



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Lionel Messi wins Ballon D'or for record seventh time**

Detailed News On Page-08

**ECP's duty to use EVMs in elections: Fawad**

Detailed News On Page-01



**Bilawal slams govt over TTP negotiations**

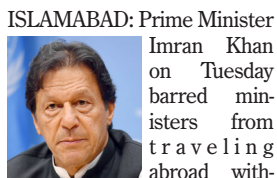
Detailed News On Page-08



## Briefs

### Ministers barred from traveling

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday barred ministers from traveling abroad without permission during the federal cabinet meeting Tuesday. According to sources privy to the discussion the prime minister said that the next three months are crucial and therefore no minister should go abroad. "No minister could travel abroad without seeking permission," he said. Moreover, sources further shared that the prime minister took strict notice of some PTI leaders' remarks regarding the Climate Change moot.

### Pak values ties with Bahrain

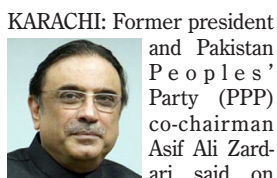
DNA



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Staff Bahrain National Guard (BNG) Major General Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Saud Al Khalifa called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa here at General Headquarters (GHQ) on Tuesday and appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation, special efforts for border management and role in regional stability. During the meeting, matters of mutual interests, current security situation in Afghanistan and bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) media release.

### 18th Amend. must be protected

DNA



KARACHI: Former president and Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari said on Tuesday that no compromise would be made on a powerful parliament and people's right to sovereignty. In his message on the 54th Founding Day of the Party, Asif Zardari said that the PPP is steadfast on its founding philosophy and manifesto. He said that PPP founder and Quaid-e-Awam Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had struggled for a parliamentary system in the country and had given the country a parliamentary system.

## 'Military land only for defence purposes'

"If [the land] is not being used for defence then it will go back to the government," Justice Gulzar said

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Gulzar Ahmed on Tuesday said that the law did not allow land meant for defence purposes to be used for commercial gains, saying such land should be returned to the government once its strategic use has ended. A three-judge bench headed by the chief justice and comprising Justice Qazi Mohammad Amin Ahmed and Justice Ijazul Ahsan resumed the hearing on the issue of military lands being used for commercial purposes. As the hearing got under way, the chief justice again grilled Defence Secretary retired Lt Gen Mian Mohammad Hilal Hussain over commercial establishments being built on military land. "The law's intention is not that defence land is used for any other purpose," Justice Gulzar reiterated. "If [the land] is not being used for defence then it will go back to the government." "This is government land," the top judge said, noting that cinemas, petrol pumps, housing societies, shopping malls and marriage halls were being constructed on land meant for defence. General sahib, these are not defence purposes," he told the defence secretary, asking the attorney general to explain how

Continued on Page 02

## Ali Wazir granted bail

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan Tuesday ordered the release of MNA Ali Wazir on bail. The Waziristan lawmaker has been directed to deposit surety bonds worth Rs 400,000. Ali Wazir was arrested on charges of issuing statements against state institutions during a speech on December 06, 2020. The FIR against the MNA was registered at a Karachi police station. Wazir had filed an appeal against the Sindh High Court's (SHC) verdict which had dismissed his bail plea. The lawmaker had claimed that he is innocent and not guilty of the offenses mentioned in the FIR. The court observed that the other accused in the hate speech case had been granted bail, which was not challenged, so Wazir could not be kept in jail as well. The lawmaker, however, may not be released immediately as there are other cases pending against him in which he has not been granted bail.



ISLAMABAD: Embassy of United Arab Emirates in Islamabad is organising a picture exhibition (from the UAE National Archive) highlighting the 50 glorious years of friendship between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. Hamad Obaid Alzaabi - Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates along with Sardar Yasir Ilyas - CEO Centaurus Mall witnessing the Exhibition. - DNA

## HRW report accuses Taliban of atrocities

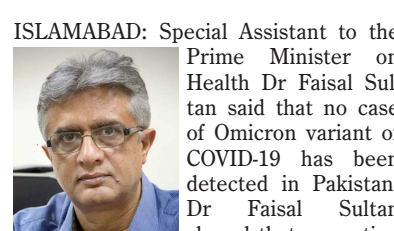
HRW says the report is based on a total of 67 interviews

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The Taliban executed dozens of members of the Afghan security forces after they surrendered following the militants' seizure of Afghanistan in late summer, new research released by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Tuesday alleges. The HRW report detailed "the summary execution or enforced disappearance" of 47 former members of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), including military personnel, police, intelligence service members and paramilitary militia, who had surrendered to or were apprehended by Taliban forces between August 15 and October 31. HRW says the report is based on a total of 67 interviews, including 40 in-person interviews with witnesses, relatives and friends of victims, and Taliban fighters. Some people were granted anonymity by HRW for their report. In some cases, families report stories of people who simply disappeared. The findings of the investigation would make a mockery of the Taliban's previous claims to the international community that it would lead a more inclusive government than it did two decades ago. Its leaders had promised a reprieve for those who collaborated with US forces during the American presence in the country.

## No Omicron case in Pak: Dr Faisal

KHAYAM ABBASI



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan said that no case of Omicron variant of COVID-19 has been detected in Pakistan. Dr Faisal Sultan shared that a meeting is scheduled today at the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) during which guidelines and policies regarding the vaccination will be finalised. "We cannot control the Omicron variant from coming to Pakistan, but we can control its impact by ramping up the immunisation process," the health minister said. "Our priority is those who have not been vaccinated at all." "With more people immunized, we can control the impact. It is my appeal to the people to get vaccinated and follow SOPs," he added. In a brief interview with media, Dr Sultan explained that

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## 'Omicron vaccines may take months'

NEWS DESK

HONG KONG: It will take months to develop a new shot of COVID-19 vaccine that works against the Omicron variant as the existing vaccines may be less effective against the new strain, the head of US vaccine manufacturer Moderna has told Financial Times. Stephane Bancel told the newspaper in an interview published Tuesday that data would be available on the effectiveness of the current vaccines in the next two weeks but scientists were not optimistic. "All the scientists I've talked to ... are like 'this is not going to be good'," he told the newspaper. Bancel's warning came as G7 health ministers held emergency talks on the new variant, which is spreading around the world and prompting nations to close their borders.

## Next by-polls through EVMs, says Fawad

The minister says ECP should ensure use of the EVMs in all the next elections



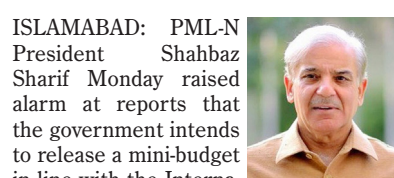
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Two weeks after passage of bills related to electoral reforms from joint sitting of the Parliament, the Federal Cabinet on Tuesday viewed that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was bound to hold all the next elections including by-polls through the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). "The Federal Cabinet while discussing the most important decision on the EVM opined that after amendment in the [election] laws, it is mandatory for the election commission to hold all next by-polls through EVMs," Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain told the media persons after the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

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## Shehbaz alarmed at mini-budget rumors

STAFF REPORT / DNA



ISLAMABAD: PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif Monday raised alarm at reports that the government intends to release a mini-budget in line with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) recommendations, saying that it would prove to be a death knell for a nation already reeling from the effects of rising inflation and unemployment. As per sources, tax exemptions on mobile phones, stationery, and packaged food items are likely to be abolished in the mini-budget, while the amendment bill would allow the government to withdraw sales tax exemptions from zero ratings in addition to exports, stated the report. In a statement, Shahbaz said that it would become impossible for the nation to live after the government introduces the mini-budget considering how petrol, gas and electricity will become even more expensive.

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## Iraq declares election results

BAGHDAD: The political bloc led by Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr was confirmed the winner of the October parliamentary election. Iraq's independent election commission announced the final results on Tuesday following weeks of recounting and intensified rejection from the losing parties. Five seats changed as a result of the appeals and recounting process in the capital: Baghdad, Nineveh, Erbil, Kirkuk and Basra. "We have committed ourselves to dealing with the election results in accordance with the law, and with utmost integrity and impartiality," said Jalil Adnan Khalaf, chairman of the election commission's Board of Commissioners, at a press conference. - APP

## Macron urges Raisi to respect obligations

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron has called on his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi to return to fulfilling Tehran's obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal "without delay" as negotiators seek to revive the accord at talks in Vienna, his office said.

In telephone talks on Monday, Macron urged Raisi to engage in a "constructive manner" in the talks that resumed after a suspension of almost half a year, following the election of the hardliner to the Iranian presidency. European powers are seeking to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that has been moribund since the United States walked out in 2018, prompting Tehran to ramp up nuclear activities as Washington reimposed sanctions. France's objective "was to see Iran return to full respect for all of its commitments under the JCPOA and that the United States return to the agreement," the French presidency said. Macron also "underscored the need for Iran to engage constructively in this



direction so that the exchanges allow a swift return to the agreement," it added. "Iran must return without delay to compliance with all its commitments and obligations... and quickly resume cooperation that allows the (UN atomic) agency to fully carry out its mission," it said. A statement from Raisi's office added that he urged Macron "to strive with other parties in Vienna to conclude the negotiations and lift the sanctions against Iran." "Sending a full team to

Continued on Page 02

## Inside...

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Cyber security graduates vital for digital Pakistan - Page 04

Saudi Arabia's exciting journey into a reimagined future - Page 05

Govt to free state land from encroachments - Page 06

President Aliyev hails Pakistan's support in war - Page 07

Bilawal lashes govt for initiating talks with TTP - Page 08

## Stronger Japan-Pakistan ties my priority: WADA Mitsuhiro

Newly-arrived Japanese ambassador says next year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations; Our embassy going to be easily accessible and user-friendly embassy as possible

A.M.BHATTI/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Newly arrived Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan WADA Mitsuhiro, has said it was his pleasure to contribute to the development of Japan-Pakistan relations especially at this very important time and to work in this wonderful country which has a rich history, culture and also very warm-hearted people. In his message published on the Embassy social media pages, Ambassador WADA said, next year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Pakistan since our cordial relationship began in 1952. "On this remarkable opportunity, I will sincerely pursue my duties to further develop the existing friendly relationships in various fields such as politics, economy, culture, and defence coop-

eration. Your kind support will be much appreciated". The Ambassador added, he would like to revisit what they had accomplished in the past as long-time true friends and trusted partners. Development cooperation between the two countries had started back in 1954 and to date, Japan has been the second largest donor for Pakistan on a cumulative basis after the United States. We are committed to provide support to Pakistan for its socio-economic development and the effect of utilizing Japan's strengths toward the development of Pakistan and the region will continue, he said.



While talking about the business cooperation the ambassador said, it was also a very important area for further development. In 2020, the amount of export of some Pakistani products including fresh mangoes, dates, salt and shrimps to Japan stood at a record high. Moreover, Japanese companies located in Pakistan have established long-standing business relations with Pakistan and contributed to Pakistani economic development through large amounts of investment and employment. Exchange of people in various fields has also promoted our relationship. Unfortunately, the movement of people and economic activities have been restricted to a great extent in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I, nevertheless, continue to devote myself to enhance people-to-people exchange by utilizing all possible means, including online. Here, a special notice should be made to the Pakistani athletes who competed at their best in the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games even during the COVID-19 situation in the summer of 2021". He said his motto was as easily accessible and user-friendly embassy as possible. "All our staff members, while listening to your feedback, will continue to make efforts in this regard. Our door is always open to any suggestions or requests you may have for us". "As Ambassador, I will work hard to further cordial Japan and Pakistan relationships. Let's invite you to make joint efforts for further strengthening the stable, vibrant and prosperous Japan-Pakistan relations. I appreciate your support and cooperation", Ambassador WADA concluded.



## Briefs

## Experts warn increasing smoking trend in girls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The health experts at the National Dialogue organized on Tuesday under the auspices of Pakistan National Heart Association (PANA) to expose the propaganda of "Tobacco Harms and Tobacco Industry Tactic" warned that the trend of taking up smoking is gaining more attraction in girls than boys that need urgent attention of the stakeholders.

The purpose of the dialogue was to expose the misleading campaign of the tobacco industry called 'Behr Pakistan'. The campaign was only propaganda of the industry that exaggerated illicit trade share so that tax increase on tobacco could be avoided, the experts said. Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson National Commission on the Rights of the Child Afshan Tehseen Bajwa said that due to the attracting tactics and campaigns of tobacco industry around 1,200 school going children used to start smoking daily. "Among the children girls are particularly more tempted to opt for smoking and there number is growing at an alarming pace where smoking has become a norm among such young girls' cohort that is an alarming indicator," she added.

Bajwa urged to promote role models and effective parenting among the youth to contain smoking. The experts hailing from Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and others indicated that raising taxes on tobacco was the single most effective policy to reduce its consumption.

## Another dies of corona in Faisalabad

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Another patient died of COVID-19 while one person was tested positive in the district during the last 24 hours. A spokesperson for the health department said on Tuesday that 313 coronavirus tests were conducted in public and private sector labs during the same period. He said that total active cases in Faisalabad were recorded 77 while recoveries 25,870. He said that 200 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital, 52 at the DHQ Hospital and 150 at Govt General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad for COVID-19 patients. At present, 32 patients were under treatment at the Allied Hospital, 13 at DHQ Hospital and 3 at General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad. He further said that 27 confirmed patients were isolated at their homes in the district.

## Military land only...

FROM PAGE 01

the defence ministry would "limit the land's use to defence". The court said it would interpret the law concerning the land of cantonment boards in light of the Constitution, with Justice Amin remarking: "This is also very important for the institution's own reputation." The CJP then turned to the attorney general, saying "They must be made to understand the law, who will do that?"

He said a retired major had given the land of Global Marquee, a wedding venue near Gora Qabristan, on lease to a private party, and asked whether he had the authority to do so.

The CJP expressed dissatisfaction over a report submitted by the defence secretary regarding the case, saying the report "claims the [illegally built] buildings have been demolished, but they are still there".

The defence secretary responded that he would visit the sites in person and take pictures to compile a new report. "This situation is a cause of embarrassment for the army and us both," CJP Ahmed remarked, following which the attorney general offered to withdraw the report submitted today.

The court directed him to submit a detailed report within four weeks, identifying the purposes of each piece of cantonment land.



ISLAMABAD: Rotary Club of Islamabad (Metropolitan) took up Recycling/ Clean and Green Murree drive and donated Two Recycling bins to TDCP Hill Top Murree, Khajut to create awareness. – DNA

## Korean companies looking Pakistan as potential destiny

The participants spoke about the potential that exists for trade and investments between the two countries. Ambassador Sangpyo, while acknowledging the fact pointed towards the increase in interest of the Korean companies looking at Pakistan as a potential destiny

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The visiting Ambassador of Korea, Suh Sangpyo, met with a group of prominent businessmen in Karachi.

Prominent businessmen including Arif Habib, Ehsan Malik, Abbas Akberali, Asad Ali Shah, Bashir Ali Mohammad, Nadeem Kazmi, Sohail Shams, Sulaiman Mehdi and Kalim Farooqui in presence of the Consul General of Korea Kim Haksung met the Korean Ambassador, said a statement on Tuesday.

In the meeting, the participants spoke about the potential that exists for trade and investments

between the two countries. Ambassador Sangpyo, while acknowledging the fact pointed towards the increase in interest of the Korean companies looking at Pakistan as a potential destiny. He named the existing joint ventures in manufacturing with their Pakistani counterparts and assured of conveying the potential to the ones in Korea eyeing investments overseas.

An interactive session followed with each participant briefing the Ambassador and his visiting team about the sectors which hold good possibilities with joint ventures with Korean companies for both equity participation and technical



collaboration with Pakistani business houses. He was of the view that the existing figures related to trade and investments between the two friendly countries has the

potential to increase manifold. Earlier, The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan Suh Sangpyo called on the Sindh Governor Imran Ismail at Governor house here on Tuesday. The Consul General of the Republic of Korea Kim Haksung was also present on the occasion.

During the call-on, they discussed bilateral relations, promotion of cooperation in different fields, current situation of Covid-19 and other mutual interests, according to a Governor house communique. Imran Ismail said that Pakistan and the Republic of Korea had deep friendly relationships, which were becoming strong by time.

He said, 'Pakistan accords special importance to its economic relations with Korea.'

Imran Ismail stated that Pakistan wished to promote relations with Korea in all fields and for that political and parliamentary relations' were significant in that regard.

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Suh Sangpyo stressed the need for promoting relations among the people of the two countries. He also desired the exchange of high-power trade delegations and holding of exhibitions. He further said that the exchange of trade and cultural delegations would help develop bilateral relations.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the Pakistan International Property Exhibition and Convention. – APP

## Aawaz II KP learning and development forum concludes

Child Labour Survey for KP will be completed by June 2022 and the recommendations will be used to shape government policies and actions

PESHAWAR: Minister for Labour, Shaukat Yusufzai reiterated the Kyber Pakhtunkhwa Government's commitment to eradicating child labour and harmful practices like early age marriages.

He was speaking at the concluding session of the two-day Aawaz II KP Learning & Development Forum in Peshawar on Tuesday.

The minister said that the Child Labour Survey for KP will be completed by June 2022 and the recommendations will be used to shape government policies and actions. He appreciated the role of Aawaz II in highlighting key implementation challenges and on-ground service delivery issues. Deputy Country Director, British Council Pakistan Mark Crossey said that together with support from partners and stakeholders, Aawaz II is making an impact in the 22 districts of KP and Punjab to promote inclusion and basic rights of the marginalised and vulnerable members of the society. The Forum brought together about

100 activists from nine KP districts in which the Aawaz II Programme is operational. Dialogue and information sharing were identified as the two key factors that are helping the programme promote inclusion of vulnerable groups including women, children, transgender persons, the differently-abled and religious minorities.

On the second day of the two-day event, three sessions were held. The first was on including the perspectives of PWDs. Zawar Noor, speaking in this session, stressed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2021 must be expedited so the rights of the differently-abled are protected and they feel integrated and equal to other citizens.

The Deputy Secretary Social Welfare, Altaf Husain, said that the Social Welfare Department is very hopeful that the legislation will be passed very soon. He also shared current projects initiated by Social Welfare Department including setting up of brail printing

process and facility for online registration of the differently-abled. In the session on Mainstreaming of Transgender Persons, Namkeen, Social Activist appreciated efforts to include transgender persons through programmes like Aawaz II and stressed on the need to promote registration of transgender persons with the social welfare department.

Speaking about including minorities, MPA Ravi Kumar said that the government has given priority to integrating religious minorities in the province.

He said it was important to recognise that the majority has played an important role in the rights and integration of religious minorities. As a Member of the KP Assembly, MPA Kumar said that he not only takes up issues of minorities but also of other vulnerable groups like women, trans persons, and persons with disabilities. Kumar encouraged young activists to continue to work for interfaith harmony and appreciated the efforts of Aawaz II in that regard. – APP

## Traffic management must for growth: LCCI

LAHORE: The role of a good traffic management system in economic development cannot be undermined as it reduces the cost of doing business by curtailing the transportation time of the trading goods.

Laure Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) President Mian Nauman Kabir stated this during an interactive meeting with the Chief Traffic Officer Lahore (CTO) Muntazir Mehdi at the LCCI on Tuesday. LCCI Vice President Haris Ateeq, former LCCI President Mian Shafiqat Ali and Convener of LCCI Standing Committee on Traffic Police Liaison Khamis Saeed Butt also spoke on the occasion. The CTO said that traffic police had adopted zero tolerance policy against the violation of rules as it was the biggest reason of traffic jam and road accidents. – APP

## Next by-polls through...

FROM PAGE 01

"If elections are not conducted through the EVMs, there is another opinion that the government will not be able to fund them," he said, explaining the existing election laws that only gave legitimacy to the polls via the machines. He said Federal Minister for Law and Justice Dr. Muhammad Farogh Naseem was of the view that on prima facie, the government could only give funds to the ECP for elections if that were held through EVMs.

The government had formed a committee in that regard and the law ministry would give its opinion on the matter, Fawad added.

The minister said the ECP should ensure use of the EVMs in all the next elections as the Parliament had given mandate in that regard.

## Macron urges Raisi...

FROM PAGE 01

the talks shows Iran's serious will in these talks," Raisi said. Referring to the United States, he added: "Those who have started to violate the nuclear deal must gain the confidence of the other party for the negotiations to proceed in a real and fruitful manner."

The EU chair of the talks, Enrique Mora, said after the first session of discussions Monday that he felt "extremely positive," though he acknowledged that "difficult issues" have yet to be tackled.

## Shehbaz alarmed...

FROM PAGE 01

The former Punjab chief minister said an increase in taxes would further destroy the business community and shrink Pakistan's economy. Shehbaz Sharif said the doomsday of inflation had arrived and that the only salvation for the masses would come in the form of the incumbent government going home. The PML-N leader said a mini-budget in line with the IMF's recommendation would be a threat to Pakistan's national security.

## No Omicron case...

FROM PAGE 01

the virus is detected by examining the spike protein for certain mutations that could be concerning.

He said that the available information [regarding Omicron] at the moment is based on assumptions. However, he said that after observing South Africa's surge in infections, it has been established that the new strain's transmissibility is faster than any previously detected variant of COVID-19.

He also said that any information regarding disease severity and the ability of the virus to "escape" the immune response in vaccinated or recovered people is still not confirmed.

## 36 arrested, 35000 kites recovered

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Police claimed on Tuesday to have arrested 36 kite-sellers and recovered 35,000 kites from their possession.

During the anti-kite drive, the police teams nabbed 36 shopkeepers while selling kites in different parts of Faisalabad including Shams Abad, Chak No.209-RB, Chak No.203-RB, Mannanwala, Dawood Colony, Chibban Road, Jamia Chishtia, Haq Baho Chowk, Akbar Chowk, Muhammad Abad, Bohar Chowk, Gol Chowk, Bakkar Mandi Road, Lasani Road and Baowala and arrested 36 people. The police recovered more than 35,000 kites and dozens of chemically-coated string bundles from their possession. The accused were locked behind bars.

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# NATIONAL DAY OF ROMANIA

## MESSAGE OF H.E. NICOLAE GOIA Ambassador of Romania

**T**HE 1st of December 1918 represented the main event in the history of modern Romania, when the great Assembly in Alba-Iulia voted to unite Transylvania with Romania thus creating a unitary state. Building on a 100-year history, December 1st was adopted as Romania's National Day in 1990, but had grown into a meaningful celebration for Greater Romania since 1918. On 1st of December 2021 we celebrate the 103 years since the realization of our Great Union. One hundred and three years back, the century long ideal of national unity has been achieved, building the foundation of the modern Romanian state. The anniversary of the Great Union has given us the opportunity to honour the memory of the sacrifices made for laying the foundation of new Romania which ultimately placed us in the midst of great European family. The end of the First World War and the armistice concluded in 1918, represents a crucial moment in the history of mankind causing deep changes both in international relations, and at socio-cultural level. Like every year on this occasion I would like to emphasise that we, in Romania and in Europe, will always remember that 1,1 million soldiers from the subcontinent had fought courageously and heroically in different battle fields of the WWI and 60,000 of them, mostly from today Pakistani Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, had paid the ultimate price in defending the ideals of peace, freedom, liberty, dignity, democracy and fundamental human rights. Today we pay tribute and honour them as much as we honour our heroes!

More than 100 years after the Great Union, Romania reaffirms its attachment to the principles of international law, promotion of mutual respect and good understanding, to dialogue and to multiculturalism, values that are the basis of its international profile and external action. Today, Romania is a security provider and enjoys unprecedented development, security and welfare. Our collective duty is to protect these values and secure them in the medium and long term, as well to prepare for challenges ahead. The key European policy is to unity we successful back our first ever dency of the EU Councery possible opporprofound European vobible contribution to a inclusive Europe. We value to the idea of coproean value, reflect for unity and cooperMember States, as well economic, social and enshrined in the EU sary of the Great Union an incentive towards more unity at the European level. As a responsible member of the European Union, we fully proved our capacity to build consensus and find efficient and viable solutions for our common European future. Pakistan represents an important partner for Romania in the South Asian region. We acknowledge Pakistan's efforts in fighting terrorism, militancy and radical extremism and hope that these endeavours will continue to be an important part of international war on terror. In spite of these challenges, which obviously affected the advancement of many economic projects, we welcome the positive dynamics of the Pakistani economy, which are witnessing despite the obstacle created by the pandemic situation, a steady and robust economic growth, as well the opportunities created for the foreign companies interested in doing business in Pakistan. We are eager to work with our Pakistani friends and partners for taking forward the bilateral agenda, as well as the cooperation within the EU-Pakistan framework and in multilateral formats, especially in the UN. I warmly welcome the spirit of Romania-Pakistan relations, characterized by friendship and collaboration and the new dynamism witnessed in the recent years with a result driven political dialogue reflecting a clear desire of both states for developing a pragmatic relationship in fields of mutual interests. Maybe this as good a moment as any to deeply thank the Pakistani authorities for the valuable support we received in our operations to evacuate Romanians and other nationals from the war torn Afghanistan this summer. The empathy and solidarity shown by our Pakistani partners were exemplary and will never be forgotten.

We are living in a complicated period of mankind history, over the past two years the challenges the world is facing having multiplied many folds particularly by the Covid 19. In the fierce battle with the pervert virus we have lost so many precious lives and there is so much pain and sufferings that we need solidarity more than ever before to win this absurd and illogical war and to have our lives back. In concluding my short remarks, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you present here for so graciously accepting to respond to our invitation and celebrate together this glorious event in our history. Many thanks to all friends who contributed in more than one way to the success of tonight reception. Thank you. God bless you all.



word of the Romanian and with this call exercised two years mandate at the Presicil. Romania takes tunity to show that our cation is bringing a tanpowerful, credible and are attaching a Great hesion, a common Euing the imperious need ation among the EU as the need for more territorial cohesion as Treaties. The anniveris a good reminder and Romania pleading for more unity at the European level. As a responsible member of the European Union, we fully proved our capacity to build consensus and find efficient and viable solutions for our common European future. Pakistan represents an important partner for Romania in the South Asian region. We acknowledge Pakistan's efforts in fighting terrorism, militancy and radical extremism and hope that these endeavours will continue to be an important part of international war on terror. In spite of these challenges, which obviously affected the advancement of many economic projects, we welcome the positive dynamics of the Pakistani economy, which are witnessing despite the obstacle created by the pandemic situation, a steady and robust economic growth, as well the opportunities created for the foreign companies interested in doing business in Pakistan. We are eager to work with our Pakistani friends and partners for taking forward the bilateral agenda, as well as the cooperation within the EU-Pakistan framework and in multilateral formats, especially in the UN. I warmly welcome the spirit of Romania-Pakistan relations, characterized by friendship and collaboration and the new dynamism witnessed in the recent years with a result driven political dialogue reflecting a clear desire of both states for developing a pragmatic relationship in fields of mutual interests. Maybe this as good a moment as any to deeply thank the Pakistani authorities for the valuable support we received in our operations to evacuate Romanians and other nationals from the war torn Afghanistan this summer. The empathy and solidarity shown by our Pakistani partners were exemplary and will never be forgotten.

## Winter holidays and Christmas traditions in Romania

**R**OMANIA is a rich country when it comes to traditions and superstitions. Winter is a special season for Romanians, as it brings with it the most important religious holiday of the year and that is Christmas. New Year is also celebrated with great pomp. In big cities are organized Christmas Bazaars and there is the opportunity to enjoy fireworks and concerts with famous artists, whereas in the countryside can be found ancient ceremonies with traditional dances and songs.

**Nativity Fast**  
The winter traditions in Romania actually start in late autumn, with Nativity Fasting, practiced by the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches, and similar to Advent, observed in Western countries. The 40 day before Christmas is a period of religious preparations for the great feast of Christmas. Religious people don't eat meat or other animal products during this period.

**Saint Nicholas**  
Saint Nicholas comes on December 6. He is the symbol of charity, protector



People wearing traditional masks and costumes

Christmas Eve, children are the ones who start caroling, with adults joining in later on. In the rural parts of the country the carollers are wearing their festive traditional clothes.

**The New Year**  
While the New Year's Eve is yet another reason for celebration, with hearty meals and all-night parties, it's the numerous ceremonies and superstitions related to the renewal of the year that draw the attention. Besides caroling, Pluguorul (The Plow) is probably one of the most renowned winter traditions. Groups of people go from house to house to wish friends and neighbors a fruitful new year, good weather and good luck, by reciting a lengthy fixed poem and being accompanied by noisy drums, whips, bells, and lots of shouting aimed at chasing away the bad spirits.

**Goop of children going caroling**  
Similarly, Sorcova, Buhaiul, and other related songs and wishes, many accompanied by dances are



Sausages served with cabbage and pickles

of the poor and giver of good fortune. The tradition, mostly kept for children, is that in the night between December 5 and 6, St. Nicholas comes and places sweets and gifts in their shoes if they have been nice or places whips if they have been naughty. Children clean their shoes properly and wait to find their desired sweets and toys in the coming morning.

**The pig's sacrifice**  
It's pretty tricky to present the pig's sacrifice tradition without raising some questions regarding animal rights or EU norms that pretty much oppose this practice. Nevertheless, this is a practice that exists from pre-Christian times when the sacrifice of animals on the winter solstice was part of a more complex ritual of asking the gods to bring back the light and the sun. Many superstitions still exist regard-

ing this tradition, usually performed before Christmas, on the 20th of December, on the day of Ignat. Although it lost its ritual purposes, the pig's sacrifice is still a powerful practice in rural Romania, having very precise social and utilitarian implications for families in the countryside. It's also becoming a tourist attraction and one of the highlights of many winter holiday offers.

**Christmas**  
Of utmost religious relevance for the Romanians, Christmas (Crăciunul), is a get-together time, accompanied by both religious and secular customs. The Christmas tree is usually decorated on the 24th of December and lasts until the first days of January. Fir trees were considered sacred by the Dacians and had—still have, in some parts of Romania—a very strong symbolic relevance at weddings and funerals. On the morning of the 25th everybody finds gifts under the tree. Christmas is also an opportunity for elaborate family meals. With fasting now over and the pigs slaughtered, pork is in abundance, accompanied by other traditional foods and drinks, such as the famous sarmale or cozonac.

**Cozonac with nuts**  
Carols are probably one of the most joyous parts of the holiday and one of the best preserved winter traditions. Throughout December it is very common to have carol concerts held in most cities. The oldest Romanian carols are secular and talk about the family life, the village life, and old rituals, usually ending with good wishes, while the religious carols are newer and inspired by biblical and other religious texts. In the morning of the



Boots lined up for the arrival of St. Nicholas

truly original and appealing. Certain rituals (The Goat, The Bear, The Stag), performed by masked people, are magical ceremonials very similar to theatre plays and involve a main character (the aforementioned animals) that dies and then it's brought back to life, in a ceremony symbolizing the end of the present year and the beginning of a new one, and the purification of the soil for the following crops.

**Masked people performing Capra (The Goat)**  
As it often happens, most of these customs—especially the traditional caroling, the wishes and the rituals—are best preserved in the countryside, where they are passed on from generation to generation.

## Lt Gen Nadeem Raza Visit to Romania

**F**OLLOWING the invitation extended by Lt. Daniel Petrescu, Romania's Chief of Defence, Lt. Gen. Nadeem Raza, chairman of Pakistan's Joint Staff Committee, paid a five-days visit to Romania, from 23th to 27th of August, 2021. The program was attended by H. E. Mr. Nicolae Goia, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Romania to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with the Romanian delegation, and by H. E. Dr. Zafar Iqbal, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Romania. The high-ranking guest was welcomed with full honours, by his homologue, Lt. Daniel Petrescu.



Photo credit: Defense Ministry of Romania

ditionally extended to each other between the two countries.

programmes provided through training centres and other forms of military education. Lt. D. Petrescu said that "the number of activities and meetings at the level of experts is intended to increase and the overall security environment improved by participating in stability missions under the UN aegis." He conveyed the appreciation of the Romanian military for the professionalism of their Pakistani colleagues in the UN operations in Mali, Congo and South Sudan, where our countries contribute personnel. Last but not least, he thanked General Nadeem Raza for the support we received on our mission to evacuate Romanian nationals from Afghanistan. After the withdrawal of



Photo credit: Defense Ministry of Romania

According to the press statement released by the Romanian Defense Ministry, during the official meeting the importance was underlined of strengthening the military bi-lateral relations, given Romania's NATO and European Union memberships, and Pakistan's being a liaison country between Central Asia and South Asia, along with the mutual support that the two countries have tra-

ditionally extended to each other between the two countries.



Photo credit: Defense Ministry of Romania

Romania's Chief of Defence D. Petrescu and the Chairman of Pakistan's Joint Staff Committee N. Raza reviewed the way in which the armed forces of Romania and Pakistan can increase the level of military co-operation. They also addressed the topics of technical and military intelligence co-operation, participation in joint training activities, including in emergency management specific to the armed forces, and training

Romanian troops from Afghanistan, good co-operation between Romanian and Pakistani armed forces have materialised in ensuring the protection of the Romanian personnel and equipment in Islamabad, and other forms of co-operation. During its visit, the Pakistani delegation held meetings with officials of Romania's General Directorate for Armaments and the National Defence Industry.

## Peles Castle, the home of Romanian royalty

**B**UILT in the 19th century according to the specifications of Carol I, Romania's first King, the Peles Castle is an image of the monarch's aesthetic mindset, combining the German and Italian neo-Renaissance. Peles is located near the town of Sinaia, in the Prahova County, and it is one of the most famous castles in Romania, maybe even more than Corvin Castle, Bran Castle, or the Rasnov Fortress. The blood ties between the members of the Romanian and the British royal families, the Russian dynasty and the royal families of Germany and Greece, as well the Romanian Queen's tireless patronage of arts, have attracted to the castle the most resonant names of the 19th and early 20th century.

**History of Peles Castle**  
When King Carol I of Romania visited the location on which the beautiful castle now stands, he was amazed by the stunning scenery of the Carpathian Mountains that surround it. The construction of Peles Castle was commissioned by King Carol, and on August 22, 1873, the foundations were laid in the form of a hunting house and a summer retreat for the Romanian royal family. The castle was designed by the German architect Johannes Schultz in a Neorenaissance style that combined numerous features of classic European styles. Besides the castle, other constructions were erected, such as a power plant, the Economat Building, the royal stables, the guards' chambers, and the Foisor hunting lodge. Later additions were also built between 1893 and 1914 by the Czech architect Karel Liman.

Peles became the first castle in Europe fully powered by locally produced energy, with the electric system being completed in 1884 and the central heating system in 1897. The castle was completed in 1914, and it remained a royal residence until 1947. After the forced abdication of King Michael I, Peles was seized by the Communist regime in 1947, together with all the properties of the royal family. In 1948 the whole estate was closed, and numerous pieces of art were moved to the Art Museum in Bucharest. Peles Castle was then opened as a museum in 1953 by the communist regime, and it remained so until 1975 when it was closed again due to its advanced state of deterioration. Between 1975 and 1989, the castle was constantly renovated and was also used by the communist regime as a



retreat for the heads of state that visited Romania. After the Romanian Revolution of 1989, the castle was once again opened to the public, and in 2007 it became the property of King Michael.

**Inside and around Peles Castle**  
The inner courtyard, with its medieval air, carries the tourists back in time. The Sovereigns' Gate opens the journey into the castle, and a monumental marble staircase leads up to the Hall of Honor, the official reception space that witnessed the pres-



A courtyard in the castle

ence of royal guests, from Emperor Franz Joseph to the Crown Prince of Japan. Peles Castle also hosted numerous artists such as George Enescu or Jacques Thibaud, that were the guests of Queen Elizabeth of Romania, the wife of King Carol I.

**A courtyard in the castle**  
The impressive castle spreads over an area of 3,200 square meters, housing 160 rooms that impress through their beauty and sophistication. The best known is the Great Armory Room, hosting some of the finest collections of arms and armor, with over 4,000 pieces of weaponry that were collected or received as a gift, mainly from Western and Eastern Europe, but also from other regions of the world.

## Constantin Brancusi The most influential sculptors

Constantin Brancusi, one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th-century and a pioneer of modernism, called also "the patriarch of modern sculpture", was born in Hobita (Romania), on 19th February 1876. A passionate wood-carver, he produced numerous wood sculptures, often with a folk flavour, and he frequently carved prototypes for works later executed in other materials. He is best known for his abstract sculptures of ovoid heads and birds in flight. Formal studies took him to Craiova School of Arts and Crafts, where he pursued his love for woodworking, graduating with honors in 1898 and then to Bucharest School of Fine Arts, where he



received academic training in sculpture. He worked hard, and quickly distinguished himself as talented. He continued his studies in Munich, and École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and was invited to enter the workshop of Auguste Rodin. Even though he admired the eminent Rodin he left the Rodin studio after only two months, saying, "Nothing can grow under big trees". He continued after leaving Rodin's workshop, Brancusi began developing the revolutionary style for which he is known. His first commissioned work, The Prayer, was part of a gravestone memorial. It depicts a young woman crossing herself as she kneels, and marks the first step toward abstracted, non-literal representation, and shows his drive to depict "not the outer form but the idea, the essence of things." He also began doing more carving, rather than the method popular with his contemporaries, that of modeling in clay or plaster which would be cast in metal, and by 1908 he worked almost exclusively by carving. In the following few years he made many versions of Sleeping Muse and The Kiss, further simplifying forms to geometrical and sparse objects. His works became popular in France, Romania and the United States and in 1913 Brancusi's work was displayed at both the Salon des Indépendants and the first exhibition in the U.S. of modern art, the Armory Show. One of his major groups of sculptures involved the Bird in Space—simple abstract shapes representing a bird in flight. The works are based on his earlier Măiastra series. In Romanian folklore the Măiastra is a beautiful golden bird who foretells the future and cures the blind. In 1938, he finished the World War I monument in Târgu-Jiu (Romania) where he had spent much of his childhood. Table of Silence, The Gate of the Kiss, and Endless Column commemorate the courage and sacrifice of Romanians who in 1916 defended Târgu Jiu from the forces of the Central Powers.



Ceramics at the Peles Museum



## Briefs

## Govt needs not to curtail imports

ISLAMABAD: The government needs to draw a broad-based policy thrust to focus on increase in exports rather than curtailing imports, said a report released by the Planning Ministry.

According to the report titled "First Quarterly Economic Review for FY22", the structure of imports had been changed marginally during the current government in a bid to pursue the policy of increasing exports rather than curtailing imports. The report added that four-fifth of imports are essentials and could not be avoided.

The share of food imports had increased from 9.7% in the year 2017-18 to 13.5% in FY2020-21, similarly share of other consumer goods also increased from 6.3% to 8.7% during the period under review.

The share of intermediate primary goods in imports remained same while that of intermediate manufacturing goods increased from 13.3% in FY18 to 14.0% in FY21. Share of Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants (POL) and other energy in the country's total imports, however went down from 23.4% in FY 18 to 18.1% in FY21, while that of capital goods also went down from 8.8% to 6.3%. Similarly share of textiles in the country's imports rose to 10.4% in FY21 against the share of 8.3% in FY18, the report added. — APP

## RWMC to control City's cleanliness operation

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Rawalpindi Waste Management Company Col. (R) Ajmal Sabir Raja Tuesday said that after the expiration of seven years contract with Turkish multinational conglomerate Albayrak company, the RWMC would take over the cleaning system of the city from Wednesday.

Talking to the media, the Chairman said that 1436 sanitary workers and 210 vehicles of Albayrak would be part of RWMC, which would dispose of around 850 tons of garbage daily from the city areas.

He said that more than 4000 waste bins had been placed in the city to keep the city neat and clean while a control room was set up that would monitor the cleanliness operation round the clock, seven days a week. Meanwhile, Managing Director RWMC Awais Manzoor Tarar said that RWMC would carry out all cleanliness work from December 1, 2021, from which the company would save around 30 per cent per month.

He said that RWMC was determined to provide the best sanitation environment to the city's residents, and no compromise would be made in this regard.

The MD urged the citizens not to throw waste in the open and cooperate with the sanitary staff. In case of any complaint, citizens were asked to register their complaints on helpline number 1139, which would be rectified immediately, he added. — APP

## Domestic vegetable ghee output decreases

ISLAMABAD: Domestic production of vegetable ghee decreased by 5.18% during the first quarter of the current financial year, whereas the output of cooking oil grew by 6.77% as compared to the production of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-September, 2021, the local output of vegetables was recorded at 327,460 tons as compared to the production of 345,337 tons of the same period last year, according to the provisional quantum indices of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries for September 2021 with the base year 2005-06, which have been developed on the basis of latest data supplied by the source agencies. About 112,510 tons of vegetable ghee were domestically produced in the month of September 2021 as compared to the production of 114,107 metric tons of the same month of last year. — APP



ISLAMABAD: President NPC Shakil Anjum, President RIPJA Sohail Malik, Trainer Mansoor Malik and General Secretary RIPJA Javed Qureshi in a group photograph during training workshop organized by Rawalpindi/Isalambad Photo Journalists Association (RIPJA) at National Press Club. — DNA

## Cyber security graduates vital for digital Pakistan

He said the recent cyberattacks on the system of the Federal Board of Revenue and National Bank of Pakistan drew the attention towards an effective guard to defeat the cyber threats

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday said the risk of cyberattacks grew with Pakistan's advancement towards digitalization, thus requiring a strategy to effectively counter threats and secure national data. Addressing the awards ceremony of the first nationwide Cyber Security Hackathon 2021, the president said cyber data had become the most valuable commodity world over and stressed that Pakistan directly needed to produce a huge number of graduates in the field of cybersecurity. Themed as 'Hackers Ignited - Journey of young cybersecurity warriors', the Hackathon was organized by Digital Pakistan under the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecom, and Ignite.

Of 1176 registered teams, 475 participated in the qualifying rounds of the public-private sector sprint held at Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi in November in five categories. These included network attacks and exploitation, operating system exploitation, system application exploitation (including web), mobile device and application

exploitation, and speed programming (C++, C#, and Python). President Alvi said throughout the world including Pakistan, the infrastructure of vital importance such as banking system, credit card data, telecommunication, electricity and dams, hospitals, etc were digitalized and pointed out that anything linked with the internet or cloud was "susceptible to cyber or ransomware attacks".

He said the recent cyberattacks on the system of the Federal Board of Revenue and National Bank of Pakistan drew the attention towards an effective guard to defeat the cyber threats. He said with changing concepts of security, the country's defence was linked with enhanced awareness and capabilities to develop and deploy a proper mechanism. To match the rapid technological development, he said, there was no option but to opt for digitalization, however emphasized ensuring in-built cybersecurity set up to save the "treasure of data".

He said a paradigm shift in policymaking was needed to abreast the country with an 'offensive and defensive cybersecurity



ty. Instead of traditional brick-and-mortar educational facilities, the short-term online and virtual courses could also prepare the human resource for the market, he added.

Dr Alvi expressed confidence that Hackathon 2021 would help find talent to im-

prove the country's cybersecurity readiness and incident response capabilities. He said he had been constantly encouraging the vice chancellors of universities to work towards producing a large number of graduates in the field of cybersecurity. He mentioned that the government was offering 50,000 scholarships for students in different academic disciplines with a fifty percent disbursement allocated for girls.

President Alvi gave away awards and cash prizes worth Rs 6 million to the winners of the Hackathon competitions. Secretary Ministry of IT & Telecom Sohail Rajput said cybersecurity had become a critical domain globally, particularly in the scenario of frequent cyberattacks at national institutions.

He said the IT Ministry was working on an ecosystem fulfilling the needs of a safe cyberspace in the country. The Hackathon 2021, he said, greatly helped in identification of talented youth capable of exploring the cyber world.

The event was attended by IT experts and professionals, and the youth with skills of countering network attacks. — APP

## AIOU ensures merit, transparency policy

Defamation notices will be served to all negative elements who are impeding the process of progress and development of the university and hence doing injustice to millions of poor students

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) strictly ensures merit and transparency in all of its key academic and administrative affairs including expansion and strengthening of university infrastructure, human resource management and recruitment as well as provision of facilities for the students.

These views were expressed by Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum, VC, AIOU while addressing the participants of inaugural ceremony of 'Health Care Centre'. He, further, added that all human beings are answerable to Allah and if any violation of rules is proved in any of university affairs during his tenure, he would present himself for accountability. Criticism for the sake of criticism and baseless accusations will not be tolerated.

However, positive criticism aimed at bringing reforms and improvement will be welcomed. Defamation notices will be served to all negative elements who are impeding the process of progress and development of the university and hence doing injustice to millions of poor students enrolled in various programs of the university. Moreover, it was his deep desire that university health care center must provide emergency medical services



during the night to university employees residing in the university colony, therefore, the center has been upgraded and medical facilities have been further strengthened and a senior medical officer will be appointed soon. Male and female wards have been established in the health care center as well as operation theater,

laboratory and dispensary. After the inaugural ceremony, Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum took round and visited various sections along with Raja Umar Younis, Dr Zaiba Hameed and Project Director, Sharif Ullah. The center was upgraded within a very short period upon the special directives of the Vice Chancellor. — APP

## MoCC, foodpanda ink MOU for eco-friendly packaging

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) and food panda, online food and grocery delivery platform, on Tuesday, inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to promote the reduction of polythene or plastic bag use in restaurants through industrial partnership.

The MOU was signed by the senior officials of the Ministry and foodpanda global parent-Delivery Hero here at the MoCC in the presence of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam.

As per the MOU, foodpanda would create awareness within the restaurant industry to discontinue the use of polythene bags and for reduction of plastic waste in the pilot cities of Clean Green Pakistan Index (CGPI) Phase-I and Phase-II based on priorities mutually established with the MoCC. Under the CGPI initiative, 35 quantifiable indicators of solid and liquid waste management, cleanliness, and plantation would be gauged in the cities to trigger a healthy competition leading to eco-friendly cities.

The foodpanda would also launch two campaigns every year each for six months to target the restaurant industry with the aim to set goals for reducing material waste, to adopt recyclable or compostable packaging, where the two campaigns would focus on green and sustainable packaging. Moreover, foodpanda would also create awareness among the citizens about the climate change challenges and encourage climate-conscious citizenship by introducing incentives for customers upon the usage of green packaging like green customer cards, badges to customers upon return of the packaging material, etc., where the target would be to control waste.

As part of the MOU, foodpanda would encourage its global parent to include Pakistan in its sustainable packaging initiative so that the country could also benefit from the adoption of earth-friendly packaging, especially for its grocery vertical pandamart.

It also included that as a good corporate citizen, foodpanda would organize tree-plantation campaigns in two cities each year-one on 23rd March (Republic Day) and the other on 14th August (Independence Day). — APP

## CDA imposes fine Rs 150bln to encroachers

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Capital Development Authority (CDA) Affairs, Ali Nawaz Awan on Tuesday said the federal apex agency had so far imposed Rs 150 billion fines on encroachers in the federal capital.

Addressing a press conference, he said an anti-encroachment drive underway across the city and strict actions were being taken against 'land mafia' that had occupied land worth approximately Rs 500 billion.

Flanked by Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Farrukh Habib, he said mega projects worth billions of rupees were underway with a special focus on rural areas of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

Referring to the issue of Nasla Tower in Karachi, he said political parties occupied public lands in past, adding Nasla Tower was one of its example.

He mentioned that the ICT administration, had retrieved around 5,200 kanals of forest land from illegal occupants and imposed fined worth Rs 150 billion. — APP

## Punjab govt utilizing all resources for public welfare

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Minister for Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Raja Rashid Hafeez on Tuesday said the Punjab government was utilizing all available resources for public welfare projects.

He said the government had completed several new water supply projects in PP-16 to provide clean drinking water to the residents.

He said supply of clean drinking water had been ensured in various areas, adding, new projects had been started to overcome issue of water scarcity. Similarly, a number of roads and streets projects were also completed besides improving sewerage system in different areas, he informed.

The Minister said there were complaints of increasing traffic problems across the city which needed to be addressed and the departments concerned were working to resolve the issue. Completion of Nullah Lai Expressway and Ring Road projects would significantly reduce traffic congestion problem on the city roads, he added.

On the complaints of profiteering, the provincial minister said the administration was taking effective measures, adding, rate lists were also being issued besides conducting special raids to check profiteering in open market.

He said the citizens should lodge complaints against profiteers and hoarders as with the cooperation of the citizens, the issue could be controlled. — APP

## "Beauty Alt Atrocity" exhibition concludes

ISLAMABAD: A two-week long solo exhibition titled "Beauty Alt Atrocity" by Ayisha Arshad Shah Nawaz concluded on Tuesday here at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA).

The exhibition was organized by PNCA, Visual Arts Division, featuring more than 25 artworks, including abstract art as well as calligraphy.

This show was a collection of intricately crafted paintings. Through her works, Ayisha explores the innumerable sufferings and miseries which are caused in the process of creating something fantastical and worthy, the sacrifice every individual makes to achieve the desired on a very personal level as well as a societal level.

Ayisha Shah Nawaz is a Canadian-Pakistani artist born in Lahore, in 1975. A graduate of the prestigious National College of Art, her work has been exhibited in six countries spanning three continents. A profound thinker, she challenges the status quo with every stroke of her brush. The displayed artworks have been privately built up and were so complex, diverse, and somehow both entirely contemporary and yet faithfully traditional, that it boggles the mind. — APP

## Academia urged to play role for moderation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Pir Noor ul Haq Qadri has said that education is the foundation of progress and academia must play a role in dissemination of moderation and peaceful co-existence.

He was addressing an international seminar at International Islamic University (IIU) held in connection with 42nd anniversary celebrations of the university titled "The contributions of IIUI in advancing knowledge and way forward through strategic plan 2021" organized by the Islamic Research Institute (IRI) of the university. The religious minister said that Pakistan will keep progressing and we must deliver to the coming generations so that they may lead the world. He hailed IIUI President's initiatives for university's progress, and hoped that it would achieve its goals in the light of its newly prepared strategic plan. He said that he will be looking forward to working with the scholars of IIUI in the Rehmat ul lil Almeen (PBUH) program. He stressed that educational institutions have

vital importance in promoting peace and tolerance. He emphasized on protection of rights of minorities adding that those must be given due importance in the society. Addressing the ceremony, IIUI President felicitated the Rector, Vice Presidents, teachers, staff and students on the occasion of 42nd anniversary celebrations. He said that it is the day to reiterate the resolve that IIUI would be among the leading education institutions of the world in future. He said

that in the future the university will have the addition of two new faculties.

He added that as part of transformation and advancement, the university has also launched its online portal for open and Distance learning. He said that IIUI management is focused on facilitating on campus 30 thousand male and female students in acquiring quality education.

Discussing the Pak Saudi ties, he said both countries have deep and historic ties and





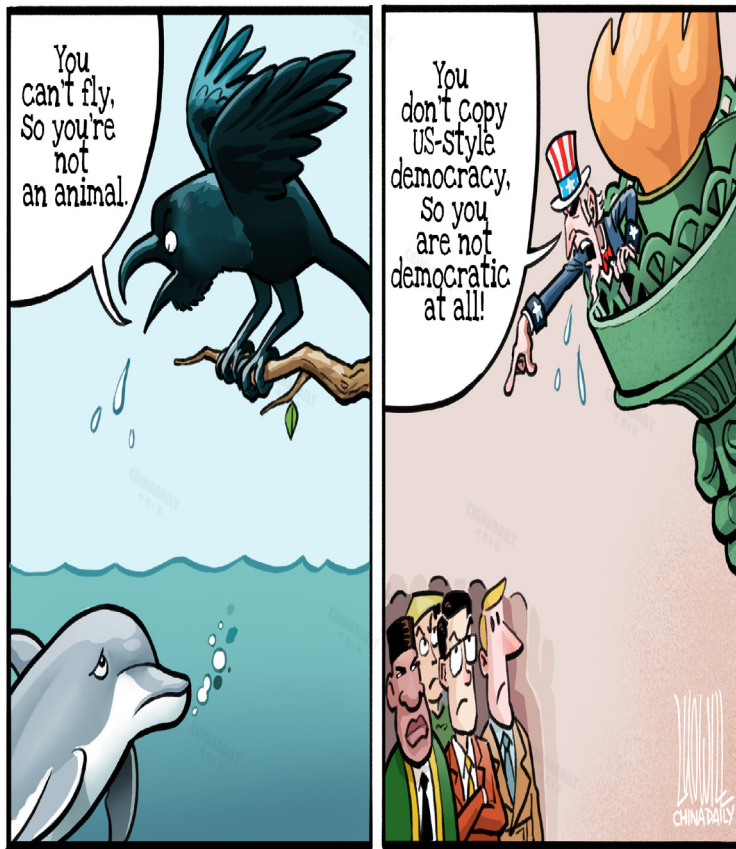
## Booster shot

THE provincial health department of Sindh has decided to offer free-of-cost Pfizer booster shots to people who have already been fully vaccinated in the province. This comes in light of the heightened risk of transmission and re-infection courtesy of the new strain, Omicron. Against the best of hopes, the now heavily mutated virus has prompted countries to impose travel restrictions and bans once again in order to isolate the virus and prevent a global outbreak. In light of the immense risk being posed to the global community, it is good to see the Sindh government take this preventative step.

When news broke of the spread of Omicron in South Africa, the federal government was quick to impose a travel ban on the seven countries which had been reporting a high number of cases. The offer of booster jabs by the Sindh government seems the next logical step to take in order to enhance national immunity so that there is resistance to transmission. Regardless of whether the population has received the Chinese, Russian or any of the alternative vaccines, each and every fully-vaccinated individual will be eligible for the shot, keeping in mind the supply. This is a decision that all provinces must also take so that we are able to frame and implement a national, and more cohesive, policy towards the prevention of re-infection.

Meanwhile, the NCOC and the government alike should stress the importance of surveillance facilities at airports and other points of entry. This should particularly be followed for high-risk countries where not only is Omicron being reported but those neighbouring countries that have the highest probability of catching it as well. Federal Minister for Planning Asad Umer is correct; we only have weeks to get ahead of this. This strain continues to serve as a reminder of how the pandemic is still not a thing of the past and to safeguard the progress we have made in battling it, a little more action is necessary.

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## Voter manipulation

WITH the by-election of NA-133 in Lahore on the line on December 5, 2021, the Election Commission of Pakistan must stay vigilant. The troubling video regarding the alleged sale and purchase of votes is one instance where the authority must get to the truth without any delay. The video appears to show two men paying off prospective voters and asking for an oath to vote for the PML-N. The former ruling party has come out to vociferously deny its hand in this purported theft of votes. As expected, all sides have wasted no time in blaming one another. PTI and PPP have alleged that PML-N might be engaged in influencing voters through monetary gains while PML-N has in turn claimed that PPP might be behind this. The ECP has already announced that a forensic audit of the video will be carried out to determine responsibility. This is important to get beyond the narrative of accusations. The authority's mandate is to ensure free, fair and impartial elections and investigating this falls right into the wheelhouse. Previous investigations have been useful—but action is still pending. We must not forget that this is not the first instance of potential malpractice and it certainly will not be the last. The election watchdog has to ensure that each report is investigated to its fullest.

Beyond this instance, we still have the lingering issue of the Daska by-polls and the damning investigation that followed. Action must be taken against those found guilty in Daska as well, in order to set the right precedent and prevent the brazen attacks on our democracy. The task to ensure transparency and fairness in elections is by no means simple, but each time irregularities are unearthed, we have an opportunity for course correction, but only if we take stern and immediate action. Authorities must act on instances of electoral fraud and manipulation in order for the system in spite of those that would try to derail it.

## Saudi Arabia's exciting journey into a reimagined future

Ishtiaq Ahmed



The FDI is hard to come by, but its prospects have increased due to the revamping of the regulatory framework and progress in other enabling conditions, resulting in the issuance of more than 400 FDI licenses in the first quarter of 2021

GREAT things can come from sheer imagination, provided a country's leadership is able to understand the public pulse and then rechart its national destiny on the basis of a reimagined future. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, an outcome of such imagination by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is steering the Kingdom into a futuristic journey, with one grandiose project after another. Oxagon is the latest addition — a floating hexagonal industrial complex that will, in a decade's time, provide the world's first fully integrated port and supply chain ecosystem for NEOM. NEOM itself is being built as a futuristic city at a price tag of \$500 billion on the Red Sea coast in the northwestern Saudi province of Tabuk. Powered by green hydrogen, it seeks to provide a postmodern experience in urban living that we can only dream about — with robot maids, airborne taxis, an artificial moon and much more. The Line is NEOM's flagship project. It is a linear city linking the coast of the Red Sea with the region's mountains and upper valleys that is being built along a 170 km line — with no cars, no streets, no carbon emissions and a hyperloop running down

the middle, providing a supersonic, friction-free travel service to its 1 million residents. Oxagon represents a fundamental shift in how the world views manufacturing. Its smart factories will offer products in sustainable energy, autonomous mobility, water innovation, sustainable food production, health and well-being, modern methods of construction and technology, and digital manufacturing, including telecoms, space technology and robotics. NEOM and its flagship projects will operate in "digital air," with satellite communications, cloud parks and a hyperdata center. Together with two major tourism and entertainment destinations — the Red Sea Development Project and AMAALA — they are geared toward accomplishing Vision 2030's strategic goal of making Saudi Arabia a hub of international investment, business, travel, tourism and trade. The same goal underpins so many other mega-tourism and entertainment projects that celebrate and promote Saudi Arabia's heritage and natural beauty, such as Qiddiya near Riyadh, AIUla in the north-west and Soudah in the Asir region. There are also ambitious infrastructure ventures, from multi-lane metros to smart housing complexes and business districts across major cities. Being the center of the Islamic world, Saudi Arabia already hosts millions of Muslims for Umrah and Hajj every year. However, its liberal visa policy introduced in 2019 is meant to attract other foreign tourists who yearn to explore and seek pleasure in a new territory. Vision 2030 seeks to attract 100 million tourists annually by the end of the decade, with the National Tourism Strategy announced in October planning to invest \$1 trillion in the tourism sector. But the Kingdom also wants more foreign investors, hoping to raise \$100 billion in foreign direct investment by 2030. Under the National Investment Strategy announced at the Future Investment Initiative Forum in October, it will spend \$7 trillion to implement the Vision 2030 projects. The contributions will come from the Public Investment Fund, with a net worth of \$450 billion, and the private sector, including Saudi Aramco and the petrochemical firm SABIC. The FDI is hard to come by, but its prospects have increased due to the revamping of the regulatory framework and progress in other enabling conditions, resulting in the issuance of more than 400 FDI licenses in the first quarter of 2021. In February, the government also issued an ultimatum to international companies to either shift their regional headquarters to the Kingdom by January 2024 or risk losing their government contracts. The response was prompt, with 40 multinationals, including PepsiCo, Siemens and

Unilever, deciding to relocate to Riyadh — a trend that is likely to accelerate. Saudi Arabia has a clear advantage over other Gulf states in terms of geography: It has a landmass the size of Western Europe, with two vast coastlines on key shipping routes. The Red Sea ports, with NEOM and Oxagon as the major industrial outposts, will particularly help the Kingdom to harness 13 percent of the world's trade through the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia also has an edge over other Gulf competitors in terms of demography: The bulk of its 33 million population is young, offering an enormous demographic dividend. Vision 2030 seeks to tap this potential by using the Saudi drive to diversify its oil-based economy and become one of the 15 largest economies in the world by 2030 to significantly curtail youth unemployment, especially by promoting small and medium-sized enterprises and raising women's participation in the workforce, which has already increased from 20 percent to more than 33 percent in just two years. Such revolutionary happenings in the hitherto conservative nation with a rentier economy offer a great lesson in leadership for a world in crisis. Vision 2030 has also impacted the daily lives of ordinary Saudis in ways that were unimaginable until recently, such as opening up an enormous social space in sports and entertainment for the craving youth. The country is now a popular regional venue for music concerts, with international stars set to perform at the Formula One Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in Jeddah in early December. Starting with one cinema in 2018, it now has movie theaters across the country. It was also no surprise that, within two years of the lifting of the ban on women driving, a female driver enjoyed a major race win. Such revolutionary happenings in the hitherto conservative nation with a rentier economy offer a great lesson in leadership for a world in crisis: That the destiny of a nation ultimately rests on the aspirations of its citizens, and that only a ruler with a sense of history and a vision for the future has the will and the ability to assess and meet public aspirations ahead of time. This is a necessary condition that naturally opens up limitless possibilities for national progress and its global expression in the times to come. — *Ishtiaq Ahmed is a former journalist, who subsequently served as the vice chancellor of Sargodha University in Pakistan and as the Qaid-e-Azam Fellow at the University of Oxford.*

## Why Iran may become a latent nuclear state

Marwan Bishara

The record shows that the US is disposed to making bad decisions on false pretences that lead to horrific outcomes in the Middle East, but I doubt we are close to another foolish decision yet. Neither Washington nor Tehran is interested in such military escalation. Biden's strategy is to largely disengage militarily from the Middle East hotspots, not get drawn into a quagmire worse than the Iraq war. And despite his bluster, Khamenei has shown to be careful not to drag Iran into a military confrontation with the US — one that is sure to cripple the Islamic Republic, weaken its regime and damage its regional standing

AS the negotiations to salvage the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement resume in Vienna, it is a déjà vu all over again. The United States warns of crippling sanctions, Israel threatens war, the Europeans plead and prod, and the Arabs watch from the sidelines, as Iran drags out the talks and accelerates its uranium enrichment. Except this time, diplomacy seems destined to fail, leaving the door open to a number of scenarios, which, thanks to former US President Donald Trump and his Middle East brain trust, former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, include war and/or the distinct possibility of Iran becoming a latent nuclear state. After all, it was Trump who decided to nuke the internationally recognised 2015 agreement. After repeatedly condemning it as "rotten" and "disastrous", he abandoned it in 2018 on the basis of unsubstantiated and unrelated allegations. To make matters worse, Trump imposed new crippling sanctions on Iran, including secondary sanctions on third parties trading with the country, and ordered the assassination of its most revered general, Qassem Soleimani. Boxed in, Iran lashed out in all directions. Most importantly, it renewed its uranium enrichment programme, bringing it ever closer to weapons-grade level. After US President Joe Biden took office in January, he failed to use the small window of opportunity to disavow his predecessor's policies and get the deal back on track in the first half of the year. His attempts to exploit Trump's sanctions to force Tehran into accepting new conditions have backfired. In August, Ebrahim Raisi, a hardline cleric and a protégé of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, was elected president of Iran. Today, Tehran insists its return to the agreement is conditional on the Biden administration's lifting "all sanctions" imposed after 2017 — whether nuclear-related or not. It expects Washington to provide the necessary guarantees that no future administration may abandon the deal again. And it will wait for proof that the sanctions are totally and truly lifted before making any moves towards the agreement. It also rejects any and all discussion of its missile systems and regional role. For its part, Washington expects Iran to return to the status quo ante and dispose of the

highly enriched uranium and the powerful centrifuges that produced it before nuclear-related sanctions are lifted. It insists other sanctions may only be lifted after Iran changes its "destabilising" regional behaviour. And it also insists on the need for a more comprehensive, more permanent agreement that guarantees Iran may never produce nuclear weapons. In short, as mistrust runs deep and expectations run wild, a return to the 2015 agreement is looking utterly improbable and terribly insufficient to settle the nuclear issue. That is why, the Biden administration is contemplating the use of so-called Plan B, which includes stronger diplomatic pressure and tougher economic sanctions against Iran. But then again, this is a policy that has been tried and has failed many times. What is the point of redeploying it, knowing Iran could accelerate its uranium enrichment to the 90 percent needed to become a nuclear state, while its hardline government boasts mounting "economic resistance" against American imperialism? If America does not play it carefully, it may have to go at it alone. Russia and China are not going to join any new American pressure campaign against Iran, considering their tensions with the Biden administration. It is doubtful the Europeans will join either, without a realistic endgame in sight. That is why the US has recently warned that "all options are on the table". But we have heard that before regarding the Taliban in Afghanistan and look how that turned out. We have also heard it muttered on Ukraine, Taiwan, Venezuela, Syria, North Korea, etc. Some reports now speak of the Biden administration outsourcing the war option to Israel, giving the region's only nuclear power the green light to act militarily against the Iranian nuclear programme, which may well lead to an all-out regional war. The record shows that the US is disposed to making bad decisions on false pretences that lead to horrific outcomes in the Middle East, but I doubt we are close to another foolish decision yet. Neither Washington nor Tehran is interested in such military escalation. Biden's strategy is to largely disengage militarily from the Middle East hotspots, not get drawn into a quagmire worse than the Iraq war. And despite his bluster, Khamenei has shown to be careful not to drag Iran into a military confrontation with the US — one that is sure to cripple the Islamic Republic, weaken its regime and damage its regional standing. That is why, Washington will persist in its pursuit of a diplomatic solution, knowing all too well that Iran will continue to drag its feet in Vienna while it speeds up its enrichment, even refusing, for now, to negotiate directly with the Americans before sanctions are lifted. And here lies the fundamental difference between Vienna 2015 and Vienna 2021. Tehran may no longer be accelerating its enrichment to use as leverage in the negotiations, as it did prior to the 2015 agreement, but rather to become a de facto latent nuclear state. To be clear, a latent nuclear state is not a nuclear power. It is a state that possesses the know-how and the resources to quickly become one — much like Japan, which is also a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). By contrast, Israel, which is a nuclear power, is not a signatory. In fact, Iran has long wanted to be like Japan. Iranians who see Japan as a model to emulate, have long considered it a double standard that Japan can have the fuel cycle and "stay happily" in the NPT, but Iran cannot. Iran may be more interested at this point in time in becoming a latent nuclear state like Japan than a nuclear power like India, Pakistan or Israel. Not only is this consistent with its official line, which states that Iran will not develop nuclear weapons that it considers "immoral", it is also more realistic than becoming a nuclear power and more achievable than ever before. Short of a dramatic political reversal, this could lead to a direct confrontation with the US and/or Israel. But my guess is that for the foreseeable future, it is going to be the Arabs, those in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere, who support a Middle East free of nuclear weapons, that will pay the price of this foolish regional Cold War. — *Courtesy: Al Jazeera*

## Atrocities in IIOJK; Silence a question mark on world's conscience!

Muhammad Akhter



Indian forces under the Fascist regime of Narendra Modi are carrying out the worst state terrorism in IIOJK

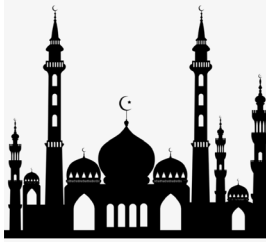
ON April 21, 1948, Security Council the chief organ of the united nation's passed a resolution in favor of free and impartial plebiscite in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to decide whether the state of Jammu and Kashmir would accede to India or Pakistan. In addition to this, as of October 29, 2021, the Security Council has adopted 2603 resolutions. But, on contrary to that the Kashmir's still awaits for implementation of these resolutions. On the other hand, for last 74 years, the valley became a story of barbarism and atrocities, the brutal Indian occupied forces continues its inhu-

mane fake operations against the unarmed and oppressed Kashmiris. It is imperative to mention here for me, the Occupying Indian forces under the guise of so-called search operation is not taking the name of stopping the series of oppression and violence on unarmed people. It is a matter of fact, Human rights violations in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have been going on for decades, but since August 5, 2019, it has taken a form where all the inhabitants of the occupied valley have been imprisoned in their own homes. Indian forces under the Fascist regime of Narendra Modi are carrying out the worst state terrorism in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Narendra Modi's regime has made Kashmir the largest prison and most militarized zone in the world. A demographic change is being hatched to turn Kashmiris into a minority. Despite this, the occupying security forces of India, whenever they want, evict the unarmed Kashmiris from their homes and torture them and many of them are martyred. The Criminalized silence of the international community and international organizations on all this is not only regrettable and reprehensible, but also a question mark on the world's conscience. In the latest fake operation, the occupying Indian forces has martyred 4 more people, including a Kashmiri businessman and a doctor in Srinagar. Among those martyred in the India's state terrorism are Sameer Ahmed Tantray of Tral, Amir of Banihal, Altaf Ahmed Bhat (cement Dealer) of Hyderpora and Dr. Mudasar Gul and Occupying security forces also refused to provide the bodies of the martyrs to their families, after which the family members staged a protest for the return of the body. The fake encounter once again exposed

India's modus operandi to fulfill its' nefarious agenda under Hindutva Ideology. In my opinion, if the United Nations and other international bodies are really serious about the human rights violations in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) than they have to take strict action against India to stop the gross Human rights violations, then there is no reason for the occupying security forces to persecute unarmed Kashmiris. It should be noted, Since October 1, 2021, the Indian occupying forces have killed 25 unarmed Kashmiris in fake encounters and so-called search and raid operations. According to a ground reality, extrajudicial killings, illegal detentions, the hardships of detention, harassment on a daily basis and restrictions on fundamental freedoms have become commonplace in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). It is high time for the international community to hold India accountable for violations of human rights and international law. Moreover, the international community has to understand that lasting peace in South Asia depends on a just solution to the Jammu and Kashmir issue. The dream of the peace can never be fulfilled without resolving the Kashmir issue. In this regard, the international community must give Kashmiris legitimate and inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions for final settlement of Kashmir issue. Similarly, in Pakistan, through using various digital forums there must be a full-fledged campaign in order to educate the youth of Pakistan about the Kashmir issue. So that collectively the youth may be able to raise voices on each day on different forums till the final resolution of Kashmir issue. Because a revolution needs collective efforts and it will work on it.



## SERVICES



### Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:26 am
Zohr.....	11:57 am
Asr.....	03:23 pm
Maghrib.....	05:01 pm
Isha.....	06:28 pm



### Hotels & Restaurants

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



### Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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### Emergency

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G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8.....	9266316
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Wapda Rawalpindi.....	111-309-309

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

Wasa Water Tank Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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ISLAMABAD: President and CEO of JS Bank Limited Basir Shamsie, Senator Faisal Javed Khan, Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman (Rtd) and other cutting ribbon to inaugurate the JS Private Banking Center at Serena Business Complex. – DNA

## Govt to free state land from encroachments

– Survey reveals 824,210 acres land in Punjab, KP, Balochistan encroached

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib says the government is committed to remove encroachments on state owned land across the country. He was addressing a news conference along with Special Assistant on Capital Development Authority (CDA) Affairs Ali Nawaz Awan in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The Minister of State said for the first time, digitalized cadastral mapping is being prepared; and under this initiative, 81000 sq kilometers state-owned land in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan has been digitized. Giving details, Farrukh Habib said digital survey of around

81,209 square kilometers land had so far been carried out that revealed encroachment of some 824,210 acres of state land worth Rs 3 trillion in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. "Around 88 per cent work on [digitalization of] total land [record] in Punjab, KP and Balochistan has been completed. Out of total surveyed land, 824,210 acres of state land has been encroached whose worth is around Rs 3,000 billion as per a conservative estimate," the minister said while addressing a news conference here.

Flanked by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Capital Development Authority, Ali Nawaz Awan, Farrukh said out of the total encroached land, around 675,615 acres were meant to grow forests, but occu-

pled illegally by illegal occupants allegedly in connivance with certain people of previous governments.

He said it was unfortunate that the forest land worth over 1,800 billion was encroached in Pakistan while the entire world was stressing over growing trees to tackle the looming threat of climate changes. Prime Minister Imran Khan was the first leader in the country's history who was keen to ensure massive afforestation, he said referring to recent speech of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson at the United Nations General Assembly where he praised PM Imran Khan, asking the world leaders to follow his steps in neutralizing the climate changes threat. Divulging details, he said

8,256 acres land of Railway worth around Rs 307 billion, 816 acres land of Civil Aviation Authority having value of around Rs 98 billion, National Highways land valuing approximately Rs 52 billion and land of Evacuee Trust worth Rs 117 billion had been encroached across the three provinces. The minister also shared details of private land encroached by the illegal occupants in the major cities saying its record was compiled after completing the digitalization. He said around 7,000 kanals land was encroached in Karachi having worth of around Rs 650 billion, whereas 10,500 kanals of land valuing Rs 1,500 billion was illegally occupied in Lahore and total encroachments worth Rs 500 billion came to the fore

in Islamabad. Total value of state and private lands encroached by the encroachers was of around Rs 5,500 billion, Farrukh noted. He said this became possible with the help of cadastral mapping which provided exact information about recent and past status of a land through Georeferencing feature of Google. The promise made by Prime Minister Imran Khan for crucial land reforms had almost been fulfilled as the cadastral mapping of the state land was in final stages, he said adding it was for the first time in the history of Pakistan that land record was being digitalized across the country through cadastral mapping. Provincial governments from Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan had extended full cooper-

ation for digitalization of land record, but the Sindh government remained committed to its tradition of creating hurdles in all those good initiatives taken by the centre. He said the Sindh government was not cooperating deliberately in that regard which proved that the provincial authorities was somehow involved in providing support to the land grabbers. The minister said since the record had been obtained through cadastral mapping, the relevant departments had started taking actions against the encroachments. Responding to a query, he said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had the history of feeding lies to the public and attacking the state institutions including judiciary.



ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Bakhtawari Former Vice president ICCI is presenting bouquet to the Patron-in-Chief of United Business Group Mr.S M Muneer.Zafar Bakhtawari , Irfan Ahmed Sarwana , Amir Shami and Khalid Chaudhry are also present at a dinner hosted in honor of the UBG candidates of FPCCI Election. – DNA

## SNGPL detects 87,197 gas theft cases in 2020-21

ISLAMABAD: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines (SNGPL) has detected around 87,197 cases of gas theft on its network during the last fiscal year, under a comprehensive Unaccounted for Gas (UFG) reduction plan given by the government. "There are 86,959 gas theft cases of consumers and 238 are of non-consumers," according to an official document. The company also registered 377 FIRs (First Information Reports) against the gas pilferers. The UFG losses of SNGPL and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) stood at 8.83 per cent and 15.85 percent respectively during the fiscal year 2020-21. "Volumetric loss of SNGPL remained at 34,021 million cubic feet (mmcf) of gas and SSGC 67,476 mmcf of gas, mainly because of gas leakages, measurement errors and theft," according to an official report available with APP. In 2019-20, the SNGPL and SSGC had prevented a volumetric loss of around 9,938 MMCF gas against the UFG reduction target of 14,806 MMCF gas. The UFG is a phenomenon of gas loss that occurred due to various technical factors when gas flowed from fields to end consumers. It is calculated as the difference between metered gas volume injected into the transmission and distribution network (Point of Dispatch/Delivery) and the metered gas delivered to the end consumers (Consumer Meter Station) during a financial year. In line with the government policy to reduce line loss, the report said the gas companies were taking all possible measures to bring down the UFG ratio gradually in the coming years. – DNA

## Reference against Ahsan Iqbal adjourned

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Tuesday adjourned hearing till December 21, on Narowal Sports City Complex (NSCC) reference against former minister for inter provincial coordination Ahsan Iqbal and others.

The hearing was adjourned without further proceeding due to absence of the defence lawyer.

AC-III Judge Syeds Asghar Ali heard the reference filed by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) against PML-N's stalwart Ahsan Iqbal and others. At the outset of hearing, Ahsan Iqbal adopted the stance that the cases were made against him just to damage his political repute. The court asked the accused to speak through his lawyer. The judge, however, adjourned hearing on the case till December 21.

## Puppet Show for orphans begins at PNCA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) Tuesday arranged a two-day Puppet Show for orphans, their mothers and less privileged community with the objectives to use puppetry as a strong medium of communication.

PNCA organized the event in collaboration with Secour Islamiq Foundation (SIF), said a press release issued here. The aim of the puppet show was to convey a message to stop childhood marriages, avoid excessive use of cell phones and internet. This activity has provided learning opportunity to children and enjoyed their interaction with each other. SIF is working for welfare of orphans and their families. Their goal is to provide support in education, nutrition and creation of employment opportunities to orphans and their mothers. PNCA in collaboration with SIF has successfully achieved its objective in promoting puppetry arts, visual arts and use of puppetry as a medium for creating awareness on social issues.

## Gold price falls by Rs 1200 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed decrease of Rs 1200 and was sold at Rs 122,600 in the local market on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 123,800 the previous day. The price of 10 gram 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1028 to Rs 105,110 from Rs 106,138 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went down to Rs 96,350 from Rs 97,294. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs1460 and Rs1251.71 respectively. The price of gold in international market remained constant at \$1794, the Jewellers Group reported. – APP

## ITP issues 94,931 fine tickets during last 2 months

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) issued 94,931 fine tickets to road users over four major violations during the last week. According to the traffic police spokesman, ITP has launched 'Safety First Campaign' last week in order to ensure safe road environment and traffic discipline in the city. The campaign has been formally launched following directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil Ur Rehman.

He said that action was taken against 21,927 road users over lane violation, 13,369 motorists for not fastening seat belt during drive, 6249 motorists for using mobile during drive, 53,386 motorcyclists for not using helmets. He said that special campaign is underway to check violations while various teams headed by Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Muhammad Omar Khan are performing duties at main roads of the city and taking action against the violators. – APP

## Webinar stresses need to engage private sector

Purpose of the webinar was to aware masses on the private sector's participation in technical and vocational education & training (TVET) as an essential for the success of technical and vocational education and training as well as labour market growth

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Endorsing the pivotal role of private sector in the country's sustainable economic development, experts at a webinar have emphasized on the importance of private sector's inclusion in the TVET sector to ensure productive as well as skilled workforce. The webinar was organized by the TVET Sector Support Programme (SSP) titled "Private Sector Engagement: A Way-forward to Decent Economic Opportunities for Skilled Graduates and a Sustainable TVET Eco-System" in Islamabad. The TVET SSP has been commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is being implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Inter-

nationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in close collaboration with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), provincial Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs) and other private sector organizations. Purpose of the webinar was to aware masses on the private sector's participation in technical and vocational education & training (TVET) as an essential for the success of technical and vocational education and training as well as labour market growth. Hospitality & Skills Sector Expert Hr Engro Fertilizers Ltd Arshia Ahmed Saqib and Cluster Coordinator for Training, Sustainable Growth and Decent Employment Opportunities, GIZ-Pakistan, Mr. Olaf Handloegten were the panelists. Omair Abubaker, Private

Sector Engagement Expert and National Coordinator, GIZ-Pakistan, moderated the webinar. He discussed about the importance of Public-Private Partnership in TVET sector and technical and vocational trainings for creating opportunities for youth of Pakistan with the panelists. The speakers highlighted how collaboration of public & private sectors in TVET from designing of curriculum to TVET delivery and workplace-based trainings is indispensable to create economic opportunities for trainees, TVET graduates and to create sustainable socio-economic environment. Giving expert opinion in the webinar, Chief People Officer, KIA Lucky Motors Corporation, Ashaer Saeed, said that the SSP's engagement of private sector is the need of the time for ensuring the country's sustainable develop-

ment and achieving sustainable eco-system. He also said the TVET SSP is committed to empower youth of the country, however, it can't be achieved until industry is involved in the programme and share its role for development. While speaking about the empowerment that could be attained through skills enhancement, Arshia Ahmed Saqib remarked that seeing rapid entrance of youth in labour market and not getting jobs was very stressful, however, TVET emerged as a turnaround for youth. "When private industry engages with the TVET SSP, this enhances and creates the best career opportunities for the youth," she asserted. In her remarks, Head of TVET SSP, GIZ-Pakistan, Iris Cordelia Retzoll, said inclusion of private sector in TVET is a way forward for decent employment oppor-

tunities. "When private sector stakeholders participate in decision-making processes related to TVET sector management, it paves the way for sustainable demand-driven TVET system for economic prosperity of the country," she argued. The speakers were of the consensus view that TVET SSP is re-shaping the future of our youth by including industry and enhancing work-place based training opportunities for youth to learn on-the-job trainings and compete in labour market. During the webinar, it was also deliberated how public sector bodies should work in close collaboration with the private sector organizations for the widespread and success of technical and vocational education and training. This engagement with TVET decision making and implementing bodies will generate human capital.



## Briefs

Japan  
opposition  
picks new  
leader

TOKYO: Japan's main opposition party on Tuesday elected its 47-year-old policy chief as leader, as it tries to regroup following a disappointing electoral performance against the country's long-ruling conservatives. Kenta Izumi, who is far from a household name in Japan, takes the helm of the Constitutional Democratic Party after its celebrated founder Yukio Edano stepped down over poor results in October's election. Izumi faces the difficult task of uniting Japan's fractured opposition bloc in the face of the Liberal Democratic Party, which has ruled Japan for nearly all of the past seven decades.

He has pledged to strengthen programmes to assist the poor and needy in an apparent effort to draw a contrast with the ruling party's generally pro-business policies. "We will conduct politics that are people-centred," he said. The eight-term lawmaker, who beat three candidates for the leadership job, won his first lower house seat at age 29, unusually young in Japan.

The father of three was born in northern Hokkaido and represents a district in Kyoto where he went to college and began working as a staff member for a local politician.

Japan's opposition had been hopeful that they could capitalise in October's vote on public discontent with the ruling party's virus response after a summer infection surge. But instead, the LDP under new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida secured a strong majority. — APP

Greece to  
make vaccine  
mandatory  
for over 60

## NEWS DESK

ATHENS: Greece said on Tuesday it would make COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory for people aged 60 and over, a drastic step for the country grappling with a new surge in coronavirus cases.

Authorities said they would impose a 100 euro (\$114) fine on every individual over the age of 60 who was not vaccinated. The measure would apply each month from Jan. 16 onwards.

About 63 percent of the population of about 11 million is fully vaccinated. Vaccine appointments have picked up in recent weeks.

"We are focusing our efforts on protection of our fellow citizens and for this reason their vaccination will be mandatory from now on," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told a cabinet meeting. "Greeks over the age of 60 who have not been vaccinated must, by Jan. 16, book an appointment for their first dose, or else they will face a 100 euro administrative fine every month."

Greece has recorded a spike in infections this month, with daily cases hitting record highs.

It has recorded 931,183 infections and 18,067 deaths since the start of the pandemic last year.

The country this month barred unvaccinated people from indoor spaces including restaurants, cinemas, museums and gyms, even if they had tested negative for the coronavirus.



BAKU: President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev received Federal Minister for Defence Production of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Zobiaida Jalal. Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov and Pakistan's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee are also present. — DNA

President Aliyev hails  
Pakistan's support in war

Federal Minister for Defence Production of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Zobiaida Jalal stressed that her country highly values brotherly relations with Azerbaijan, noting that these relations had passed the test of time over the years

## DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has received Federal Minister for Defence Production of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Zobiaida Jalal. The sides praised the successful development of bilateral friendly relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in various fields. The importance of Zobiaida Jalal's visit in terms of expanding this cooperation was pointed out. Recalling with satisfaction his recent meeting with the President of Pakistan, the President of Azerbaijan noted that this meeting was very successful and contributed to the strengthening of bilateral relations.

Touching upon the activities of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Commission meeting to be held in Baku, President Ilham Aliyev expressed his confidence that the event would serve to expand economic cooperation, increase trade and raise the level of relations between business communities of the two countries. The head of state also stressed the need for setting out investment priorities.

President Ilham Aliyev once again thanked Pakistan for its continued political and moral support for and brotherly stance on Azerbaijan's just position during the Patriotic War and stressed that the Azerbaijani people appreciated it. In this regard, the President noted that the Azerbaijani side would be pleased to see Pakistani companies among the foreign companies involved in the reconstruction and restoration work in the liberated territories.

Minister Zobiaida Jalal stressed that her country highly values brotherly relations with Azerbaijan, noting that these relations had passed the test of time over the years. He noted that the victory of Azerbaijan in the Patriotic War was celebrated in Pakistan with festive events, describing it as an indicator of brotherly relations between the two countries.

The minister expressed her confidence that the meeting of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Commission would also contribute to expanding bilateral relations. The sides also highlighted the importance of expanding cooperation in all areas, including trade, energy, transport, tourism, education and military-technical spheres. They exchanged views on further expansion of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan-Turkey trilateral cooperation format in various directions. The two countries' constant support to each other, both bilaterally and within international organizations was hailed at the meeting.

Meanwhile Azerbaijan's Minister of Economy Mikayil Jabbarov has also met with Federal Minister of Defence Production of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Zobiaida Jalal. "During the meeting with Minister Zobiaida Jalal, we have discussed the prospects for the development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Pakistan in the field of industry, as well as exchanged views on issues regarding the Pakistani companies' involvement in the projects carried out in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan," Minister Jabbarov said.

Fiscal deficit  
narrows to  
0.8pc in Q1

ISLAMABAD: The fiscal deficit narrowed to 0.8 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the first quarter of the fiscal year 2021-22, according to monthly Economic Update and Outlook for November released by the finance ministry here.

Last year, the deficit during the period was recorded at 1.1 percent of GDP, it says adding the revenue growth outpaced the growth in expenditures.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit has been reduced to Rs 438.5 billion in Q1 FY2022 against Rs 484.3 billion in the comparable period of last year.

The primary balance remained in surplus and stood at Rs 184.2 billion (0.3 percent of GDP) in Q1 FY2022 against the surplus of Rs 257.7 billion (0.6 percent of GDP) last year.

"The fiscal performance remained strong during the first quarter of the current fiscal year on the back of healthy growth in tax revenues, careful expenditure management and higher provincial surplus," the report says.

During the period under review, total revenues posted an impressive growth that outpaced the rise in expenditures.

Total revenues grew by 22.3 percent, primarily driven by 36.6 percent growth in tax collection from both federal and provincial levels. — APP

Govt  
facilitating  
Pakistan  
community in  
Russia: Envoy

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to Russian Federation Shafqat Ali Khan on Tuesday said that the present government was making all out efforts to facilitate Pakistanis living abroad.

Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan said this during the online Khuli Kachehri he conducted for Pakistani community in Russia.

During the Khuli Kachehri matters pertaining to issuance of visa and facilitation of students studying in Russia were raised, a press release issued by Pakistan Embassy in Moscow said.

The Ambassador issued instructions to the concerned wings of the Embassy for taking appropriate steps for facilitating Pakistanis.

He said that Khuli Kachehri provided excellent opportunity to directly interact with Pakistanis living in abroad.

The Pakistanis who attended the Khuli Kachehri online appreciated Pakistan Embassy Moscow for their timely response and assistance in resolution of their issues.

Pentagon orders new  
probe into Syria airstrike

## DNA

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon launched a fresh probe Monday into a 2019 airstrike that killed civilians in Syria, two weeks after a New York Times investigation claimed the US military concealed dozens of non-combatants' deaths. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin instructed Army General Michael Garrett to "review the reports of the investigation already conducted into that incident" and "conduct further inquiry into the facts and circumstances related to it," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said. Garrett's three-month review will assess "civilian casualties that resulted from the incident, compliance with the law of war, record keeping and reporting procedures," Kirby added. It will also probe whether measures

taken after the earlier investigation were effectively implemented, if "accountability measures" should be taken and if "procedures or processes should be altered."

According to a Times investigation published mid-November, a US special force operating in Syria — sometimes in complete secrecy — bombed a group of civilians three times on March 18, 2019, near the Islamic State (IS) bastion of Baghouz, killing 70 people, mainly women and children.

The Times report says a US legal officer "flagged the strike as a possible war crime" but that "at nearly every step, the military made moves that concealed the catastrophic strike." The Times found the strike "was one of the largest civilian casualty incidents of the war against the Islamic State," but was never publicly acknowledged by the US military.

"The death toll was downplayed. Reports were delayed, sanitized and classified. United States-led coalition forces bulldozed the blast site. And top leaders were not notified," the report said, adding findings of a Pentagon probe were "stalled and stripped of any mention of the strike."

A statement released by the Pentagon after the report said the initial investigation into the incident by the US Army Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, found the strikes were "self-defense," "proportional" and that "appropriate steps were taken to exclude the presence of civilians." A US-led coalition and Kurdish-led allies announced the defeat of the IS proto-state, known as the "caliphate," at the end of March 2019 after overcoming the last jihadist holdout of Baghouz.

Nearly 200M  
children living in  
war zones: Report

## WEB DESK

ANKARA: Nearly 200 million children are currently living in the world's most lethal war zones, the highest figure in over a decade, according to figures compiled by a global NGO.

The number of children in conflict zones in 13 countries jumped nearly 20% in 2020 from 162 million in 2019, making it the second-highest figure on record since 208 million in 2008, read a report released by Save the Children International on Tuesday.

"This spike was driven partly by outbreaks of violence in Mozambique, as well as ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, the DR Congo,

Nigeria, and Yemen, which are already on the frontline of climate change's worst impacts and coping with life-threatening hunger crises," read the report.

"The sharp increase in 2020 shows that a global pandemic and the United Nations' call for a global cease-fire were not enough to halt these wars."

It also revealed that 337 million children were living near armed groups and government forces that recruit children, a threefold increase from three decades ago. "The number of countries where children are recruited — and where more than half the world's children (nearly 1.3 billion) live — also jumped to 39, its highest in 30 years," the report said.



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Pm on commerce & investment Abdul Razak Dawood in a meeting with Ulanbek Totuiaev ambassador of Kyrgyzstan. — APP

Pakistani female wins  
global accolade in  
Tech Leadership

ISLAMABAD: Ammara Masood, CEO of NdcTech is the Winner for "Women in Tech" leadership category at the 2021 Global Banking Tech Awards hosted in London by Fintech Futures. This is truly a valuable recognition competing globally with the top tech leadership in the financial industry among other contenders. The award is an accolade for a leader making a significant impact in the banking/financial services industry and contributing towards the industry's betterment. Now in its 22nd year, the Banking Tech Awards recognizes excellence and innovation in the use of IT in financial services worldwide, and the people who make it happen. The Woman in Technology Leadership Award category lauds an outstanding woman for her distinguished leadership and inspiring work in her organization, and for making a positive impact on the wider banking/financial services industry. Ammara, CEO of NdcTech commented "I am delighted and truly humbled to receive such valuable recognition and acknowledgment by a prestigious global organization. — DNA

First Omicron  
case detected  
in Japan

TOKYO: Japan on Tuesday confirmed its first case of the Omicron coronavirus variant, a day after authorities announced new Covid border restrictions.

"Regarding the traveller arriving from Namibia, it was confirmed to be a case of Omicron after analysis at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases," government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters.

"This is the first Omicron case confirmed in Japan," he said, adding that the infected traveller, a man in his 30s, is now in isolation at a medical facility.

The announcement came a day after Japan tightened its border rules again, barring all new foreign arrivals just weeks after relaxing tough regulations to allow some students and business travellers entry.

The new rules mean only Japanese citizens and existing foreign residents can enter the country, with few exemptions, and those coming from areas with known Omicron cases require hotel quarantines ranging from three to 10 days.

Japan has recorded just over 18,300 coronavirus cases during the pandemic, while avoiding tough lockdowns. After a slow start, its vaccination programme picked up speed and nearly 77 percent of the population is fully vaccinated. — APP

## Can Taliban keep the lights on in winter?

## NEWS DESK

KABUL: As poverty and hunger grow in the country, the new government scrambles to meet its electricity debt obligations, facing the grim prospect of Afghanistan plunging into darkness.

It is getting dark and Zabihullah Bawar, a 34-year-old former construction worker, seems anxious as he rushes towards his old mud house in Kandahar. He uses his mobile-phone torch to lighten the room he shares with his family of four. The home's small solar battery is broken and the family will spend the cold night of November 25 in nothing but candlelight.

Zabihullah has been jobless for the last four months and has no money to get the battery repaired. The government-run construction and development projects have halted since the Taliban grabbed power in Afghanistan in mid-August. As a result, hundreds of thousands of laborers have lost their jobs.

Zabihullah worked as a daily-wage construction worker. With much of the building activity coming to an end, he could only find work a handful of days in the past three months. "Sometimes, we don't have anything to eat for several days. I can't buy powdered milk and medicine for my one-year-old son." While the economic prospects have severely shrunk, the public services that depend heavily on an uninterrupted power supply are being affected, too. To keep offices, universities and hospitals running, the Taliban will have to keep the country's electricity grid functional.

There are presently 8 to 10 hours of power outages on a daily basis in Kabul. The cold weather, coupled with difficult economic conditions, has made life difficult in the country. Other provinces and rural areas endure power outages for longer hours.

The Taliban has a difficult road ahead. Afghanistan owes millions of dollars to neighbouring countries that supply electricity to the war-torn nation. The Taliban has to pay Afghanistan's electricity

debt of \$110 to \$130 million with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Iran. The Taliban has to pay Afghanistan's electricity debt of \$110 to \$130 million with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Iran. (AP) Piling debt and frozen aid

On November 1 2021, SAGR, the US government's leading oversight authority on Afghanistan reconstruction, reported that the Taliban's interim government faces severe revenue shortages in addition to potential technical and personal difficulties.

The new government has to pay its electricity debt of \$110 to \$130 million with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Iran. Afghanistan relies heavily on electricity imports from these countries. Its domestic power production does not meet the country's energy needs. The total installed capacity for domestic power production is around 700 megawatts, while Afghanistan's Ministry of Energy and Water places the country's electrical needs at 2000 megawatts.

The Taliban only recently resumed the collection of electricity bills from consumers in Kabul and nearby provinces. Collections have been delayed since the Taliban's takeover in August due to the fact the country's banking system was rendered dysfunctional. Also, the new regime took a while to appoint leaders to the country's power department, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS).

One official, who wishes to remain anonymous, tells TRT World, "After several rounds of talks, we could convince the banks to keep the electricity bills payment desk open even if the branches are not able to provide other banking services".

The official also said that DABS has been collecting more than \$1.4 million (100 million Afghani) in revenue on a daily basis since early October. DABS spokesperson Hekmatullah Noorzai told TRT World that they are in talks with neighbouring countries about paying the debts. "We will start the process of making the due payments in the very near future," Noorzai said.



**Briefs**

**Lionel Messi wins record seventh Ballon D'or**

**SPORTS DESK**

PARIS: The Argentina superstar has once again been named the best player on the planet, with Robert Lewandowski finishing as runner-up. Lionel Messi has his hands on the Ballon d'Or once again, with the mercurial Argentina claiming the seventh Golden Ball of his remarkable career to date. The latest of those prestigious prizes was collected at a glitzy gala in Paris on Monday, with the PSG superstar not having to travel far after severing ties with La Liga giants Barcelona in the summer. Having been recognised as the best player on the planet for 2021, Messi is now two triumphs clear of eternal rival Cristiano Ronaldo – with a five-time winner now at Manchester United finishing outside of the top three for the first time since 2010.

**Faryal Talpur name removed from ECL**

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The federal government Tuesday removed the names of PPP central leaders Faryal Talpur from the Exit Control List (ECL). The federal interior ministry has given one-time permission to Faryal to go abroad for 30 days. The interior ministry said that Faryal had sought permission for treatment abroad. NAB has recommended Faryal's name in the ECL during its probe into fake bank accounts case against her. On Tuesday, the Interior Ministry informed the FIA in writing after removing the name from the ECL.

**Moscow: West, Ukraine threaten Russia**

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that military exercises and other moves by the West and Ukraine threaten Russia's security, warning against crossing the Kremlin's "red lines". Addressing an investor conference via video link, Putin declined to say whether Moscow planned to move troops across Ukraine's border – as the West has been alleging for weeks. "Look, they spoke about a possible Russian military intervention in Ukraine at the beginning of the year. But as you see this did not happen," Putin said. "It is not about intervening or not intervening, fighting or not fighting. It's about mending ties," Putin said, adding that it was important to take into account the security interests of all parties. "If we sincerely strive to achieve this then no one will feel threatened." Putin addressed investors as tensions spiral between Moscow and Brussels, and NATO looks to counter a fresh Russian military build-up on Ukraine's border. The new buildup follows a similar surge in the spring, when Russia gathered around 100,000 troops on Ukraine's borders but later announced a drawdown. Putin said Moscow was concerned by Western moves to conduct large-scale previously unannounced military drills near Russia's borders, singling out US-led exercises in the Black Sea. Separately, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov lobbed a series of new accusations against Kiev and said Russia reserved the right to respond if its security was threatened. "We simply don't have the right to exclude that the Kiev regime may embark on a military adventure." – APP

# Bilawal lashes govt for initiating talks with TTP

Says the "culture of pressuring courts over phone calls" to rein in political leaders should now end, saying that courts and parliament must take measures to end this practice once and for all

**DNA**

PESHAWAR: Reacting angrily to the ongoing talks between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday demanded that those who were involved in the killings of women and children in the name of 'Qital' should be given punishments as per the Islamic laws. Addressing a public gathering in Peshawar held in connection with the party's 54th Foundation Day, the PPP Chairman said it was unfortunate that the government was holding talks with the elements, who had the blood of innocent men, women and children on their hands, without taking the opposition parties into confidence. "We will not let the government give an 'amnesty' to these people," he vowed. Bilawal said he saluted the person-

nel of the Pakistan Army and Police who had laid down their lives fighting against the TTP terrorists. He said that the government was secretly holding talks with the terrorists involved in the APS tragedy. "We will not accept the negotiations with the proscribed organisation." PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said that the "culture of pressuring courts over phone calls" to rein in political leaders should now end, saying that courts and parliament must take measures to end this practice once and for all. "We are not happy at all that audio tapes are emerging against those who would threaten and pressure courts over phone calls to hand sentences of 20 years' [imprisonment] to Shaheed Bibi and Zardari and to seize their family property," Bilawal told a rally in Peshawar. "We think the system of making phone calls is wrong today and was wrong then and in the future, no one should have the courage to



make such an attempt." The PPP leader said "Imran must realise the gravity of the situation and stop practising undemocratic politics, otherwise, he will suffer the same fate as that of his predecessors." Accusing the government of surrendering to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) terms and conditions, the PPP chairman said that the 'deal' struck between the government and the Fund would take its toll on the masses. He vowed not to let the govern-

ment make the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) subservient to the IMF. He alleged that 'selected' Prime Minister Imran Khan was trying to give a safe passage to Kulbhushan Jadhav. "PPP will not allow him to give amnesty to the Indian spy," he expressed the resolve. The PPP chairman also accused the government of befooling overseas Pakistanis in the name of electoral reforms. "We are of the view that there should be an 'electoral college' for the Pakistanis living abroad," he said, and added, "We will continue to oppose the electronic voting machines (EVMs)." He said the PTI government's poor performance had laid bare the hollowness of its tall claims of bringing 'change' in the country. "Now it is in everybody's knowledge which 'change' the PTI was talking about before coming to power. That 'change' is joblessness and inflation," he taunted. Bilawal alleged that 'selected'

Prime Minister Imran Khan had given instructions to the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa not to allow the PPP to hold a gathering in the provincial capital. "Come and see Mr 'selected' that the entire city of Peshawar has thronged the PPP's Jalsa," he said, and claimed that it came to power, PPP would make the country's economy 'poor friendly'. Earlier in his statement on the occasion of the 54th foundation day of the PPP, he said that after a long struggle and unprecedented sacrifices, only PPP can pave the way for democracy in Pakistan. Only PPP's manifesto and strategy can make the homeland of 220 million Pakistanis a truly democratic and welfare state. The PPP chief further said that the PPP is a revolutionary movement based on the ideology of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the philosophy of Shaheed Murtaza Benazir Bhutto, and the struggles and sacrifices of many generations.

**Azerbaijan says 14 dead in helicopter crash**

BAKU: Fourteen people died Tuesday in an Azerbaijani military helicopter crash which went down in the east of the Caucasus country during a training flight, officials said. "Fourteen people died and two more were wounded as a result of a state border service helicopter crash," the ex-Soviet republic's frontier guard said in a statement. It said all of the victims were military servicemen. Earlier Tuesday, the country's border service and prosecutor general said in a joint statement that "a military helicopter belonging to Azerbaijan's state border service crashed today at Garakheybat airfield in the Khzyz region at approximately 10:40 am (GMT 0640) while conducting a training flight." They said an investigation was underway into the accident's causes. The incident came two weeks after Azerbaijan and neighbouring Armenia engaged in the worst fighting along their shared border since going to war last year over the contested Nagorno-Karabakh region. – APP

**Moderna warns against vaccine struggle**

LONDON: Existing Covid-19 inoculations will struggle against the fast-spreading Omicron variant, the head of vaccine manufacturer Moderna warned Tuesday, as countries ramp up vaccination programmes and impose further restrictions in an effort to curb growing concern. First reported to the World Health Organization in South Africa less than a week ago, the new strain has rapidly spread from Africa to the Pacific, and from Europe to North America as dozens of countries have announced travel restrictions. While no deaths have yet been reported from Omicron, and it could take weeks to know how infectious and how resistant the strain may prove to vaccines, its emergence underscores how besieged the world remains by Covid-19, nearly two years after the first cases were recorded. Stephane Bancel, the head of US vaccine manufacturer Moderna, told the Financial Times in an interview published Tuesday that data would be available on the effectiveness of vaccines in the two weeks' time, but that scientists were pessimistic. – APP

**Germany's incoming chancellor backs jobs**

**DNA**

BERLIN: Germany's incoming chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday signalled his backing for mandatory coronavirus jabs, a party source told media, as the country struggles to contain a fierce fourth wave of the pandemic. Scholz, who is holding crisis talks with regional leaders, said he was "aware that there were cross-party debates" among lawmakers about making the vaccine compulsory, a source at the meeting said. "Scholz signalled his sympathy for such a regulation," added the source, who is from Scholz's centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD). The introduction of mandatory jabs would have to be approved by parliament. Outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative CDU/CSU bloc, which will not be part of Scholz's incoming ruling coalition, has also come out in favour of requiring citizens to be inoculated against Covid-19. Scholz, Merkel and the heads of Germany's 16 states are discussing tougher curbs to confront record-high infection rates and rapidly filling intensive care beds. Among the measures being discussed are the closures of bars and clubs, and limiting large events.

**China rejects fake news smearing CPEC building**

BEIJING: China on Tuesday firmly rejected the certain media for creation of fake news with deliberate attempt to smear the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) building and China-Pakistan relations. "China firmly rejects certain media's attempts that violates its professional ethics and creation of fake news with the deliberate attempt to smear the CPEC building and China-Pakistan relations," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said during his regular briefing. Yesterday, there was a mentioning of so called reports that some protests broke

out in the Gwadar region opposing the excessive fishing rights given to Chinese trawlers saying this was not good to local people and have negative impact on people's livelihood. The spokesperson said, "This is completely a fake news. Certain media's hyping up of the protests against China in Gwadar region lacks factual basis." He said that after verification, there was no Chinese trawler that went to the Gwadar Port area for fishing or docking and reiterated that Gwadar Port as a leading project of CPEC has been focusing on the development and people's livelihood. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs a meeting of federal cabinet. – DNA

**TRNC keen to have enhanced trade ties with Pakistan: envoy**

Dilsad Senol identifies agriculture, construction, tourism, education, dairy sector and citrus as potential areas of cooperation for Pakistan with TRNC

**STAFF REPORT**

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Dilsad Senol, Chief of Mission, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in Pakistan said that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was keen to promote trade relations with Pakistan that would benefit the people and economies of both countries. She said that while addressing the business community during her visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Ms. Dilsad Senol said that there was no formal trade between TRNC and Pakistan and it was time that both should focus on promoting bilateral trade. She identified agriculture, construction, tourism, education, dairy sector and citrus as potential areas of cooperation for Pakistan with TRNC. She said that TRNC was importing



most of the construction material and it was a good opportunity for Pakistan to export its construction material to TRNC besides exporting many other products. She said that TRNC has developed better infrastructure with qualified labour and was offering good incentives to foreign investors. She urged that Pakistani investors should tap TRNC's market for investment. She said that 20 universities were operating in TRNC and over 3000 Pakistani students were getting education in these universities. She said that common culture and religion also provided good scope to Pakistan and TRNC for promoting business relations.

**GB Ex-judge distances himself from affidavit**

ISLAMABAD: Former chief justice of Gilgit-Baltistan Rana Shamim on Tuesday distanced himself from an affidavit attributed to him in which allegations of collusion were levelled against another former jurist Mian Saqib Nisar, telling the Islamabad High Court (IHC) that he had not yet examined the 'leaked' document. Shamim made the remarks during the hearing on show-cause notices issued over an investigative report that highlighted Shamim's alleged accusation against Nisar of colluding to deny bail to top PML-N leadership before general elections 2018. At the outset of hearing, Justice Minallah asked Shamim whether he had submitted his response, to which the latter replied that the court should ask his lawyer about it. He added that there had been a tragedy in his family and requested the court to schedule the next hearing after December 12. The IHC chief justice, however, gave Shamim four days to submit his written response. Shamim was previously represented by his son Ahmed Hassan Rana, an advocate of the Supreme Court. However, he later changed his legal counsel to Latif Afridi. "I have not yet seen the [published] affidavit," the ex-GB judge informed the court, referring to the document in the report carried by The News. It may be mentioned here that The News report had said that Shamim confirmed the contents of the leaked affidavit both on a phone call with the correspondent, as well as a message.

**Experts, panelists discuss COP26 outcome**

The SAPM on Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam highlighted the participation of Pakistan and informed the audience that Pakistan will be chair of G77 next year and would take this opportunity to flag issues of climate finance

**STAFF REPORT**

ISLAMABAD: A discussion on the outcome of the COP26 was held at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), Sustainable Development Policy Institute and Embassy of France. The event was attended by a wide variety of stakeholders including academia, researchers and civil society reps. President IRS, Amb. Nadeem Riyaz in his welcome remarks shared the overall objective of hosting the event and summarized the issues and expectations from COP26 with special focus on non-traditional security threats and challenges Pakistan face. In his keynote, the SAPM on Cli-

mate Change, Malik Amin Aslam highlighted the participation of Pakistan and informed the audience that Pakistan will be chair of G77 next year and would take this opportunity to flag issues of



climate finance as well as loss and damage. H.E Andreas Ferrarese, Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan talked about the importance of negotiation and the need to remain engaged in climate conversation to find solutions that are inclusive and sustainable. The panel discussion was moderated by Aisha Khan (CEO of CSCCC) in which Mr. Yves Manville (DHM, French Embassy in Islamabad), Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam (MNA), Mr. Najy Benhasine (Country Director, World Bank) and Mr. Abid Suleri (Executive Director SDPI) shared their perspectives on the achievements and shortfalls of the Glasgow Climate pact 2021. In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Shafiq Kakakhel emphasized on the need for climate justice, equity and just transition.