Rs2.81 in its value in the interbank market. In the open currency market on Thursday, the value of rupee remain unchanged at Rs231. However, the rate to buy the US dollar also stayed at Rs228.75. (Agencies)

Aramco to invest US\$7b in South Korea

SEOUL: Saudi Aramco will invest US\$7 billion in its South Korean affiliate S-Oil for the construction of a refinery-steam cracker plant that will convert crude oil into high-value petrochemical products. Located at S-Oil's existing site in Ulsan, the plant will have the capacity to produce up to 3.2 million tonnes of petrochemicals annually and include a facility to produce high-value polymers. The project is expected to start in 2023 and be completed by 2026. The Shaheen project, Aramco's biggest-ever investment in the East Asian country, will represent the first commercialization of Aramco and Lummus Technology's thermal crude-to-chemicals (TC2C) technology, which increases chemical yield and reduces operating costs. It follows an earlier US\$4 billion investment into the first phase of the petrochemical plant expansion completed in 2018. (Agencies)

Bangladesh to work with Tanzania in food security

DHAKA: Bangladesh has expressed its keen interest to work with Tanzania in ensuring food security. Besides, the country wants to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Tanzania in the blue economy. Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen expressed the interest while talking to Tanzania's Blue Economy and Fisheries Minister Suleiman Masoud Makame on the sidelines of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) conference in Dhaka on Wednesday (November 23). (Agencies)

Google is all set to start operations in Pakistan

LAHORE: In a major breakthrough, the tech giant Google is all set to begin its operation in Pakistan by the end of this December 2022, PMLN Senator Afnan Ullah said. For the aforesaid development, the delegation from Google is scheduled to visit Pakistan on 11th Dec'22. Google will also provide 15,000 scholarships to Pakistani students, he also informed that the government will extend the scope of Google services in the country which will boost job opportunities in Pakistan. In order



to tap, the digital potential in Pakistan Google has introduced several initiatives including a career certificate, and a suicide hotline. To recall, a Google delegation visited Special Technology Zone Authority (STZA) in Apr'22. (Agencies)

SBP imposes condition to open bank account to purchase \$2000

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has made bank account opening mandatory on every \$2000 buying or above and for foreign travel, to curb the dollar outflow, State Minister for Finance Aisha Pasha said on Wednesday during the meeting of Senate Committee. Furthermore, the condition to buy a dollar has been slashed to \$5000 from \$10,000 and made mandatory to transfer payment through bank accounts to purchase dollars. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, who has expressed confidence that the country will meet its external account re-



quirements during the current fiscal year, has come under fire for failing to bring the dollar rate below Rs200. Earlier, Dar said the government will clear pending Letters of Credit (LCs) amounting to \$100,000 and will resolve the issues of all pending LCs. (Agencies)

Philippines to cut tariffs on EVs amid high fuel costs

MANILA: A Philippine inter-agency panel chaired by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr on Thursday approved removing tariffs on electric vehicles (EVs) to spur demand amid high fuel costs. Marcos will issue an executive order cutting to 0% the most favoured nation tariff on EVs like passenger cars, buses, vans, trucks, motorcycles, and bicycles, and their parts for five years. Current import duties range from 5% to 30%. "The executive order aims to expand market sources and encourage consumers to consider acquiring EVs, improve energy security by reducing dependence on imported fuel, and promote the growth of the

domestic EV industry ecosystem," Economic planning secretary Arsenio Balisacan told a news conference. Consumers in the Philippines currently need to shell out US\$21,000 to US\$49,000 for an EV, versus the US\$19,000 to US\$26,000 price for conventional vehicles. Tariff rates on hybrid vehicles will not change. Of the country's more than five million registered automobiles, only 9,000 are electric, mostly passenger vehicles, government data show. Personal EVs account for just 1% of the market and are mostly owned by the extremely wealthy, data from the United States' International Trade Administration show. (Agencies)

Seafood exports jump 39.6pc to \$134m in 4 months

ISLAMABAD: The exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 39.65 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The country earned \$134.596 million from seafood exports during July-October (2022-23) against the exports of US \$96.384 4 million in July-October (2021-22), showing growth of around 39.65, PBS reported. In terms of quantity, the exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 40.93 percent by going up from 36,088 metric tons last year to 50,859 metric tons in first four months of last year. On year-on-year basis, the seafood exports increased by 38.65 percent to \$54.662 million in October 2022 from the ex-

ports of \$39.425 million during October 2021. The exports also witnessed 38.74 hike in terms of quantity by going up from 14,544 metric tons last year to 20,179 metric tons this year. On month-on-month basis, the seafood exports increased by 30.62 percent when compared to the exports of \$41.848 million in July September, according to the PBS data. In terms of quantity, the fish exports went up by 36.73 percent in October 2022 compared to the exports of 14,758 metric tons in July 2022. The overall food exports from the country were recorded at \$1493.859 million during July-October (2022-23) against the exports of \$1432.712 million recorded during July-October, showing growth of 4.27 percent). (Agencies)

Stocks rise, dollar slips as Fed signals softer rate hike pace

KARACHI: Asian markets rallied Thursday and the dollar weakened further after minutes from the Federal Reserve's latest policy meeting suggested it could slow its pace of rate hikes. The news provided traders with a cushion against concerns about surging Covid cases in China that have fanned speculation authorities will revert to lockdowns and other economically debilitating measures to fight the outbreak. Wednesday's much-anticipated minutes showed most US central bank chiefs felt smaller increases would "likely soon be appropriate" as the economy shows signs of weakness following almost a year of monetary tightening. Bets were growing on officials announcing a 50-basis-point lift at their December gathering, down from four straight 75-point

hikes, with officials keeping tabs on economic data. The latest indicators showed the manufacturing and services sectors continued to contract last month, while jobless claims picked up. The developments allowed Wall Street traders to head off to their Thanksgiving break with a spring in their step, the S&P 500 ending at a two-month high as they finally see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel after a painful year. And Asia followed suit, with Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Manila and Jakarta all in the red. The more risk-on environment was also reflected in a further drop in the dollar against its peers, having surged for much of the year as traders bet on ever-higher US interest rates. (Agencies)

UK's Ofgem says price cap will rise to nearly \$5,200 without intervention

LONDON: British energy regulator Ofgem said its price cap for average household energy bills would rise by about 21% to 4,279 pounds (\$5,170.74) a year from January to the end of March 2023. Households, however, will not pay this amount as Ofgem's price cap has been superseded by a government-backed price guarantee set at 2,500 pounds a year for average consumption until the end of March 2023. The move, intended to cushion consumers against the economic shock of war in Ukraine, comes as Britain faces a forecast lengthy recession. Ofgem's announcement means the government action will save typical households around 1,779 pounds a year, compared with what they would have had to pay under the regulator's cap. The government price guarantee rises to an average 3,000 pounds a year from April 1 un-

til the end of March 2024. Analysts at Cornwall Insights have said that capping gas and electricity prices for British households for the next two years could cost up to 140 billion pounds (\$159 billion) in an extreme scenario. European energy prices started to rise as the world emerged from COVID-19 lockdowns and then surged in February following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As a result, the cost of wholesale gas has increased, and the price that suppliers need to charge per unit of energy has gone up sharply, prompting the government to step in and help consumers. Many British energy companies, often supplying both gas and electricity to homes and businesses, have struggled in the face of soaring wholesale energy costs because the price caps limit how much of the increases can be passed on to customers. (Agencies)

Coral Energy turns focus to Asia, halts trade in Russian crude

NEW DELHI: Dubai-based trader Coral Energy said it is looking at expanding its business in Asia where energy demand is set to rise, and has stopped dealing in Russian crude oil since western sanctions were imposed on some Moscow entities in July. The trading house emerged as one of the key suppliers of Russian crudes to Asia after some western entities shunned purchase of Russian oil following its invasion of Ukraine in late February. "We supplied Russian crude oil cargoes until it was legitimate to do so but once sanctions were imposed on Russian

entities, we stopped dealing in Russian oil," the trading firm said in an emailed response to Reuters' queries on Wednesday. Coral is still dealing in some refined products because of its binding contracts with some Russian entities, it said, adding these contracts are valid till the end of this year. European Union sanctions on Russian crude and oil products will take effect from Dec. 5 and Feb. 5, respectively. Coral, which started operations in 2010 as petroleum product trader, has evolved into a global firm and dealing in fertilisers and soft commodities as well. (Agencies)

UAE unveils national plan to double GDP by 2031

DUBAI: The UAE has set out a plan to double its gross domestic product to 3 trillion dirhams (\$820 billion) by 2031 through driving up the country's non-oil exports and tourism sector. Unveiled by the country's Vice President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid at the UAE Annual Government meetings held in Abu Dhabi, the 'We The UAE 2031' plan has a focus on social, economic, investment and development aspects. As part of the plan to raise GDP from its current level of 1.49 tril-

lion dirhams, targets were set to increase the country's non-oil exports to 800 billion dirhams. Foreign trade is also set to rise to 4 trillion dirhams, with the contribution of the tourism sector to GDP to grow to 450 billion dirhams. Sheikh Mohammed said that 'We The UAE 2031' will shape the progress of the country towards a more accomplished and developed future, in which all entities and institutions will cooperate within a unified ecosystem. (Agencies)

Croatia beat Spain 2-0 to reach Davis Cup semis

MALAGA: Twice champions Croatia reached the final four of the Davis Cup Finals for a sixth time with a 2-0 win over hosts Spain in Malaga on Wednesday. Marin Cilic rallied to clinch the winning point for Croatia with a 5-7, 6-3, 7-6(5) victory over Pablo Carreno Busta after Borna Coric had earlier given his side the lead with a 6-4, 7-6(4) win over Roberto Bautista Agut. With Carreno Busta up 5-4 in the third set tiebreaker and two points away from forcing a deciding doubles rubber, Cilic fired down an ace to draw level and then coolly went on to seal the win in three hours and 13 minutes. Croatia, who finished runner-up to Russia in last year's Davis Cup final, will play Australia in semifinal action on Friday in Malaga. A misfiring Cilic managed to

hold serve in the opening game of the match despite four double faults and that inaccuracy at the service line was a sign of things to come for the Croatian, who mixed 20 aces with 15 double faults. Cilic started to find his groove in the second set where he managed to consolidate a break for a 5-2 lead and then went on to force a decider. After the two players combined for four service breaks across a six-game span of the third set, Carreno Busta held for a 5-4 lead but Cilic also steadied the ship and managed to push it to a tiebreaker where he quickly fell behind 4-1. In the day's first match, Coric was solid from the service line as he fired down 12 aces and turned aside the only break point he faced en route to securing the victory in just under two hours. (Agencies)

Tatum leads NBA-best Celtics over Mavs



WASHINGTON: Jayson Tatum scored 37 points and grabbed 13 rebounds Wednesday to spark the NBA-leading Boston Celtics to a 125-112 victory over visiting Dallas despite 42 points from Luka Doncic. The Celtics, whose nine-game win streak was snapped Monday at Chicago, bounced back by dominating the Mavericks, improving to 7-1 in Boston and an NBA-best 14-4 overall. "I think we were locked in from the beginning," Tatum said. "Losing to Chicago made us regroup and refocus. We just knew they were a really talented team. Luka is the head of the snake. It was good to

come home and get back in the win column." It was Tatum's 10th career game with 35 points and 10 rebounds. He made 11-of-24 from the floor and 13-of-15 from the free throw line. In a showdown of early season NBA Most Valuable Player candidates, league scoring leader Doncic countered with a game-high point total on 17-of-28 shooting and five-of-9 from the line. The Slovenian guard also had nine assists and eight rebounds. "Everybody knows how talented and special he is," Tatum said. "He can do so many things on the court. He's somebody I respect and like competing against." The Celtics led 70-49 at halftime and by double figures from late in the first quarter until Doncic sparked a late rally to pull Dallas within 114-105 with 3:43 remaining. Al Horford answered with a 3-pointer to ignite a 10-2 Boston run and Dallas never came within 13 again. (Agencies)

Adam Scott takes early lead at Australian PGA; Smith two back

BRISBANE: Adam Scott shot a 5-under 66 on Thursday after a 6 a.m. tee time to trail by one stroke after the first round of the Australian PGA championship at Royal Queensland. Three other Australians shot 65s in the afternoon groups — Min Woo Lee, Jason Scrivener and John Lyras — to share the first-round lead. Brad Kennedy, Anthony Quayle and South Korean Jeunghun Wang matched Scott's 66 and were tied for fourth. Scott was playing in the same early-morning group as British Open champion Cameron Smith, who was three strokes behind after a 68, and Ryan Fox, a close runner-up to Rory McIlroy on the European tour's order of merit this season, who had a 72. The 35-year-old Fox is No. 27 in the world after ending last year at No. 213. The New Zealander

won two European tour events and had four runner-up finishes in his resurgent season. Scott had an early task for "new" caddie Steve Williams, who has come out of retirement to carry the bag for the 2013 Masters champion. When he woke up for his ultra-early tee time, Scott couldn't find his golf bag. Eventually recovered from his manager's hotel room, the pair were welcomed by hundreds of early risers on the 10th tee. "It was panic stations... Steve was kicking doors down," Scott laughed of his early-morning search for his clubs. Strong approach play led to four tap-in birdies in five holes on either side of the turn and then, after back-to-back bogeys brought him back to the field, Scott's putting gave him two more birdies in the final three holes. (Agencies)

Ferrari clinches 1-2-3 in F1's final test for 2022

ABU DHABI: Ferrari filled the top three places on the timing screens in Formula One's post-season test in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday as the sport looked to the future with grand prix veterans and newcomers alike starting work with new employers. Carlos Sainz was quickest for Ferrari ahead of team mate Charles Leclerc, with both race regulars taking turns in the one F1-75 car and focusing on Pirelli's 2023 tyres. Israeli test driver Robert Shwartzman was third fastest in the other Ferrari and did 116 laps, the equivalent of two grand prix distances. Spain's double world champion Fernando Alonso, 41, made his track debut with Aston Martin after leaving Renault-owned Alpine while 35-year-old Nico Hulkenberg be-

gan his comeback with U.S.-owned Haas. "Today was about learning the tyres for 2023, learning their characteristics and with these test days you have a bit more time to try stuff," said Hulkenberg, whose last full season was in 2019 with Renault. "I coped better than expected to be honest, so that's good," he added of his fitness. "There's now three months of hard-core preparation to get ready, I have a plan and I know what I have to do." Australian rookie Oscar Piastri tested for McLaren alongside 2023 team mate Lando Norris while Frenchman Pierre Gasly settled in at Alpine following his move from Red Bull-owned AlphaTauri, who welcomed Dutch driver Nyck de Vries in his place. (Agencies)

Northern, Sindh set final clash in Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2022-23

LAHORE: Northern set final clash with Sindh despite losing last round match against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2022-23 at Shoaib Akhtar Stadium, Rawalpindi. In-form Sindh qualified for the final of revamped domestic season for the very first time. Northern will take on Sindh in the five-day tournament decider at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore from Saturday, 26 November. Northern

finished with 135 points to top the table. Sindh occupied the second spot with 128 while Central Punjab stood third with 124 points. Balochistan accumulated 114 points to finish fourth. Southern Punjab had to contend with a fifth spot with a tally of 89 points and despite their impressive tenth round win, defending champions Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ended at the sixth spot with 78 points. (Agencies)

Afghan Refugee Sports Gala to start from Nov 29 in Peshawar

PESHAWAR: In collaboration with Afghan Commissionerate and UNHCR, a sports gala is being organized for Afghan refugee youth living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The Afghan refugees will participate in cricket, futsal, indoor games and drawing and other events. In this regard, Director Education and Youth Development Cell Ehsanullah while talking to the media said that the

Afghan Commissionerate Peshawar has been conducting various sports activities for the Afghan youth since 2016 jointly with UNHCR, which has been successful beyond expectations. With the efforts of Afghan Commissionerate Abbas Khan and his team, once again on the request of representatives of Afghan youth, various events of the Afghan Refugee Sports Gala are starting from

December 29, which will continue for two weeks. In order to promote peace and harmony, co-curricular, sports and cultural events are being organized. An event of the Afghan Cricket League will be held from November 29, 2022, to December 6, 2022. A total of 10 teams from KP will participate in the event. Members of the host community will also be part of the event. (APP)

Gavi becomes youngest World Cup scorer since Pele

DOHA: Spain midfielder Gavi's goal in his team's 7-0 thrashing of Costa Rica on Wednesday made him the youngest World Cup scorer since Brazil great Pele in 1958. Pele was 17 in Sweden when he led Brazil to their first World Cup title, scoring six goals. Gavi, 18, also secured the game's MVP award after becoming the youngest Spaniard to score at a World Cup, breaking the record of Cesc Fabregas who was 19 when he netted against Ukraine in the 2006 tournament. "I'm happy for the ac-



complishments but what I really care is that we won and played a great game, let's move forward," Gavi told a news conference. "Of course, it's an honour to be second in this list and it's something that makes me really

happy." Gavi scored Spain's fifth goal in the 74th minute with a sumptuous volley in off the post after a floating cross from Alvaro Morata. Ferran Torres bagged a brace and strikes from four other players took Spain past the 100-goal mark in soccer's showpiece tournament. Barcelona's Gavi became the youngest player to represent Spain in November, 2021, two months after his 17th birthday. A few months later, he became the youngest Spanish player to score a goal for his country. (Agencies)

Britcher, Sweeney giving women's doubles luge a try for US

LONDON: Summer Britcher and Emily Sweeney have been USA Luge teammates for years. They've traveled together, they've competed together, they've gone to the Olympics together, they've stood on World Cup podiums together. Being on a sled together was not part of the plan. Until now. Britcher and Sweeney, the two most experienced women's singles sliders that USA Luge has on its current roster and two of the most accomplished in the national team's history, are going to compete in doubles together at some World Cup events this season — the first steps to-



ward what could be a run to the 2026 Olympics, when two-woman luge will make its debut on winter sport's biggest stage. They're not giving up on singles. But women's doubles is a relatively new thing in the luge world, and they see enormous potential. The World Cup season for luge starts in Austria on Dec. 3; the World Cup slate

for sliding's other two sports, bobsled and skeleton, opens this weekend in Whistler, Canada. "It's crazy how quickly we became a team," Britcher said. "We've been teammates, but now we're a team. And it's been really exciting to share this experience with somebody, because it's kind of like the coolest second chance ever." It truly is a second chance, in a lot of ways. Both are highly accomplished on the World Cup circuit. Britcher has more wins than any U.S. women's luge athlete ever with five and has claimed 25 medals overall when factoring in relays. (Agencies)

Match officials for Pakistan vs England Tests announced

RAWALPINDI: Andy Pycroft, member of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Elite Panel of Match Referees, will lead the playing control teams for the three ICC World Test Championship fixtures between Pakistan and England in December. Seven umpires, three of whom are from the ICC Elite Panel of Um-

pires, will officiate the Tests across Rawalpindi (1-5), Multan (9-13) and Karachi (17-21), a PCB news release said on Thursday. Joel Wilson, who is one of the 11 members of the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires, will join Ahsan Raza as on-field umpire for the opening Test, which will be the first between the two sides on Pakistani

soil since 2005. Marais Erasmus will be the third umpire and Asif Yaqoob will be the fourth umpire. Marais Erasmus and Aleem Dar, the other two umpires from the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires, will take on-field duties in Multan with Joel Wilson and Rashid Riaz performing third and fourth umpire duties. (APP)

Nabeel breaks India's Guinness World Record

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Syed Nabeel Hasan Rizvi has broken a Guinness World Record for the Longest Number Sequence Memorized in four seconds. "Nabeel memorized 30 random numbers in just four seconds, and correctly recalled in sequence," Nabeel's coach Sania Alam of Futuristic Learning USA institute told APP. She informed that Nabeel had broken the record which was previously set in place by an Indian in March 2022 with 28 numbers memorized. "Nabeel has been training his memory skills for many years with me. He has also competed in various international mind sports competitions including World Memory Championships," she said. Sania said Nabeel was the junior UK Memory Champion 2019 and Bronze Medalist of UK Mind Mapping Championship 2019. Commenting on the big achievement, Nabeel said, (APP)

KP Snooker C'ship enters final stage

PESHAWAR: Sirbuland, Sarjeel, Akash, Amir Shehzad took berth into the semi-final of the ongoing 34th edition of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Snooker and Billiard Open Championship being played at Balahisar Snooker Club on Wednesday. In the first quarter-final Sirbuland defeated Saud Khan (Swat) 4-3, Sarjeel of Hazara recorded a victory against Fawad Khan by 4-0, Akash of Azad Jammu and Kashmir beat Shah Khan of Peshawar by 4-3 in a thrilling match while Amir Shehzad of Azad Jammu and Kashmir defeated Abdullah of Azad Jammu and Kashmir by 4-3. In the pre-quarter-finals Azad Jammu Kashmir's Akash defeated Peshawar's Jalil Moscow by 4-0 and qualified for the next round. Similarly, Peshawar's Saud defeated Azad Jammu Kashmir's Abdul Ghaffar by 4-3, Peshawar's Sarbuland defeated Mujahid by 4-0. (APP)

DAILY HOROSCOPE: NOVEMBER 25 2022



It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.

- VIRGO:** If you are planning a new creative project it might be best to put back the start date until early next week. According to the planets domestic issues are currently more important, so devote yourself to smoothing out the wrinkles in your home life.
- LIBRA:** If the atmosphere at work seems a bit heavy at the moment you should take that as a sign not to push other people too hard. Not everyone can match your ambition, so make allowances and use incentives rather than commands to motivate your colleagues.
- SCORPIO:** The message of the stars today is that you must speak up if you believe some sort of injustice is taking place. Scorpio is one of the few signs that is not afraid to take on people in positions of power, so say your piece and say it loud.
- SAGITTARIUS:** The more anxious you are about a challenging situation the worse it will get, so stop fretting and start believing it will come good in the end. Your thoughts always create your reality, even more so at this time of year because your mind is so powerful.
- CAPRICORN:** Stop harking back to the past and wishing that you had done some things differently. You did what you did and you are where you are and the only course of action that matters now is that you make your future a thing of beauty. Get working on it.
- ACQUARIUS:** What occurs today, tomorrow and over the weekend will remind you that in the greater scheme of things it's not how much you earn or what your professional status is that matters but who you are as a human being. Put people first, including yourself.
- PISCES:** This is not the time to be taking on any new chores because what happens over the next few days will create the kind of serious opportunities that demand your full attention.

6 million locked down in 'iPhone city'

ZHENGZHOU: Authorities have ordered six million people into lockdown in a city where violent protests broke out at an iPhone factory over Covid isolation policies and working conditions. Hundreds of workers took to the streets around the vast iPhone factory in Zhengzhou on Wednesday, confronting hazmat-clad personnel wielding batons in a rare display of public anger in China. In the wake of the unrest, Zhengzhou authorities ordered mass testing and an effective lockdown for several districts in the central Chinese city starting on Friday. City centre residents cannot leave the area unless they have a negative Covid test and permission from local authorities, and are advised not to leave their homes "unless necessary". The restrictions will affect more than 6 million people but do not cover the iPhone factory, where workers have already been under Covid restrictions for weeks. (Agencies)

Journalists have much to lose if Twitter dies

PARIS: Few will lose as much as journalists if Twitter dies, having grown reliant on its endless sources and instant updates despite the dangers and distortions that come with it. There has been fevered talk of the platform's imminent demise since billionaire Elon Musk took over last month and began firing vast numbers of staff. But most journalists "can't leave," said Nic Newman, of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. "It's actually a really important part of their work." Newman was working at the BBC when Twitter started making waves in 2008 and 2009. "It was a new Rolodex, a new way of contacting people - fantastic for case studies and ... experts," he said. But Twitter also became a competitor, replacing newsrooms as the source of breaking news for the public when terrorist attacks, natural disasters or any fast-moving story struck. "Journalists realised they wouldn't always be the ones breaking the news and that their role was going to be different - more about contextualising and verifying that news," said Newman. It also meant journalists were tied to the platform for announcements by politicians and celebrities - most famously the dreaded late-night and early-morning tweets from Donald Trump that left hundreds of journalists sleep-deprived throughout his presidency. The dependency has bred many problems. (Agencies)

Venezuela's Maduro to talk opposition today



CARACAS: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government will resume talks with the opposition Friday after more than a year in a bid to resolve a political crisis that has gripped the country since a contested 2018 election. Negotiations between the two sides last took place in October 2021 in Mexico, and international efforts have mounted in recent months to get the talks back on track. The opposition is seeking free and fair presidential elections, next due in 2024, while Caracas wants the international community to recognize Maduro as the rightful president and lift sanctions. "Dialogue between Maduro's government and the Venezuelan opposition will resume on the 25th and 26th of November," Colombia's President Gustavo Petro wrote on Twitter. He did not specify where the talks would take place, however, a source close to the negotiations told AFP that delegations would meet in Mexico City. (Agencies)

French lawmakers to vote on bullfighting ban

FRANCE: French MPs are expected to vote for the first time Thursday on whether to ban bullfighting after a national debate that has pitched animal rights' defenders against fans of the traditional blood sport. Though public opinion is firmly in favour of outlawing the practice, the bill is expected to be rejected by a majority of lawmakers who are wary about stirring up the bullfighting heartlands in the south of the country. There is also a chance that the legislation, proposed by a vegan left-wing lawmaker, fails to be presented for a vote in the National Assembly at the last minute. "We need to go towards a conciliation, an exchange," President Emmanuel Macron said on Wednesday, adding



that he did not expect the draft law to pass. "From where I am sitting, this is not a current priority." His government has urged members of the ruling centrist coalition not to support the text from the opposition France Unbowed party, even though many members are known to personally favour it. During a first debate on the parliament's law commission last week, a majority voted against the proposal by MP Aymeric

Caron, who denounced the "barbarism" of a tradition that was imported from Spain in the 1850s. "Caron has antagonised people instead of trying to smooth it over," a lawmaker from Macron's party told AFP on condition of anonymity. The bill proposes modifying an existing law penalising animal cruelty to remove exemptions for bullfights that can be shown to be "uninterrupted local traditions". These are granted in towns such as Bayonne and Mont-de-Marsan in southwest France and along the Mediterranean coast including Arles, Beziers and Nimes. "The traditional character of an activity has never been a moral justification for it," Caron told the BFM news channel on Thursday. (Agencies)

Anwar Ibrahim sworn in as Malaysian PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Long-time opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was sworn in as Malaysia's prime minister Thursday, in a victory for political reformers locked in a battle with Malay nationalists for days after the divisive general election produced a hung Parliament. Broadcast live on national television, Anwar took his oath of office Thursday evening in a simple ceremony at the national palace. Malaysia's king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, named Anwar, 75, as the nation's 10th leader after saying he was satisfied that Anwar is the candidate who is likely to have majority support. Anwar's Alliance of Hope led Saturday's election with 82 seats, short of the 112 needed for a majority. An unexpected surge of ethnic Malay support propelled Former



Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's right-leaning National Alliance to win 73 seats, with its ally Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party emerging as the biggest single party with 49 seats. The stalemate was resolved after the long-ruling bloc led by the United Malays National Organization agreed to support a unity government under Anwar. Such a tie-up was once unthinkable in Malaysian politics, long dominated by rivalry between the two parties. (Agencies)

Domestic violence in Germany increases over last 5 years

BERLIN: The number of domestic violence victims in Germany has increased by 3.4% in the last five years and the overwhelming majority of them are women, the German government said Thursday. A government report indicated that there were 143,604 domestic violence cases in 2021, up by 4,711 from 2017. However, the real figure is likely much higher since many victims are afraid to report domestic violence to the police. According to the report's data for 2021, 80.3% of victims were female, while 78.8% of suspects were male. "Every hour, an average of 13 women suffer intimate partner violence. Almost every day, a partner or ex-partner attempts to kill a woman. Almost every third day,

a woman dies at the hands of her current or previous partner. That is the reality. The reality is also that many victims of violence are afraid to get help." Family Minister Lisa Paus told reporters in Berlin during the report's presentation. Paus said services geared toward helping women need to be expanded urgently "so that in the future, women everywhere in Germany will find a safe haven and competent advice and help." Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, said it was also important that perpetrators face the consequences of their crimes. "Men who commit violence against women, whether psychological or physical, are criminals - criminals whom we prosecute with the utmost severity," (Agencies)

S. Korea in demographic crisis as many stop having babies

SEOUL: Yoo Young Yi's grandmother gave birth to six children. Her mother birthed two. Yoo doesn't want any. "My husband and I like babies so much ... but there are things that we'd have to sacrifice if we raised kids," said Yoo, a 30-year-old Seoul financial company employee. "So it's become a matter of choice between two things, and we've agreed to focus more on ourselves." There are many like Yoo in South Korea who have chosen either not to have children or not to marry. Other advanced countries have similar trends, but South Korea's demographic crisis is much worse. South Korea's statistics agency announced in September that the total fertility rate - the average number

of babies born to each woman in their reproductive years - was 0.81 last year. That's the world's lowest for the third consecutive year. The population shrank for the first time in 2021, stoking worry that a declining population could severely damage the economy - the world's 10th largest - because of labor shortages and greater welfare spending as the number of older people increases and the number of taxpayers shrinks. President Yoon Suk Yeol has ordered policymakers to find more effective steps to deal with the problem. The fertility rate, he said, is plunging even though South Korea spent 280 trillion won (\$210 billion) over the past 16 years to try to turn the tide. (Agencies)

Philippines asks China for explanation over latest sea feud

MANILA: The Philippines has sought an explanation from China after a Filipino military commander reported that the Chinese coast guard forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris in the possession of Filipino navy personnel in the disputed South China Sea, officials said Thursday. Sunday's incident off Philippine-occupied Thitu island is the latest flareup in the long-seething territorial disputes involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. China has denied its coast guard forcibly seized the debris from the Filipino sailors. Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson in Manila, Maria Theresa Daza, said without elaborating that a diplo-

matic note was relayed to China for "clarification from the Chinese side over the incident." Vice Adm. Alberto Carlos, who heads the military's Western Command, said the Filipino sailors, using a long-range camera, spotted the debris drifting in strong waves near a sandbar about 800 yards (540 meters) offshore. They set out on a boat and retrieved the floating object and started to tow it back to Thitu Island. As they were traveling back to the island, "they noticed that a China coast guard vessel with bow number 5203 was approaching their location and subsequently blocked their pre-plotted course twice," Carlos said in a statement. (Agencies)

EU chief to meet Xi

BRUSSELS: EU chief Charles Michel will head to Beijing next week for a meeting with China's President Xi Jinping, a European official told AFP on Thursday. The official, confirming a report in the Financial Times, said the European Council president's December 1 visit would be formally announced later Thursday. The trip comes amid a lively debate between EU capitals as to how to handle relations with China, amid concerns over Beijing's rights record, threat to Taiwan, trade pressure on some EU countries and support for Russia. The United States is pushing its Western allies to align themselves against China, but some EU members with important trade links resist splitting world affairs into two camps. Michel walks a line between Germany, with its important economic interests in China, and EU members like Lithuania, which has courted Beijing's anger by building links with Taiwan. (Agencies)

Five women killed every hour by family member: UN Report

NEW YORK: A UN report published said that at least 45,000 women and girls around the world were killed by partners or family members in 2021. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women said the figure meant that more than five women or girls were killed every hour by someone in their family. The report stressed that although its findings on femicide were "alarmingly high," the real figures were likely to be much higher. According to the UN, an estimated 81,100 women and girls were killed intentionally last year. "Of all the women and girls intentionally killed last year, some 56% were killed by intimate partners or other family members... showing that home is not a safe place for many women and girls," the UN offices said. The report acknowledged men and boys were far more likely to be killed overall, making up for 81% of all victims. But women and girls were particularly affected by gender-based violence in their own homes, according to the findings. (Agencies)

Israel rescinds Gaza work permits, citing bomb worries

JERUSALEM: Israel has cancelled 200 out of some 15,500 permits issued to Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to work in its territory after a labourer was accused of planning to carry out a bombing, the Shin Bet security agency said on Thursday. The suspect, arrested on Oct 30, told interrogators he had been recruited by relatives in the militant group Islamic Jihad to plant a bomb on a bus in southern Israel, the Shin Bet said. It said the suspect had been indicted in an Israeli court. It was not immediately clear if he had been assigned a lawyer or how he might plead to the charges. The Shin Bet said that among Israel's responses was the voiding of around 200 permits of workers who have militant family members. "The attempt by terror groups to exploit the jobs of workers in Israel in order to carry out attacks endangers the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of residents of the Gaza Strip," Defence Minister Benny Gantz tweeted. (Agencies)

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