



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Uzbekistan will not create special places for Afghan refugees

Detailed News On Page-07

Taliban bans use of foreign currencies

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Novak Djokovic survives scare at Paris Masters

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Babar Azam becomes No 1 T20 batter

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: Pakistan skipper Babar Azam on Wednesday reclaimed the top slot in ICC's T20I Batting Ranking after a superb performance during the Pakistan vs Namibia match in the T20 World Cup. Azam's two successive half-centuries in the ongoing ICC tournament (and three in four matches) have helped him overtake England's Dawid Malan and grab the No. 1 position for batters. Babar, who recently scored 51 against Afghanistan and 70 against Namibia to lead the 2009 champions into the semifinals, is at the top of the ranking for the sixth time in his career.

Imran Khan provoking ministers

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif on Wednesday alleged that Prime Minister Imran Khan is provoking federal ministers to "frontally attack" the election commission. Reports recently surfaced of the premier asking his ministers to back Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry and Minister for Railways Azam Swati who were served notices by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) after they levelled serious allegations against the constitutional body.

Biggest relief will be PM's resignation

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday declared that the biggest relief package for the public will be the resignation of Prime Minister Imran Khan. In a statement, Marriyum Aurangzeb lashed out at Imran Khan blaming him for inflation, economic disaster and rampant unemployment in the country.

PM announces Rs 120 billion relief package

Addressing the nation, the premier said that the govt is introducing a package for 20 million families, which will – in turn – benefit 130 million Pakistanis

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday addressed the nation and announced a "historic" relief package worth Rs120 billion for the masses. Addressing the nation, the premier said that considering that the masses are undergoing a tough time due to the inflation in the country, the government is introducing a package for 20 million families, which will – in turn – benefit 130 million Pakistanis. "This [poverty alleviation] package, which is worth Rs120 billion, will be offered to Pakistanis by the federal and provincial governments," he said. The premier announced that under the package, citizens will be able to avail a 30% discount for six months on three basic edible items, including ghee, wheat, and pulses, under targeted subsidy. The premier said that under the package, interest-free loans of up to Rs500,000 will be provided to city-dwellers to start businesses, while a similar amount of loan will also be provided to farmers. The prime minister further added that the government has asked the construction sector to increase the salaries of workers, while a health-insurance programme will be introduced in Punjab from December. "Under the package, four million families will be able to build houses without interest," the PM said, adding that Rs1,400 billion have been set aside for the Kamyab Pakistan Programme (KPP) 2021 with the aim to provide opportunities to the deserving and uplift 3.7 million households across the country.

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Opposition slams govt's relief package

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Shortly after Prime Minister announced a Rs120-billion subsidy package for 20 million most-vulnerable families of Pakistan on Wednesday, Opposition leaders criticised the move and called it an "acceptance of the government's failure and 'nothing but a joke'". Taking to Twitter, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said that the PM's package is "too little for 200 million people." "PM's package is nothing but a joke. PM claims few families will benefit from 30% discount for only 6 months on ghee, flour & lentils. In 3 yrs, ghee increased [by] 108%, flour 50% & gas 300%," he wrote. "30% is too little, too late for 200 million ppl facing historic inflation, poverty & unemployment." Following suit, former senator and PPP leader Sherry Rehman termed PM Imran Khan's address to the nation a "bizarre speech", and called the premier the "Blame Minister of Pakistan". Taking to Twitter, Rehman criticised the prime minister and said that she chose the name "blame minister" for him as he has been shifting blames on the former governments and international markets for the rise in inflation and prices of oil, gas, and other essential items.

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NCOC eases curbs on inbound travel

The NCOC meeting revised the COVID-19 related travel policy, health and testing protocols

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Wednesday lifted inbound travel restrictions for Category B countries including all high risk states other than Category C amid enforcement of obligatory vaccination for inbound travel October 1. The NCOC meeting revised the COVID-19 related travel policy, health and testing protocols. The Forum opined that owing to mass vaccination undertaken by various countries, a downward trend was witnessed in all COVID indicators across the globe. It added that after enforcement of obligatory vaccination for inbound travel in Pakistan with effect from October 1, COVID related travel policy and health / testing protocols were revised. The Forum decided that inbound air traffic would operate at full quantum with effect from November 10, 2021. After revision in the Inbound Travel Policy, following countries on the basis of High Positivity, High Daily COVID Cases / Deaths and

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Covid-19 claims 11 more lives

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The national tally of Covid-19 active cases on Wednesday was recorded 22,570 with 561 more people testing positive for the deadly virus and 544 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Eleven corona patients have died during the last 24 hours, nine of the deceased were under treatment in different hospitals and two of them perished in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). Some 43,914 tests were conducted across the country on Tuesday, including 14,995 in Sindh, 15,664 in Punjab, 9,128 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 3,354 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 361 in Balochistan, 244 Gilgit Baltistan (GB), and 168 in AJK.



ISLAMABAD: EU Parliament's Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South Asia (DSAS) led by Nicola Procaccini calls on Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. EU ambassador Androulla Kaminara is also seen in the picture. – DNA

'Mega Relief Package' to benefit millions

Fawad says decline in commodities prices at global market was expected

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain

Wednesday said Prime Minister Imran Khan's 'Mega Relief Package' would benefit millions of people, especially to low-income ones. In a tweet, he said decline in commodities prices at global market was expected and its impact would start to unfold within next six months. If the government had not been successful to deal with coronavirus pandemic, the challenges for us would have been manifold, he added.

Security committee meeting on Nov 8

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser has summoned a meeting of the parliamentary committee on national security comprising members of the National Assembly and the Senate. The meeting will be chaired by NA Speaker at 11am on November 8 in the National Assembly Hall. The meeting will be briefed by military officials on current national security issues. During the meeting, the top military brass will brief about the overall affairs of national security. – APP

Pakistan ready to engage with the EU

FM exchanged these views in a meeting with EU Delegation for Relations with South Asia

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: EU Parliament's Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South Asia (DSAS) led by Mr. Nicola Procaccini called on Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Views were exchanged on various aspects of the Pakistan-EU relations and regional and international developments. Recalling his meeting with the EU High Representative Josep Borrell and his earlier virtual interaction with

Qureshi meets young entrepreneurs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In line with Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi's long term focus on economic diplomacy, a delegation of young entrepreneurs from the global non-profit Entrepreneurs Organization called on the Foreign Minister. Held under the Foreign Minister's "FM Connect Agenda" for greater stakeholder inclusivity, the delegation comprised of some of Pakistan's top young CEOs from the Lahore Chapter of the Entrepreneurs Organization, led by its President Mohsin Khawaja.

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US sanctions Israeli maker of Pegasus spyware

The company, NSO, was engulfed in controversy over reports of spying

WASHINGTON: After discovering that the Israeli maker of the Pegasus spyware supplied software used to target officials and journalists, the US authorities, have put the firm on the "black list" of companies. The company, NSO, was engulfed in controversy over reports that tens of thousands of human rights activists, journalists, politicians, and business executives worldwide were listed as potential targets of its Pegasus software. Smartphones infected with Pegasus are essentially turned into pocket spying devices, allowing the user to read the target's messages, look through their photos, track their location and even turn on their camera

without them knowing. "These tools have also enabled foreign governments to conduct transnational repression, which is the practice of authoritarian governments targeting dissidents, journalists and activists outside of their sovereign borders to silence dissent," the US Commerce Department said in a statement. Washington also targeted Israeli company Candiru, Singapore-based Computer Security Initiative Consultancy PTE (COSEINC), and Russian firm Positive Technologies. The companies' addition to the so-called "entity list" list means that exports to them from US organizations are restricted. – DNA

Govt frees another 82 TLP activists

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: As per the agreement reached between the government and the proscribed Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, the government continues freeing the detained activists of the banned religious outfit as it has released another 82 workers. The government on Wednesday freed another 82 activists of the banned TLP from Adiyala Jail, Rawalpindi while honoring the accord it has made with the religious party a couple of days ago. On Tuesday, the government released 50 members of the outlawed TLP. So far, it has freed 132 activists of the outfit. On the other hand, the banned TLP activists were still holding a sit-in in Wazirabad Park on Wednesday. The commuters have been facing great difficulty even after the passage of 11 days since the protest started and the peace agreement between the government and the proscribed TLP.

WC T20: India keeps hopes alive

ABU DHABI: India returned to winning ways on Wednesday as they finally opened their account by beating Afghanistan by 66 runs in a do-or-die Super 12 encounter to keep their campaign alive in the ICC T20 World Cup 2021. India rode on outstanding performances from Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul and Ravichandran Ashwin to register their first win of the campaign after 3 games. The Men in Blue moved up a place above Namibia in fourth position but still need to win their last two games and depend on other results to stand a chance of qualifying for the semifinals. – DNA

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Republicans jolt Biden with Virginia governorship win
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Pak welcomes first Uzbek convoy at Torkham border

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood says it will further strengthen trade ties with Central Asian states and Uzbekistan

DNA

QUETTA: The first-ever consignment of trucks from Uzbekistan has reached the Torkham border in Pakistan by land, the Ministry of Commerce confirmed Wednesday. This is a continuation of the government's efforts to strengthen regional coordination, Adviser to the PM on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood said, adding that it will further strengthen trade ties with Central Asian states and Uzbekistan. National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf along with Adviser to the PM on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood and five members of the Uzbek delegation, led by Lt Gen Makhmudov Victor, Secretary of the Security Council of Uzbekistan were present. The visiting delegation received a briefing by the relevant authorities at Michni post, besides witnessing arrival of cargo trucks from Uzbekistan. The visit to Torkham by Uzbek delegation shows that the region is increasingly piv-



oting around the geo-economic paradigm whose core component is regional connectivity. This underscores the immense benefits awaiting to be reaped by all the regional countries and symbolizes that connectivity is the future of the region. In the second leg of the trip, the delegation visited Pakistan Military Academy Kakul where the visiting dignitary received a briefing from the Commandant and witnessed training of military cadets. While praising the standards of training and professionalism of the academy, Lt. Gen. Makhmudov evinced interest in sending Uzbek military officers for training to PMA. A day earlier, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had met with Lt Gen Victor at the Foreign Office and exchanged views on multifarious issues. The two sides discussed Pakistan-Uzbekistan bilateral relations, including cooperation on matters related to trade and economic cooperation, regional security, and defence.

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LAHORE: High Commissioner of Nigeria Abioye Mohammed Bello called on Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office. – DNA

NOHP to curb animal, plant, human diseases: Dr Khalid

Medical doctors, agricultural, livestock and environmental scientists to work together to address the challenges confronting the country

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: The University of Agriculture Faisalabad in collaboration with other agricultural and health institutions will formulate recommendations for National One Health Policy in order to combat collectively issues of plants, environment, humans, and animals for a better world. This decision was taken by the experts at the World One Health Day seminar organized by the Agricultural University Faisalabad (UAF) at Center for Advanced Studies Auditorium UAF. The seminar was chaired by Dr. Khalid Mehmood Khan, President, Pakistan Academy of Sciences. Dr Khalid Mehmood urged medical doctors, agricultural, livestock and environmental scientists to work together to address the challenges confronting the country. He said that the scientists of UAF should play a leading role on scientific and research basis to

map out recommendations for One Health Policy in order to curb the growing human, animal and plant diseases. UAF Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that UAF in collaboration with the University of California had launched project under One Health some years ago meant to cope with human, plant, animal and environmental health. He said that many diseases in humans are transmitted by animals. He said that nutritive food will help overcome the malnutrition issue responsible for increasing ailment in the society. He said that we had destroyed the environment from our own hands with chunking out smoke etc provoking climate changes. Our entire diet depends on wheat, but if other commodities like maize, millet, etc. are added to wheat, it will have better health consequences," he said. Vice Chancellor, University of Health Sciences, Prof Dr Javed Akram said that nature

had created all living beings for a purpose but human beings have distorted the balance for their own benefit which is causing diseases and climate change and hinder human development. He said that agricultural, medical and environmental experts would have to come up with a plan of action to balance biodiversity. Faisalabad Medical University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zafar Ali Chaudhry said that they would sign a MoU with UAF one health. He called for joint efforts, saying that this would lead to improvement in the medical field as well as prosperity in agriculture. Program Director Policy and Strategic Planning Unit Dr Shafqat Zareen informing the participants about the government's measures against rabies transmitted from animals to humans, urged the experts to make concerted efforts to prevent diseases transmitted from animals to humans. She hoped that One Health would help improve ecosystem to steer out of the crisis.

Nigerian HC meets CM Buzdar

DNA

LAHORE: High Commissioner of Nigeria Abioye Mohammed Bello called on Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office on Wednesday. Chairman P&D and others were also present. Both the dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interest and agreed to promote bilateral cooperation in different sectors including agriculture, IT, tourism, textile, sports goods and pharmaceutical industry. The CM pointed out that a number of opportunities were available to further expand trade relations between Pakistan and Nigeria. The exchange of trade delegations will further promote economic ties and the investors of both countries will be mutually benefited due to the expansion in the volume of bilateral trade, he noted. A facilitation centre has been established at the office of CM Punjab to ensure ease for local and foreign investors and it is noteworthy that a conducive atmosphere was provided for investment, added Usman Buzdar. Direct access was provided to investors to concerned high government officials through the facilitation centre and a zero NOC policy was being introduced to enter the province into a new arena of investment, he added.

Steps underway to make drive against measles successful: Dr Kamran

3.3 million children aged 9 months to 15 years will be vaccinated against measles and rubella

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The measles and rubella catch-up campaign will be started in the district from November 15 to 27, during which 3.3 million children aged 9 months to 15 years will be vaccinated against measles and rubella, while children up to five years will be vaccinated against polio also during the campaign, all new, essay arrangements for the campaign have been finalized. However, parents are strongly urged to protect their children against deadly diseases by vaccinating them. This was stated by Director Health Services Dr. Kamran Rasheed as the special guest in the District advocacy Seminar with the collaboration of UNICEF for Private Practitioners (GPs) held at District Health Development Center. CEO DHA Dr. Kashif Mehmood, Regional Coordinator WHO Dr. Mudassar, Divisional Coordinator UNICEF Dr. Serena, President Pakistan Medical Association Dr. So-lat Nawaz, Dr. Altaf-ur-Reh-

man from AFPP, Dr. Tahir from PPA and officer from Health Department and a large number of officers and private practitioners were also present. The Director Health Services appreciated the efforts of the organizers on the successful conduct of the seminar and urged the doctors to play a vital role for the success of the campaign, because they have a respectable place in the society and they have a deep connection with the patients who come

for treatment. The CEO of Health said that the rubella vaccine is being introduced for the first time and after this campaign, it will be part of the vaccine and then vaccinations against 12 diseases will be given. He said that just as measles and polio are dangerous, so is the rubella virus too. He said that about 2500 vaccinators will take part in the campaign which will set up kits stations inside the houses and inject children

in the area. In addition, vaccination facility will also be provided at fixed centers, hospitals and dispensaries. The representative of World Health Organization stressed on the need to make concerted efforts to make the campaign a success and thanked the district administration for its full support in this regard. Dr. Sarina explained the aims and objectives of the measles and rubella campaign and thanks to the guests.



FAISALABAD: Director Health Services Dr. Kamran Rasheed addresses a seminar regarding measles and rubella campaign. – DNA

PFA discard 1,225kg spurious honey

LAHORE : Punjab Food Authority (PFA) on Wednesday discarded 1,225 kgs spurious honey and unwholesome food during crackdown against fake honey producing units in the provincial metropolis. The food safety team closed down a fake honey manufacturing unit in Data Ganj Bakhsh Town and discarded 800 kg of adulterated honey and 425 kg raw material, said a spokesperson. Furthermore, PFA seized 80 kg substandard sugar, 35 kg glucose, five kilogram rose petal, five kilogram hazardous chemicals, packing material and empty bottles during the raid. – News Desk

GCWUF ranked top among all women universities

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) has been ranked as top among all women universities of Pakistan in QS Asia Top University Rankings 2022. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, GCWUF Vice Chancellor Dr. Robina Farooq said that it was a matter of immense pleasure for her that her institution was ranked as top among all women uni-

versities of Pakistan and 500-550 internationally in QS Asia Top University Rankings 2022. She said that 2022 rankings were scored on 11 key indicators including academic and employer reputations as well as the number of staff holding a Ph.D., among others significant factors of academic excellence. This incredible achievement clearly indicates that GCWUF faculty members as well as its management were ready to take a leap towards ever-increasing

challenges of the higher education sector, she added. The GCWUF VC also appreciated the role of Quality Enhancement Cell for its most convincing presentation of the university at this prestigious international forum. She also acknowledged the consistent support of Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Higher Education Department (HED) for academic uplift. She also felicitated the GCWUF team for this marvelous achievement.

Martyrs are assets of department: SSP Kamal

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Martyrs are asset of police Department. They laid their precious lives for the safety and honour of Department. SSP Patrolling Mirza Anjum Kamal said while offering Fatiha at the Yadgar-e-Shuhda at PHP Regional office along with MNA Raza Nasrallah Ghuman. MNA Raza Ghuman also paid tribute to 20 Shuhdas of Patrolling Police and admired the efforts being rendered by PHP to prevent crime and regulate traffic. He reiterated that patrolling police is a potential force to counter the crime and mitigation of accidents on highways. The role of PHP as first responder is also appreciable and quite helpful in preservation of crime scene and shifting of injured to hospital timely. SSP Patrolling Anjum Kamal thanked MNA for his visit to PHP office and remembering Shuhda in his prayers.

KP notifies relaxation of corona SOPs till Nov 15

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced relaxation in corona Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) for less vaccinating districts till November 15 except provincial metropolises. The decision has been taken following directives of National Command and Control Centre (NCC), said a notification issued by Home and Tribal Affairs Department. According to details, commercial activities and markets would be closed at 10 p.m. except pharmacies, petrol pumps, grocery stores, vaccination centers, milk shops, bakers, utility bills service providers home delivery shops. – APP



FAISALABAD: MNA Raza Nasrallah Ghuman along with SSP Mirza Anjum Kamal are offering Fatiha at Yadgar-e-Shuhda at PHP Regional Office. – DNA

KP approves provincial food security policy

The project is expected to generate billions in revenue on annual basis. Kissan Card worth RS 55 billion is part of this policy, Kamran Bangash remarked

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet Wednesday approved the first-ever food security policy and plan for a period of ten years with a huge financial allocation of Rs.236 billion. Chief Minister KP himself will review the implementation status of the project on monthly basis. The approval was accorded during a cabinet meeting held here with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair. The meeting was also attended by Cabinet members, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, SMBR, Additional Chief Secretary and administrative secretaries. Briefing the media regarding the decisions of the cabinet, Provincial Minister Kamran Bangash accompanied by newly inducted Minister Arshad Ayub said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the first province to approve the much-needed food security policy to address shortage of wheat, sugar and other food items. He declared it a landmark achievement which will not only suffice the province in food items but would

also generate employment opportunities in the province. About the salient features of the food policy, Kamran Bangash stated that southern part of the province had great potential for achieving the goal of Food Security where irrigation channels particularly CRBC scheme and other water courses will be channelized, Public-Private partnership will be encouraged, woman participation will be ensured to alleviate poverty and generate employment opportunities. The project is expected to generate billions in revenue on annual basis. Kissan Card worth RS:55 Billion is part of this policy, Kamran Bangash remarked. The cabinet, in prior consultation with Public Service Commission KP, also declared the recent screening test conducted by Public Service Commission KP for induction into the Provincial Management Service (PMS) as null and void and allowed all the candidates to directly appear in the written examination. This decision will ensure maximum competition as mere screening test is not

sufficient for syllabus related examination aimed at evaluating the ability of the candidates. Kamran Bangash further stated that the cabinet also discussed in detail the ensuing local bodies' elections in the backdrop of decision of Peshawar High Court viza-viz holding of the NC/VC elections on party basis. He added that provincial government had great respect for judiciary and Election Commission of Pakistan and is fully prepared for holding of Local Bodies Elections. The cabinet formed a four mem-



bers cabinet committee comprising Taimour Salim Jhagra, Shaukat Yousafzai, Shahram Khan Tarakai and Kamran Bangash to discuss modalities as well as work out technical issues with the Election Commission of Pakistan. In light of the decision of apex court, the cabinet also approved regularization of 519 employees of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Foundation and their subsequent merger into the Directorate of Higher Education. The cabinet, keeping in view the Covid emergency situation also approved monthly fee concession for the students to provide relief to the parents under the epidemic control and emergency Act 2020. The schools charging more than Rs. 6000 monthly fee will provide 20% concession while school charging less than Rs. 6000 monthly fees will provide 10% concession in the fee. It merits mentioning here that the government had earlier announced fee concession which had been extended for another three months. The cabinet also allowed one-

time exemption in KPPRA rules for purchase of high quality goats from Turkey. The cabinet approved re-constitution of KP information Technology Board in addition to approving fresh positions for Counter Terrorism Department in merged Districts. The cabinet with a view to facilitate more people also approved the extension of Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) to 23 additional semi urban union councils. Previously, WSSP was confined to only 42 union councils. The provincial cabinet also approved to extend the jurisdiction of Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) to all phases of Hayatabad, Regi Model Town (All zones), GT Road Peshawar, Motorway confluence till motorway to Toll Plaza, Kohat road up to Peshawar urban limits, Nasir Bagh Road, Warsak Road, Charsada road, all areas where horticulture work have been carried out including Nowshera, Akora and Jehangirra areas and all areas notified under section-iv of Gandahara City. – APP

was the advocate of teachers and they would receive good news in this regard. He also announced the launching of Student Card on the pattern of Health Card to provide scholarships to deserving students. The provincial minister said a double shift had been launched for the out of school children, adding, in the first phase it began in 120 schools wherein 3000 students had been enrolled. It would be extended to 400 schools in the second phase and in the third phase the number of such schools would be extended to 1000.

LHC declares pleas against RRUP as admissible

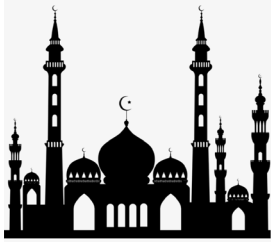
NEWS DESK

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday has declared petitions against Ravi River Urban Project as admissible after the initial hearing. LHC Judge Justice Shah Karim heard the pleas of Sheeraz Zaka advocate and others against the Ravi River project. During the hearing, the judge turned down the plea of the Punjab government to reject the pleas and remarked that the high court can hear the appeals against the project. Meanwhile, Punjab Advocate General said that River Ravi Urban Ordinance has been issued after which, the pleas cannot be heard. Earlier in September, PM Imran Khan had laid the foundation stone of Ravi Riverfront Urban Development project and planted a sapling. The Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project (RRUDP) is an approved urban development megaproject in Lahore that runs along the Ravi River in a northeast to southwest direction. It includes the construction of a 40,000-hectare (100,000-acre) planned city and the rehabilitation of the Ravi River into a perennial freshwater body.

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that I, Zeeshan S/o Shaukat Hayat, resident of Post Office Khaas, Golra, District Attock, have misplaced the allotment letter of plot # 18, booking # 272909, measuring 15' x 40' (75sqyd), located in Bahria Green Low-cost Scheme, Karachi, somewhere in Ghauri Town, Islamabad. I am applying for the duplicate allotment letter and if any person have any type of objection, they may contact the relevant department within 15 days from the publication of this notice personally or on this number: 03325957760.

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:04 am
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Maghrib.....	05:14 pm
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Samina lauds SC's notice on mammography facilities

CJ takes notice of the increasing number of breast cancer patients; ordered the availability of screening facilities with female medical staff at the public hospitals

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Begum Samina Alvi, wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday welcomed the notice taken by the Supreme Court on rising cases of breast cancer in the country, saying the joint efforts against the disease would lead to saving lives of thousands of women in the country.

Speaking at a breast cancer awareness seminar here at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI), she commended the order passed by the Supreme Court on the provision of mammography facilities at all public hospitals. A day earlier, Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed during the hearing of a case had taken notice of the increasing number of breast cancer patients and ordered the



availability of breast cancer screening facilities with female medical staff at the hospitals under the federal and provincial governments. Begum Alvi, who is leading the nationwide breast cancer awareness campaign, said the survival rate of breast cancer patients across the globe was



about 95-98 percent compared with 45 percent in Pakistan due to late diagnosis. She proposed installation of a mammogram machine at every teaching hospital so as to train the medical graduates about breast cancer screening. She said Pakistan had the highest rate of breast cancer deaths in Asia

due to late diagnosis at the third and fourth stages. One in every eight women in the country is at the risk of breast cancer, besides one woman falling victim to the disease every 13 minutes, she added. She pointed out that with a fifty percent female population, there was a need to shun the taboos

affiliated with breast cancer to encourage women to seek timely medical consultation. Begum Alvi urged the women to practice self-detection and consult the doctor immediately on noticing any abnormality in their bodies. She said a healthy lifestyle, balanced diet, and physical exercise could improve the

health of women and could also contribute to minimizing the chances of a fatal disease. She stressed upon men to extend support to women in their families suffering from breast cancer or in need of medical advice. Begum Alvi said a healthy and empowered woman could bring about a positive change in society. She invited the women to benefit from the business loans offered by the government and the State Bank of Pakistan. On differently-abled persons, she said, the marginalized segment deserved special care and opportunities in all fields of life for their effective mainstreaming in society. President RCCI Nadeem Rauf said acknowledging the important role of women in society, the RCCI had taken several key initiatives to ensure their empowerment, including setting up business incubation centres.

NH&MP briefs more than 1.8 mln road users on safety

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Highway and Motorway Police (NH&MP) briefed more than 1.8 million road users on road safety at various points on Motorways and Highways to create awareness among them. The officers of Motorway Police Mobile Education Units briefed people about road safety, said a news release issued here. They said NH&MP was trying to provide all possible assistance to the commuters. NH&MP requested the commuters to maintain safe following distance between vehicles to avoid accidents and do not take risk of overtaking where prohibited. According to NH&MP officials, accidents were caused due to overloading and over speeding and urged people to follow rules of safe driving.

Covid claims 3 lives in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI: As many as 17 more COVID-19 positive cases were reported during the last 24 hours, bringing the tally of confirmed cases to 36,026 in the Rawalpindi district while three lost their battle of life against the deadly virus. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Wednesday, among the new cases, seven were reported from Potohar town, six from Rawalpindi Cantt Town, two from Rawal town, while one each case has arrived from Taxila and Gujar Khan. "Presently 17 confirmed patients were admitted to various city facilities, counting ten in Institute of Urology, five in Benazir Bhutto Hospital and one each in Fauji Foundation and Bilal hospital," the report said. In addition, District Health Authority updated that 34,729 patients were discharged after recovery while two patients were on ventilators in a critical position, eight stable and seven on oxygen support. It updated that 3,262,452 people, including 43,875 health workers, have jabbed themselves against the lethal coronavirus (COVID-19) across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10. The positivity rate was recorded at 1.10 per cent during the last 24 hours, it added. - APP

NEPRA & DGF sign MoU for women scholarship

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Dawood Global Foundation "Ladies Fund Energy Pvt. Ltd" for providing scholarships to young women in engineering renewables bachelor programs. It would help support women to get jobs under NEPRA's banner of Power with Prosperity. NEPRA fully supported "Ladies Fund Energy Pvt. Ltd." for the support they were providing through scholarships and employment opportunities for women in Pakistan, said a press release issued here Wednesday. NEPRA under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) drive "Power with Prosperity" (PwP) is marching towards inclusive development by ensuring that all licensees of NEPRA must walk the talk. NEPRA is aligning its prosperity drive with the UN's Sustainable development goals, 2030 to progressively lead towards the global focus of ensuring greater gender diversity and inclusion in the sector. NEPRA is making headways through its licensees under CSR drive to ensure gradual increase of women employees and ensure their retention in the power sector. In this regard, NEPRA encourages its licensees to bring revolutionary change with the gender focused friendly policies and also engaging national and international organizations working on the issues related to women in power sector.

Cultural pavilion at Lok Virsa source of attraction for visitors

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Lok Virsa has become the center of attraction as pavilions established at the annual Lok Mela have set a galaxy of cultural diversity depicting heritage of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. Talking to APP, Executive Director Lok Virsa Talha Ali said, special pavilions from all provinces showed the beautiful culture of their regions through, music, food cuisines, embroidery and dresses. Folk artists, musicians, craftsmen, and dance groups were presenting their outstanding performances throughout the day, he added. "All provinces have been allocated separate pavilions to showcase their indigenous folk culture in a creative and interactive manner," he added. Talha said that this festival provided an opportunity to the diplomatic community and residents of the twin cities to have cultural entertainment and buy handicrafts at reasonable prices. Every pavilion was truly a window to the unique cultural heritage of each province and region, and Punjab's pavilion at the festival was of particular interest to many people, said artisan M Riaz. The crafts on display at the Punjab pavilion including lacquer art, Multani blue tiles, tie and dye, block printing, wood carving, darree (carpet and mats), metal work, camel bone carving, 'khussa' were attracting a larger number of women, Riaz added. Another artisan Faraz Niaz from Punjab pavilion is an expert at using natural dyes and the ancient art of wooden block making that centered in the lower Indus valley.



NARC to provide 400 metric tons of high-yielding seeds

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Agriculture Research Center (NARC) would provide over 400 metric tons of certified high-yielding seeds of wheat to local farmers across the grain producing areas for enhance per-acre output of this major cash crop, not only to meeting with the growing domestic demands but to bring output at par with international level. The initiative was also aimed at to strengthen government's efforts to ensure availability of quality seeds to local grain producers to achieve maximum per-acre crop output, besides increas-

ing farm income of small scale growers across the country, said Project Leader, Wheat Enhancement Program of NARC Dr Sikander Shaheen. Talking to APP here on Wednesday, he said during last sowing season over 300 metric tons of wheat seeds were distributed among farmers, farm associations, research stations, besides providing to different seed producing companies to seed multiplication for enhancing availability of certified seed. The NARC was providing seeds of six high-yielding varieties to local farmers that included Pakistan-2013, Borlaug-2016, Zencol-2016, Markaz-2019, AZRC-Dara and

NARC-Supper, he said adding that due to continued efforts, it was expected that domestic requirements of certified seed would be achieved with in next two to three year. He informed that fulfillment of certified high-yielding, pest and rest resistant seeds verities would also help to enhance per-acre crop output and bringing it at par with international level, which would not only increase farm income, but it would also make the local produce more competitive in international markets. Due to provision of sufficient inputs and financial assistance introduced by the government, wheat output

had registered significant increase and surpassed the set targets during last year, he said adding that government was also intended to facilitate growers to bring maximum area under grain production. "We have also provided about 470 bags of seeds comprising on 40 kg to Punjab Seed Corporation, 250 bags to Gilgit Baltistan and over 70 bags to Balochistan," he said adding that it help seeds multiplication in different ecological zones. It is worth mentioning here that over 8.813 million hectares of land in the country put under wheat cultivation every year, which required average 1.102 million tons of seeds.

Govt urged for taking ease of doing business measures

ISLAMABAD: Former Senator and PTI leader Syed Zafar Ali Shah on Wednesday said that the business community was playing important role in the economic development of the country and urged the government to focus on promoting ease of doing business to enable the business and investment activities flourish in the country. He said that the election of new office bearers of ICCI was a right choice as they had the potential and talent to contribute for the welfare of the business community. Addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he also urged the government to take all possible measures to address the concerns of traders on tax measures including installation of point of sale and digital payments. He said that by taking traders into confidence was important to improve the economy and steer the country out of troubled waters. He also congratulated Muhammad Shakeel Munir President, Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior VP and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI on their election. Speaking at the occasion, M Shakeel Munir, President ICCI welcomed the decision of Federal Board of Revenue to extend the deadline of digital payments by corporate sector up to November 30, 2021 and urged the government to remove all reservations of the business community before implementation of this new payment mechanism. - DNA

Beekeepers training under BTH uplifts 60% honey

Country's existing honey harvest potential was of 7,500 metric tons per annum produced by 10,000 bee keepers using 300,000 colonies: Secretary MOCC

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Billion Tree Honey (BTH) has encouraged bee flora plantation to enhance production on modern lines showing gradual increase of 60 percent per hive on average yield within six months pilot phase. Under the government's flagship Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Plantation (TBTP) project, the focus has been made on laid on improving existing honey farming and bee keeping practices on scientific terms for enhanced honey production to benefit from the increasing forest cover under the massive afforestation efforts, a senior official

of the Ministry Climate Change told APP. He said the country's existing honey harvest potential was of 7,500 metric tons per annum produced by some 10,000 bee keepers using 300,000 colonies. It could be enhanced to 70,000 metric tons of honey produced from the same harvest by using modern bee keeping gears, latest techniques, standardization / certification of the product and intensive marketing, he added. He said as per estimates, marketing of 70,000 metric tons of honey would generate an income of around Rs 20-25 billion and generate around 87,000 green jobs. The BTH pilot phase that

started on March 16, 2021, objectives were improvement in production capacity, quality and earnings of selected beekeepers, training of 35 beekeepers and follow up services upto honey harvest and organizing the Apiculture chain-specific

networks to collaborate with BTH. During the pilot phase, unemployed youth and former beekeepers were targeted to for training on latest beekeeping technologies and methods initially. However, the list of former beekeepers and un-



employed youth was provided by the divisional forest officers (DFOs) of selected areas, and on the basis of that information, five most suitable persons were selected at each location. The seven pilot locations for hive placement included Scrub Forest Jhelum, Mianwali plantation, Bhakkar plantation, Ban, Dino Park, PM House, President House, and Bani Gala Islamabad. The BTH official informed that the selected beneficiaries were provided on hand trainings at each location for colony management, and five modern hives along with bees were shifted at each location. While elaborating the modern bee hive design, he

said these hives were specially designed for BTH-Pilot Phase with improved design; three quarter size, triple story, bottom board was provided mesh for ventilation and brood chamber attached bottom board. The beneficiaries were trained to examine the hives and to do necessary colony management. They were also provided follow up services to keep the bees healthy and maintain strong colonies. At the end of acacia honey flow, when the bees had ripened the collected honey, the demonstration of honey harvesting activities with standard stainless steel equipment were successfully performed at each location.

Briefs

NUST retains
1st position
in Pak, 74th
in Asia

ISLAMABAD: Staying on its upward trajectory among Asian universities, the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) has retained first position among the Pakistani Higher Education Institutions for the 5th year on the trot, as per QS Asia University Rankings 2022.

According to a press release, NUST has ascended 2 positions from the last year's ranking of 76th position, thereby landing amongst the top 11% universities in Asia.

In addition, the university has taken a leap of 17 positions in the last five years, from 91st position in the 2018 Asian rankings, to the present position of 74th in the 2022 rankings, which is the fastest elevation by any Pakistani university during this period.

In his congratulatory remarks, Federal Minister for Science & Technology, Mr Shibli Faraz, extended heartfelt felicitations to NUST management, faculty, researchers and students on this crowning achievement, and hoped that NUST would continue this legacy of academic excellence to soon rise among the top 50 universities of the world. As many as 687 Asian universities are ranked in the latest edition of Asian Rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds, one of the most widely cited and prestigious university ranking agencies in the world. — DNA

‘Ehsaas’ to
help decline
inflation:
Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and Member National Assembly (MNA) Sadaqat Ali Abbasi Wednesday expressed hoped that Prime Minister Imran Khan's relief package under 'Ehsaas' programme would help decline inflation in the country.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that alleviation of poverty and steering the neglected section of society out of their backwardness was among the government's top most priorities. The government has adopting a coordinated mechanism to bring prices down and improve supplies of the commodities by anticipating shortages to benefit poor, he added.

Replying a question, he informed that inflation rate was lowest in Pakistan as compared to the other countries of the world, adding, Covid-19 had badly affected production of commodities and supply chain that has resulted in inflation across the world.

He said that the government was taking all practical steps to provide direct subsidy to the marginalized segments of the society on sugar, flour and other essential commodities. — APP

PSF to
educate
students on
plastic waste
management

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) has announced 'Essay, Poster and Trash to Model Competition' for schools students of Islamabad to create awareness on plastic waste management in youth.

The school students from Islamabad can participate in the competition and exhibit their innovative ideas regarding reusing and recycling plastic waste which is the main source of environmental pollution, said Principal Scientific Officer, PSF, Syeda Rehana Batool.

The main objective of the competition is to create plastic waste management awareness in youth and educate them how plastic waste materials are leading to environmental degradation, she said while talking to APP on Wednesday. The theme for the Poster Competition is "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Plastic Waste" while the Essay Competition is being arranged on the theme "Innovative Ideas to beat Plastic Waste". The theme of the Trash to Model Competition is "Recycled Plastic Waste Model", she informed. — APP

President urges the business
community to employ PWDs

The Government was taking every possible measure to provide a level playing field to the business community and entrepreneurs

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the business community to employ persons with disabilities (PWDs) and women, and improve their business skills to empower them financially.

He emphasized the need for facilitating differently-abled people (DAPs) by providing them easy access to buildings and workplaces. The President made these remarks while talking to a delegation of Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), led by President EO, Lahore Chapter, Mr Mohsin Khawaja, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today.

Talking to the delegation, the President said that the Government was taking every possible measure to provide a level playing field to the business community and entrepreneurs. He underlined that the business sector of the country needed to adopt an outward-looking approach and remain abreast of the changing trends in the international markets enabling them to compete in regional and global markets. He highlighted that the main focus of the Government's



economic strategy was to enhance the country's exports, reduce the trade deficit and support the underprivileged sections of society. The President stated that the Investment Policy of Pakistan had been designed to provide a comprehensive framework for creating a conducive business environment and attracting foreign investors. He added that the ease of doing

business reforms, initiated by the Government, had led to improving Pakistan's ranking in the global Ease of Doing Business Index from 108 to 136.

President EO, Lahore Chapter, Mr Mohsin Khawaja, informed the President that EO was playing an active role in the economic development of the country. The delegation apprised the

meeting about its contribution in exports and providing employment to the people. It expressed satisfaction over the economic policies of the Government and lauded its business and investment-friendly policies. The delegation also briefed the President about certain problems being faced by them. The President assured the del-

egation to take their grievances up with the concerned quarters for redressal.

He urged the delegation to play a proactive role in increasing the country's exports through value-addition and enhancing access to global markets. He also asked EO to play its role in encouraging the business community to pay their taxes.



ISLAMABAD: Switzerland ambassador to Pakistan Ambassador Bénédict de Cerjat calls on Federal Minister for Maritime affairs, Ali Ziadi. — DNA

CINUV executive
board meeting held

ISLAMABAD: The Second Executive Board meeting of COM-STECH-Islamic Countries Network for Virtual/Open Universities (CINUV) was held the other day at Anadolu University, Turkey. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor AIOU, Islamabad, Pakistan, who is also the first president of CINUV.

The executive board members from Syria, Ivory Coast, Malaysia, Iran, Turkey, Tunisia and Pakistan attended the meeting, said a press release received here on Wednesday. Dr Karim Najafi Barzegar, Secretary-General, CINUV from Iran presented the agenda of the meeting i.e., review of 2020-21 strategic plan and its implementation, progress, budget report for the financial year 2020-21 and the proposed budget for 2021-22. The members pledged to the success of CINUV among Islamic countries. On the occasion, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum said AIOU was ready to offer short-term fellowships to faculty members and students from the member countries to enhance their teaching and learning skills. "We can develop and offer joint degree programs or courses for the member countries", he added. The Executive Committee members agreed that CINUV would develop an accreditation framework for ODL/Online programs and courses to overcome the challenge of quality assurance which is one of the challenges faced by the virtual/open universities in the Islamic Countries. It was discussed in detail and decided that CINUV would also develop the Quality Assurance Framework for ODL programs with the help of Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey that would help the member countries to develop and offer quality education to their students. — APP

Rehman Malik urges govt to file
petition in ICJ against FATF

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Institute of Research and Reforms (IRR) Senator A. Rehman Malik Wednesday urged the government to file a petition in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against the FATF's discrimination and continued victimization of Pakistan.

In a letter to the government, he said that some inimical countries are using the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as a tool to put Pakistan under pressure with ulterior motives.

In another letter to President FATF Dr. Marcus Pleyer, he has expressed grave concerns over the discrimination against Pakistan and has pleaded to initiate proceedings against India for money laundering and terror



financing and investigate the Indian Foreign Minister's confessional statement of influencing FATF. In a press conference, Malik made letters public which were written to the government.

Malik wrote that the continued victimization of Pakistan by the FATF is of great concern to the people of Pakistan since it is damaging not only the country's economy but also its credibility internationally.

He wrote that Pakistan has been on the gray list since June 2018 and in every plenary session, FATF decides that Pakistan will continue to remain on the increased monitoring list-Grey List. "It is now crystal clear that some inimical countries are using FATF as a tool to put Pakistan under pressure with ulterior motives", he added. He wrote that it is discrimination against Pakistan especially when our compliance is

more than 88 % in fulfilling the demands of FATF.

Rehman Malik expressed that it was strange to note that many other states with more non-compliance to FATF are enjoying absolute immunity. He writes "I would like to further state that the USA has non-compliance of 22.5 %, France 25%, Israel 12.5%, and Japan 27.5% but none of these states are placed on the Grey List. Similarly, India has failed to meet the targets given by the FATF, yet no proceeding against it".

He said Pakistan has the right to know as to why this discrimination is against it when countries with a higher percentage of non-compliance to FATF are not placed on Grey List while Pakistan continues to be victimized without cogent reasons, he stressed.

TikTok
delegation
meets PTA
Chairman

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the TikTok (short video-sharing platform) held a detailed meeting with Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Major General (R) Amir Azeem Bajwa here on Wednesday to have meaningful engagement with the authority on content moderation in line with local laws and societal norms.

The delegation, which visited the PTA Headquarters, was led by TikTok Head of Public Policy-Emerging Markets and Head of Global CSR, Helena Lersch, a PTA press release said.

During the meeting, TikTok senior representatives highlighted various initiatives being taken along with future strategy/investment in local market for ensuring safe, productive, informative and legitimate content to Pakistani users.

The PTA chairman while acknowledging TikTok's efforts, assured to continue engagement with it to reach at a mutually acceptable mechanism for provision of safe, lawful and productive internet experience to the users in Pakistan. — APP

Punjab govt
taking steps
to improve air
quality

ISLAMABAD: The government's electric vehicle policy, tree plantation drive, and cooperation of every individual of society is essential to improve Air quality as no government can overcome all such problems alone, Provincial Minister for Environmental Protection Muhammad Rizwan said on Wednesday. Punjab government was taking a number of initiatives to improve the air quality and all relevant departments in Punjab were strictly implementing the instructions on smog control, he said while speaking to a private news channel.

He said that the current government of PTI has already taken some concrete steps, including planting trees, banning brick kiln operations, and shifting the brick kiln industry towards zig-zag technology to improve air quality. However, in order to mitigate the factors behind smog, there is a need to adopt preventive measures and increase awareness among the community, he added.

He further stressed that the transport sector also needs to make significant improvements to reduce harmful emissions and need to improve the efficiency of engines to move to zero-emission vehicles in the long term. Air quality in Lahore usually worsens during the winter season from October to February when farmers in the wider Punjab province set light to the remnants of crops, producing smoke that adds to smog, he explained. — DNA

Dengue
surveillance
teams check
869,553 sites

RAWALPINDI: As many as 1757 teams under ongoing indoor surveillance have inspected 869,553 sites in various district areas from October 13 to November 1. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC) Dr Sajjad Mehmood told APP Wednesday that 1321 teams checked 652,402 houses during indoor surveillance, and larvae were detected in 7609 houses.

The 436 teams, while during outdoor surveillance, checked 217,150 sites and larvae was found at 269 places.

He informed during indoor surveillance 23,399 houses were checked in the Chaklala cantonment board area by 54 teams, and larvae were found in 355 houses.

Similarly, 202 teams detected larvae in 2294 houses out of 87,640 houses checked in the Rawal Town area. Two hundred twenty-five teams found larvae in 1651 houses of a total of 98,252 houses checked in the Potohar Town area.

Meanwhile, in Rawalpindi Cantonment Board area, 126 teams identified larvae in 1777 houses out of 57,826 houses, 92 teams discovered it in five houses of 48,798 in Kahuta, in Taxila, 105 teams found larvae in 1249 houses of 56,835 houses. — APP

Pakistan nears completing FATF's action plans

"Two toughest action plans were given to Pakistan... and we showed excellent performance in a short span of time, and now we are near to complete the both tasks"

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar Wednesday said Pakistan was near completing the action plans given by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to ensure compliance in line with its standards.

"Two toughest action plans were given to Pakistan... and we showed excellent performance in a short span of time, and now we are near to complete the both tasks," he said while addressing the participants of first 'Assessors Course' here at the National FATF Secretariat. Hammad Azhar, who is also Chairman of Pakistan's Anti-Money Laundering (AML)/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) Group, said Pakistan was playing a key role in global fight against terrorism, its financing and money-laundering.

He said Pakistan learned a lot from this challenge [FATA action plans] converting it into an opportunity to improve the existing system. "This assessors' course is part of it as we want that Pakistan must have the local capacity to assess the public and private institutions dealing with financial flows."

Through this course, the minister vowed that Pakistan would continue with the 'improvement processes' for regional and world safety, even after completing the FATF action plans.

He expressed confidence that Pakistan's assessors, after getting training, would not only be able to represent the country at international level but also provide services to other countries.

"This [assessors course] is good development



which shows Pakistan's increasing compliance and commitment towards the FATF. Pakistan's system is much compliant to FATF as compared to most of the countries, present on this platform....our enforcement measures are far effective to them," he said. With these measures, Hammad Azhar said, Pakistan's future generations would get benefit due to lasting peace in the region and world. "It will greatly help check the menace like money-laundering, through which billions of dollars of poor countries are illegally shifted to other countries every year," he added.

Director General National FATF Secretariat Khawaja Adnan Zahir, in his welcome address to the concluding session of Pakistan's first 9-day Assessors Course, highlighted the importance of the training for law enforcement agencies and other departments, keeping in view the massive challenges the country faced over the last three years. During the past decade, he said, the global AML/CFT landscape had changed tremendously and regulatory checks on it had increased. "The economic and political image of many countries have been taint-

ed because of issues like ML/TF [Money Laundering & Terrorism Financing]," he said adding Pakistan had throughout been one of the most affected countries from ML/TF issues due to numerous reasons. At the same time, the DG said, Pakistan's resolve to fight back these challenges remained unprecedented. "In order to effectively address these challenges, it is important that we build a strong AML/CFT compliance regime by enhancing capacity of our institutions and the forefront officers."

He said such training courses would help Pakistan safeguard integrity and reputation of its system, besides producing the experts who would represent the country at international forums. Director National FATF Secretariat Rizwana Qazi presented a detailed briefing on working and objectives of the Secretariat, and structure of the training course that was attended by officers from different departments. Later, Minister for Energy awarded certificates among participants of the 'Assessors Course', were from different departments and ministries like Customs, FBR and National Counter Terrorist Authority, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Law and Justice and some others.

The course participants and the National FATF Secretariat officials took a group photo with the minister. Earlier upon arrival, Hammad Azhar unveiled the plaque of a newly established training hall at the secretariat. — APP

Looming gas shortage

PAKISTAN looks to face more gas shortages this winter. Due to the global rise in prices, the international prices for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) cargoes have shot up, leading to default on a commitment to supply LNG cargoes by two of Pakistan's long-term agreement signatories; ENI and Gunvor. Pakistan was initially supposed to get 11 LNG cargoes during November, which include 7 from a long-term agreement with Qatar, one each from the long-term contracts with ENI and Gunvor and two cargoes from spot purchases. However, now with the default, Pakistan looks set to receive only 9 LNG cargoes, which is not even nearly enough considering the demand for gas in the country.

What can Pakistan do to avoid an energy crisis this winter? Currently, the government's approach is to persuade the LNG suppliers to not default on their commitments. There are a number of persuasive tools Pakistan can employ, including legal recourse and the threat of penalty. The problem is that the penalty for default in contract is not nearly as much as the losses these LNG suppliers incurred in the price differentials between term contracts and the prevailing global market prices. The penalty is about \$3 per unit (30pc of the contract price), while the price differentials amount to around \$10-12 per million British Thermal Unit (MMBTU). It seems like the damage is done. The government should continue trying to avoid the event of default, while preparing for the worst-case scenario. What this debacle should teach us is to negotiate better, stricter contracts, envision real-world scenarios and proper due diligence. The government should have factored in that one of the LNG suppliers had a history of defaulting. Our investment treaties must also be better-vetted, and have stricter clauses on termination and default, giving companies more incentive to complete their contracts.



Lahore's air quality

LAHORE was in the news on Monday for the wrong reasons as it was declared to be the most polluted city in the world, leaving its traditional rival New Delhi far behind. The official air quality index (AQI) of Lahore was reported at 289 and international monitoring bodies put the score at 397, whereas New Delhi stood at 187. Individual areas around the city however fared worse with some of them crossing over the 500 mark. This is an extremely concerning situation, even by Lahore's standards, which has now become known for its toxic air. To put things into perspective, at 397 AQI, the pollution concentration is 34.8 times higher than the annual air quality value set by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Therefore, the air quality in Lahore has been hovering between the hazardous to extremely hazardous categories. According to experts, what made the conditions even more concerning on Monday is the fact that the readings were caused by pure pollution and not smog. Another worrying aspect is that this is purely indigenous as the country is still experiencing westerly winds, which means the wind is flowing towards India and pollution from that side of the border has still not invaded Pakistan. This implies that once the wind changes its direction and carries Indian pollution into Pakistan, the situation will likely worsen. This is untenable as the deteriorating air quality in the province poses serious consequences for our people both in the short and long term. Particularly for individuals with pre-existing conditions like asthma, going outdoors can be seriously hazardous. The authorities increasing their scrutiny of the hot spots of pollution are claiming to take action against those causing air and environmental pollution through the burning of crop stubble, garbage, and vehicular emissions. However, instituting such measures on a temporary basis and then letting go is not really a solution to this long standing problem that is only getting worse by the year. We will have to come up with more concrete policies and plans that help us reduce traffic and industrial pollution drastically. Until then, Lahore and its citizens will continue to suffer.

Afghanistan: Winter is coming

Senator Shery Rehman



Afghanistan consistently ranked between 1 and 2 out of 100 for rule of law and political stability over ten years, according to WB assessments. 64 out of 364 districts did not have any government civil office by 2019, and the social sectors were all in decline since 2014. As winter sets in, and Taliban capacity to manage predictability and aid supply chains continues to be in freefall, things look even worse

SOUTH Asia faces a perfect storm with the growing risk of an unstable Afghanistan, coupled with divided views in the international community on who must take responsibility for the strategic rubble of the American exit from the country. Despite the fact that the Taliban regime is unable to bridge the gap between promises of inclusive governance and a reality where girls cannot go to secondary school, the stark truth is that a humanitarian catastrophe will impact exactly those vulnerable citizens that the international community seeks to

protect. The broader context is that, within a decimated Afghan economy and diminishing trade lifelines from neighboring countries, 97 percent of Afghan citizens now face the looming risk of acute poverty by 2022.

While this shocking appraisal was made recently by UNDP Afghanistan, and prompted world leaders to pledge more than a billion dollars in Geneva in response to the UN Secretary General's appeal to overturn "Afghanistan's most perilous hour", the gap between pledges and cash streams is always too big to manage aid delivery models. Even if the United Nations' luck holds on the pledges that well exceeded the appeal for funds to avert a disaster in Afghanistan, the problems lie in the capacity for aid governance, or lack thereof. By October 25th, the World Food Programme pushed out a catastrophe alarm, saying that 22.8 million Afghan lives and livelihoods face acute hunger, including four million people in remote areas who urgently need food supplies before the winter snow closes routes down. Prolonged drought in parts of the country, COVID, and severe losses to this year's wheat crop has created this crisis. Food inflation has jumped by 50 percent, whereas other daily goods like petrol now cost 75 percent more. Recent cargo flights have brought in badly needed medical supplies and other relief, but there is need for much more help. Ten million children need humanitarian assistance to survive; whereas 3.2 million children under five years are already suffering from acute malnutrition in Afghanistan. Uncertainty around aid throws the Sehatmandi project in jeopardy, the country's vital source of primary and secondary health care for 31 out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan, whose 2,000 clinics and health facilities cater to millions of citizens. Healthcare professionals have warned that thousands of preventable deaths will occur only on account of COVID-19, if Sehatmandi cannot continue.

Before the Taliban assumed power, COVID-19 had already contracted the Afghan economy and increased urban poverty to 45.5 percent from 41.6 percent in 2020, whereas 34.3 percent of the employed population lived below the \$1.90 per day threshold. With dramatic economic shocks after the fall of Ashraf Ghani's government, poverty rates are expected to shoot up as much as 97 percent. There is a confluence of unfolding crises within this, including internal displacement, migration to cities, capital flight and the return of opium and other illicit trade that sustains a war economy. The problem of aid distribution and delivery mechanism is of course not new. Distribution

mechanisms have been compromised by corruption and misgovernance even before the Taliban took over. Now they are entirely missing. The Ghani administration governed through famously corrupt elite networks that controlled wealth and decision-making within "Kabulistan" to an extent that few benefits ever reached ordinary Afghan citizens. Survey after survey by international monitors throughout the last decade reported that Afghans saw their government as predatory; that corruption was endemic and public office was open for purchase. Afghanistan consistently ranked between 1 and 2 out of 100 for rule of law and political stability over ten years, according to World Bank assessments. 64 out of 364 districts did not have any government civil office by 2019, and the social sectors were all in decline since 2014.

As winter sets in, and Taliban capacity to manage predictability and aid supply chains continues to be in freefall, things look even worse. Inexperienced as they are in governance (the previous regime led by Mullah Umar is an unrealistic template in 2021), the interim cabinet is probably going to learn several hard truths about mechanizing food and health care provision for a population of 40 million people, to name only two areas that need urgent intervention. Women, who remain at risk, like minorities, will be the worst hit if pledges don't come through, or don't reach rural Afghanistan.

The crisis is real. Pictures of Afghan children starving to death on the streets of Kabul are not fake. 8.7 million people are already at the emergency level. Financial contributions, food and medical assistance must reach these Afghans. Two of the four crisis models projected by the UN are centered on trade with Pakistan, underscoring the necessity for trade lifelines flowing through Torkham and Chaman border crossings. As became especially evident during the COVID-19 period, several provinces bordering Pakistan and large parts of the populace depend on the trade in consumer perishables coming in via Pakistan. This trade is slowly picking up once again.

The Taliban regime may not see aid as an incentive to change or respond to it as a policy lever. But UN chief Anthony Guterres is right in saying the Afghan people "cannot suffer a collective punishment because the Taliban misbehaved." In the end it is the UN, whose timely alarm has reminded Western powers to prioritize Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis over regime considerations, has not fled the scene, and is organizing the daily heavy lift of whatever aid comes through, assisted by Afghanistan's civil society bedrock. This is the Afghanistan that can't be let down.

— Arab News

IIOJK; Human rights' violations continues...

Muhammad Akhter



In October 1947, Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru sent a telegram to his Pakistani counterpart, openly announcing that the Kashmir issue...

OCTOBER 27, 1947 a black day for humanity. The history of human rights' violations in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) traced back to the day India landed its troops in Srinagar. On the one hand, Indian occupational forces fought with the Kashmiri Freedom fighters and pushed them to the other side of the Jhelum River and on the other hand, it broke the mountains of atrocities on the local population. Meanwhile, when Maharaja Hari Singh went to Jammu, a delegation of Muslims there took a complaint to him that the local Sikh and Hindu population is inflicting atrocities on the Muslims. Instead of addressing the grievances, the Maharaja ordered to kill the Muslim delegation.

It should be noted, Prior to the issuance of this order, a large number of Sikh troops from the Sikh states of India adjoining Kashmir were called to Kashmir, who brutally massacred the Muslim population of Jammu in particular. In the series of atrocities on Muslims, during the struggle of Kashmiris for Pakistan's accession in 1947, more than half a million people were martyred all over Kashmir. It is very unfortunate, the situation even in the modern times is not changed. Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir has become a horrifying scene of oppression, where 14, 15, 16 corps of Indian troops are deployed with a total number of more than 9.5Lac. Who are involved in gross human rights' violations. Which means an average of one soldier for every 10 Kashmiris.

It is pertinent to mention here, that the occupied valley is currently the most militarized zone in the world and the occupying forces are inflicting such a story of oppression and barbarism that there is no piece of soil in the valley that does not contain the blood of the martyr. There is no river in which the blood of Kashmiri Muslims does not flow, there is no house in the valley in which no Muslim has been martyred and there is no person alive who has not been tortured by the occupying forces.

While, Under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958, the security forces have full authority to use any means at their disposal to crush the protesters and suppress the freedom movement. In doing so, no action can be taken against them, no matter how widespread their human rights violations. The act was enacted in occupied Kashmir in 1990, when the armed movement of Kashmiris had reached its peak and the central government had no tactic to crush them. Interestingly, As usual the implementation of the Act was strongly criticized by international human rights bodies, the United Nations, etc., as it directly empowered military officers to carry out all sorts of activities to ensure the success of their mission and to carry out Central Government orders and Tactics. In this regard, they were protected from all kinds of legal action.

The most dangerous use of this law was made on February 23, 1991, when the Indian army (mass-raped) more than 100 women of different ages during a one-night search operation in Kunan and Poshpora, two villages in Kupwara district of Kashmir. Whereas, when I was studying about Kunan and Poshpora incident, I came to know that

the number was about 150, according to Human Rights Watch and other human rights organizations. In this regard, under the pressure from these organizations, the New Delhi regime investigated the incident, but as usual, they kept a blind eye on it and declared it baseless and acquitted the soldiers those were involved. In fact, for the last 74 years, the Indian forces have been involved in gross human rights violations in occupied Kashmir, and international human rights organizations have reported large-scale violations, but India has always been arrogant. After every incident, his response has been that it is just a fabricated story or propaganda.

Interestingly, taking such a stand, India does not even allow international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to visit occupied Kashmir and observe the situation there. This attitude of India clearly shows that there are many stories of oppression in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and India does not allow any observer to go to Jammu and Kashmir to cover up the incidents so that its false claims is not opened. But, still Kashmiri youth through social media, they are trying to make the world aware of the situation and events that have happened to themselves and their nation. It is through social media that India's darkest and ugliest face can be seen in the meadows and mountains of Jammu and Kashmir with all its ugliness.

However, since August 5, 2019, the worst human rights violations have been going on in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) under the guise of curfew and lockdown. Humans and animals are being mistreated, but that does not mean that Kashmiris are only now demanding an end to curfews and lockdowns. Their demand goes even further and that is complete independence from India. In my opinion, Tactics such as curfews, lockdowns, oppression and violence have always been suffered by the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Such measures cannot frighten them and force them to give up their demands and mission. Had that been the case, India would not have needed to impose curfew in IIOJK.

In October 1947, Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru sent a telegram to his Pakistani counterpart, openly announcing that the Kashmir issue would be resolved in accordance with the aspirations and wishes of the Kashmiri people and no one other opinion in this regard. But, on contrary to that with the passage of time it is proven that, it was a just a hollow statement. In addition to this, when India took the issue to the UN platform, India reiterated its commitment to the international community that it would take a minute to resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with the aspirations and wishes of the Kashmiri people. But, India's promise has never been fulfilled till date. Now, on the one hand, the Indian fascist regime has abolished the special status of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and on the other hand, it continues to break mountains of atrocities on Kashmiris.

In conclusion, the current situation is very threatening to the world peace. Now a day, extreme wave of atrocities on Kashmiris' has begun; as habitually Indian occupied forces committing the gross human rights violation form very first day to till date. Recently, in the guise of search operations, lives have become extremely difficult and miserable. Just in the month of October, 2021 so far dozens of Kashmiri youth has been martyred by the Indian occupied forces in fake encounters. According to credible sources, the fascist ruling regime under Hindutva ideology, Once again planning to stage a "false flag operation" against Pakistan to divert the attention of the world community from the worst human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The worst human rights violations in IIOJK are on the rise and it is the duty of the international community to take immediate notice of these violations and force India to give Kashmiris their birthright of self-determination. Otherwise, blind eye over Kashmir issue and hollow statements will lead to the greatest debacle in the region.

The World Community must awake before it's too late!

— The writer is a Freelance Columnist. He can be reached at @MAKhter_ (on Twitter)

Saudi Arabia introduces new law to combat beggary

Dimah Talal Al-Sharif



The huge amount of charitable donations seized by beggars, unfortunately, have contributed to creating a loophole that has been exploited by many external parties with destructive goals. Campaigns run by terrorist groups, especially those groups who attack the Kingdom and its people, have taken advantage of this loophole

WHETHER directly or indirectly, we all know that beggary affects Saudi Arabia's economy in general. Of course, technical developments have contributed to this as social media has become a fertile ground for electronic begging and the financial manipulation of others.

With the adoption of the country's new anti-beggary law, all forms of electronic begging have become prohibited, whether by displaying payment bills, account numbers, or others. This ban includes all forms of beggary, regardless of the reasons or needs provided by the violators. Per the new law, whoever engages in begging, incites begging, agrees with the beggar, or helps in any way to practice beggary shall be punished. The penalty carries up to a six-month prison sentence, a fine of SR50,000 (\$13,329), or both. Culprits within an organized group who engage in begging could be punished with up to a one-year prison sentence, a fine of \$26,659, or both. The penalties also include deportation from the Kingdom for all expatriates. Tightening the penalties through a strict law and a clear procedural mechanism will greatly contribute to combating the beggary problem from a social point of view or economic one. The huge amount of charitable do-

nations seized by beggars, unfortunately, have contributed to creating a loophole that has been exploited by many external parties with destructive goals. Campaigns run by terrorist groups, especially those groups who attack the Kingdom and its people, have taken advantage of this loophole. I believe there is an appropriate, safe and direct alternative to donate through approved associations and platforms. These beneficiaries must allow and ensure donors a follow-up on a donation and confirm that the amount given was delivered, regardless of its value.

Moreover, the law does not address only the penalties, but it extends to include aftercare. The Saudi Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development will study the social, health, psychological, and economic circumstances of beggars in the Kingdom. After that, the ministry will guide beggars to benefit from the services provided by the government, private, and charitable agencies. The ministry, in cooperation with the Saudi Ministry of Interior, will also establish a database to record every case of beggary, arrest, and other cases where the ministry provided services. This will spread awareness of the psychological, social, economic, and security risks of beggary.

— Arab News

Briefs

PM Imran announces Rs 120 billion relief package

FROM PAGE 01

At the beginning of his address, the premier thanked China and Saudi Arabia for financially assisting Pakistan and said that had the country become a defaulter, the rupee would have depreciated more and inflation would have skyrocketed. The prime minister also shed light on the coronavirus situation across the world and said that, unlike other countries, the Pakistani government made strategic decisions related to the imposition of a lockdown and saved factories from closing down and agricultural activities were continuing as usual. "Due to the government's policies, cotton production had increased by 81%, while record-breaking motorcycle and tractor sales were witnessed in the country. "Urea was used 23% more by the farmers, indicating that the conditions were getting better. And when the farmers are happy, the production increases, and in return, it benefits the country," he said. In construction, there are Rs600 billion projects underway, as we had incentivised it, he said, adding that in the industrial sector, the large scale manufacturing had increased by 13% — more money and more jobs in the country. "We had [allowed] construction industry to operate; we tried to save our exports as if they would have stopped, then the dollar would have gone up against the rupee," he said. Due to the government's policies, rice production had gone up by 13.6%, corn 8%, sugarcane 22%, and wheat 8%. Talking about the increase in profits of several industrial sectors, he said engineering witnessed an increase of 350% in their profits, textile 163%, cars 131%, cement 113%, oil and gas 75%. The premier said electricity consumption had increased by 13%, indicating that the industry was growing. The prime minister stated that the tax revenue was increasing, which showed that our economic indicators are on the right track.

Pakistan ready to engage...

FROM PAGE 01

European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), Foreign Minister Qureshi underlined that Pakistan-EU Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP) has ushered in a new phase by laying a solid foundation and framework for multidimensional cooperation between the two sides. The Foreign Minister highlighted the enormous potential in diverse areas such as commerce and trade, sustainable development, and climate change and stressed the importance of translating them into tangible outcomes to further deepen Pakistan-EU relations. He conveyed Pakistan's readiness to continue to work for a productive and constructive partnership and underscored the importance of regular interactions between the two sides. The Foreign Minister added that the EU's GSP Plus facility to Pakistan had been mutually beneficial and played an important role in growth of trade between the two sides. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment towards effective implementation of GSP Plus related International Conventions and appreciated EU's support to Pakistan in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. The Foreign Minister also gave an account of various measures undertaken by the government for the welfare of the people of Pakistan. The two sides exchanged views on the latest developments in Afghanistan. The Foreign Minister highlighted that Pakistan had suffered the most due to conflict and instability in Afghanistan over the last 40 years and that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was in Pakistan's vital interest. The Foreign Minister appreciated that there was realization in the international community to engage with Afghanistan. He underlined that a humanitarian crisis and economic collapse in Afghanistan could have enormous consequences.

Guptill inspires NZ to a 16-run victory against Scotland

NZ, who earned their first points of the tournament with an eight-wicket mauling of India last time out, hit 35 from the first four overs, 24 of those off Wheal

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: Martin Guptill inspired New Zealand to a crucial victory against Scotland as the battle for the semifinals position heats up. Batting first, New Zealand scored 172/5 with Martin Guptill leading the charge. In reply, Scotland fought hard but remained 16 runs short which handed the Kiwis only their second victory of the tournament. The opener battled with the Scottish bowlers and the tough conditions to get to his 93-runs from 56 deliveries, falling short of what would have been only the second century of the tournament. Guptill made his runs off 56 balls with six fours and seven sixes. The 35-year-old opener put on 105 for the fourth wicket with Glenn Phillips as the Black Caps look to stay on course for a semifinal spot. Despite taking two wickets in two balls, Wheal conceded 40 runs off his four overs. New Zealand, who earned their first points of the tournament with an eight-wicket mauling of India last time out, hit 35 from the first four overs, 24 of those off Wheal. But Safayan Sharif then sent back Dar-

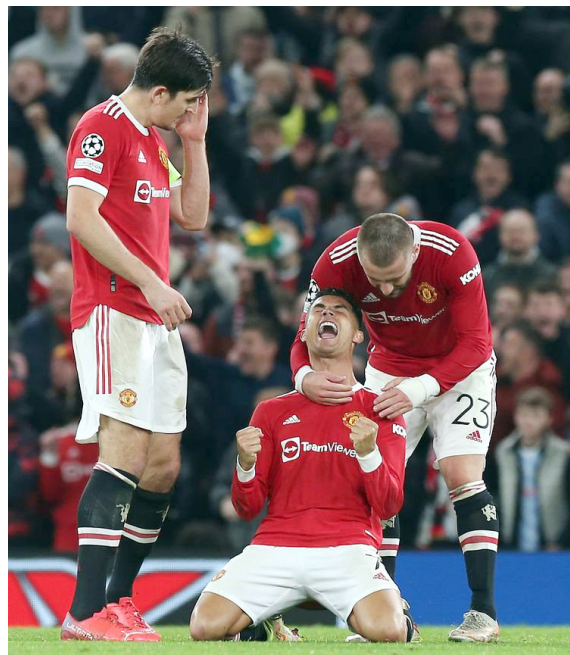


yl Mitchell for 13 and, four balls later claimed the key wicket of skipper Kane Williamson for naught. At the midway point, the Black Caps were 70-3 before Guptill completed his 18th T20 half-century off 35 balls with another six, his 150th

in the format - most by any batter. Sharif was the pick of the bowlers for Scotland with figures of 2-28. In return, Scotland showed great resistance and resilience but ultimately fell short on the big stage. The Scottish fell 16 runs short of the 173-

run target posted earlier by New Zealand. Skipper Kyle Coetzer (17) was the first one to walk as he was trapped by Trent Boult, leading him to chip the ball to mid-on and in the safe hands of Tim Southee. Pacer Southee remained in action as he proceeded to take another catch, this time of George Munsey for 22. He then came into the attack to remove Matthew Cross who had hit five boundaries earlier off of Adam Milne in an over. Mitchell Santner kept things tight with his precise spin bowling as he went wicketless but only leaked 23 runs from his four overs. Trying to keep up with the run-rate, Scotland lost wickets of Richie Berrington and Calum MacLeod in quick succession which made the chase a near-impossible task. Despite the equation favoring New Zealand, Michael Leask fought back with an unbeaten 42 off of 20 deliveries which featured 2 boundaries and 2 maximums. However, his efforts were all in vain. Ish Sodhi remained consistent with the wickets, taking two, but ended up conceding 42 runs whereas Trent Boult picked up 2 wickets while Tim Southee only managed one.

Ronaldo is Man Utd's Jordan, says Solskjaer



SPORTS DESK

MILAN: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer compared Cristiano Ronaldo's talismanic influence at Manchester United to NBA legend Michael Jordan after he scored twice to salvage a 2-2 draw at Atalanta on Tuesday. For the third time in four Champions League games

since returning for a second spell at Old Trafford, Ronaldo rescued United with a late goal as his sweetly struck volley in the 91st minute snatched a barely deserved point in Bergamo. The 36-year-old also scored late winners at home to Villarreal and Atalanta, when United came from 2-0 down to win 3-2 two weeks ago. However, another dis-

jointed display bailed out by Ronaldo's brilliant finishing will do little to ease the pressure on United boss Solskjaer. "Ronaldo is one of the best that's ever played this game. I'm sure this is the same feeling Chicago Bulls got with Michael Jordan," said Solskjaer, referring to the American star who won six NBA titles in two spells with the Bulls. "If you want the ball to fall to someone in the last minute, Cristiano is the one. He's done it so many times for us and I'm okay with him scoring more goals than me." Ronaldo's double took him past Solskjaer's 126 goals for the club. Solskjaer's switch to a back three for a 3-0 win at Tottenham on Saturday resulted in some much-needed defensive solidity after a humiliating 5-0 thrashing at home to Liverpool. However, that was just the Red Devils second clean sheet in 22 games and their problems at the back were again easily exposed in Bergamo. David de Gea has been one of United's best performers of a desperately disappointing season so far, but he was at fault as he let Josip Illicic's

shot squirm under his body and over the line. Duvan Zapata had two glorious chances to double the Italians' lead, but the Colombian firstly fired high and wide before being denied by a brilliant block by Eric Bailly. United suffered another blow when Raphael Varane was forced off midway through the first-half with what appeared the recurrence of a groin injury. However, the individual quality in the United squad was in evidence for a brilliant equaliser in first-half stoppage time. Mason Greenwood played in Bruno Fernandes, who picked out Ronaldo with a backheel for the Portuguese to blast home his eighth goal in 12 games since returning to Old Trafford in August. But United have only won five of those games as Solskjaer continues to struggle to find the right balance. The offside flag initially came to United's rescue when Zapata finally found the net 11 minutes into the second period. After a review that took over two minutes, the Gwiness Stadium erupted in celebration when the goal was given.

China tennis star says ex-vice premier sexually abused her

BEIJING: Former world No.1 tennis doubles player Peng Shuai, one of China's biggest sporting stars, has publicly accused a former Chinese vice premier of forcing her into sex several years ago in a social media post that was later deleted. According to a screenshot of her verified Weibo account late on Tuesday, Peng said that Zhang Gaoli, who became a member of the Politburo Standing Committee - China's top decision-making body - coerced her into sex and they later had an on-off consensual relationship. The post was deleted around half an hour after it was published, although searches for Peng's name on China's tightly controlled internet surged after the posting, and screenshots were shared among private WeChat groups and over iMessage. China's internet is heavily censored and the private lives of top leaders are an especially sensitive subject. Peng, who said in the post that she could provide no evidence to back her allegations, did not respond to a request for comment sent to her Weibo account.

Sports marketing agency APG, which says on its website that it represents her, did not respond to a request for comment. China's State Council Information Office did not immediately respond to requests for comment, including for comment from Zhang. When asked at a regular daily briefing about the Weibo post, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said he was not aware of the issue and that "this is not a question related to foreign affairs". Weibo and Tencent, which operates WeChat, did not respond to requests for comment. Sexual harassment and assault were for years rarely broached in public in China until a #MeToo movement began in 2018, when a Beijing college student publicly accused her professor of sexual harassment. That spread to non-government organisations, media and other industries. - APP

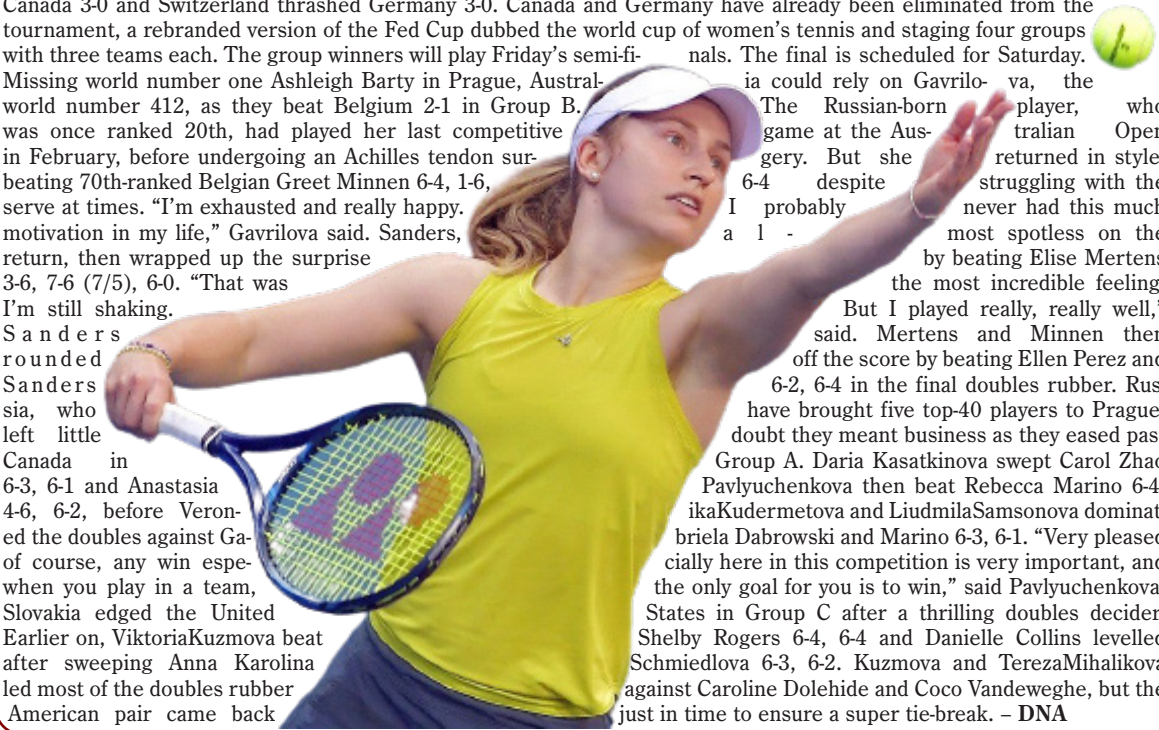


Dravid to replace Shastri as coach

NEW DELHI: India have appointed former captain Rahul Dravid as head coach to replace the outgoing Ravi Shastri. Batting legend Dravid, 48, will take charge in all three formats at the end of the ongoing Men's T20 World Cup, starting with New Zealand's tour of India in November and December. Former all-rounder Shastri, 59, took over in 2017 and his contract finishes at the end of the T20 World Cup. "It is an absolute honour to be appointed head coach," said Dravid. "There are some marquee multi-team events in the next two years, and I look forward to working with the players and the support staff to achieve our potential." The next Men's T20 World Cup is set to take place in Australia in October and November next year, before India host the next Men's 50-over World Cup in 2023. The Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) announced the news during India's T20 World Cup game against Afghanistan on Wednesday. Right-hander Dravid is the fourth-highest men's Test run-scorer of all time, with 13,288 runs and 36 centuries in 164 matches at an average of 52.31. He led India in 25 Tests after Sourav Ganguly was removed as captain in 2005, winning only eight matches, but in 2007 did lead his side to their first series victory in England since 1986. Dravid also scored 10,889 runs in 344 one-day internationals, with 12 centuries at an average of 39.16. He was part of the 1999 50-over World Cup-winning side and also kept wicket in 73 ODIs. Dravid retired from ODIs in 2011, having not been part of the World Cup-winning squad earlier that year, before retiring from Test and domestic cricket in 2012. - APP

Aussies stun Belgium at BJK Cup

PRAGUE: Daria Gavrilova and Storm Sanders led Australia to a surprising win over Belgium while Slovakia stunned the United States at the Billie Jean King Cup final tournament in Prague on Tuesday. In the day's other ties, Russia swept Canada 3-0 and Switzerland thrashed Germany 3-0. Canada and Germany have already been eliminated from the tournament, a rebranded version of the Fed Cup dubbed the world cup of women's tennis and staging four groups with three teams each. The group winners will play Friday's semi-finals. The final is scheduled for Saturday. Australia could rely on Gavrilova, the Russian-born player, who game at the Australian Open. But she returned in style, 6-4 despite struggling with the 1 - I probably never had this much a 1 - by beating Elise Mertens the most incredible feeling, But I played really, really well," said. Mertens and Minnen then off the score by beating Ellen Perez and 6-2, 6-4 in the final doubles rubber. Russia have brought five top-40 players to Prague, doubt they meant business as they eased past Group A. Daria Kasatkina swept Carol Zhao Pavlyuchenkova then beat Rebecca Marino 6-4, ika Kudermetova and Liudmila Samsonova dominated Dabrowski and Marino 6-3, 6-1. "Very pleased cially here in this competition is very important, and the only goal for you is to win," said Pavlyuchenkova. States in Group C after a thrilling doubles decider. Shelby Rogers 6-4, 6-4 and Danielle Collins levelled Schmiedlova 6-3, 6-2. Kuzmova and Tereza Mihalikova against Caroline Dolehide and Coco Vandeweghe, but the just in time to ensure a super tie-break. - DNA



Djokovic survives scare at Paris Masters

PARIS: World number one Novak Djokovic endured a tough return to the ATP singles circuit but battled through to beat Marton Fucsovics of Hungary 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 in the second round of the Paris Masters on Tuesday. The 34-year-old 20-time Grand Slam champion had said on Sunday his greatest fear was lack of match practice having not played since Daniil Medvedev dashed his dreams of a Grand Slam sweep in the US Open final in September. The Serbian's fears were borne out as Fucsovics put up a sterner test than the 'rabbit caught in the headlights' one he had produced when they met in the Wimbledon quarter-finals earlier this year. "It is my return to competition after almost two months of not playing in an official tournament," said Djokovic. "Thus it was difficult to get into my rhythm but I am happy it is a decent win." Djokovic - who rare for him is also

playing the doubles in Paris - said he expected a tough match despite having beaten his opponent the three previous times they had met. "It was a super battle," he said. "Now I must play more to rediscover my level of intensity. The more matches I play the better I will play. "I know this well as I have been in this situation before. Hopefully that experience will be useful." Djokovic barely had to engage second gear when cruising to the first set in 38 minutes with the loss of just two games. But Fucsovics broke early to go 3-1 up in the second, energising the evening crowd at Bercy. Djokovic served to save the set to love at 5-3, but the Australian, French and Wimbledon champion was unable to prevent Fucsovics serving out to take the match to a decisive set. Djokovic, though, pulled it together in the third set and broke his 29-year-old opponent to go 4-2 up. Djokovic had a match point on

Fucsovics' next service game as he turned the screw but the Hungarian saved it and stayed in the contest by winning the game to trail 3-5. Djokovic, though, made no mistake when he served for the match to see off his 40th-ranked opponent and progress to the third round.



He will play the winner of the all-French clash between Adrian Mannarino and mercurial Gael Monfils. Earlier another seed had had a tough time of it as well. Felix Auger-Aliassime set up a second round clash with Dominik Koepfer, conqueror of Andy Murray, after coming from a set down to beat Italian qualifier Gianluca Mager 4-6, 6-4, 6-1. The 21-year-old Canadian ninth seed needed five match points to do so against a dogged opponent, who played way above his world ranking of 66. Auger-Aliassime will need to be on his mettle when he faces Koepfer who saved seven match points against world number one Murray on Monday before sealing victory with his first. "The end of the first set was disappointing but I reacted well," said Auger-Aliassime. "I bounced back in the second set. After returning so well, I created occasions and I won the second set and then I

finished very well. "So the match was indeed with an upward phase which was positive for me." Auger-Aliassime has been very much also on an upward phase including reaching the US Open semi-finals although aided by his quarter-final opponent Carlos Alcaraz retiring from the match with a thigh injury. The 18-year-old Spaniard, though, has recovered and showed real toughness in overcoming Frenchman Pierre-Hugues Herbert 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/2), 7-5 in a thrilling see-saw encounter which lasted seven minutes shy of three hours. Herbert, fired up by a partisan crowd, had saved two match points but then limply handed victory to Alcaraz with his 10th double fault of the match. Alcaraz will face the in-form Italian eighth seed Jannik Sinner in the second round in what promises to be a cracking encounter of two of the up and coming young talents. - Agencies

Opposition slams gov't's...

FROM PAGE 01

She said that global oil prices were higher during the PPP's tenure but local petrol prices were "half" as compared to the current petrol prices. "Bizarre speech by the Blame Minister of Pakistan. Says all the unprecedented inflation, tsunami of oil, gas prices, essentials is becoz [sic] of the past govts & international markets. PPP faced higher global oil prices over 130 \$ per barrel but local petrol was half of today prices," wrote Rehman. She continued: "Basically he took no responsibility for the economic crisis, skyrocketing inflation, unprecedented public debt, plummeting rupee and just said 'get ready for more price hikes.' And oh, a 'relief package' for 2 crore out of 22 crore people. Which package? Ghee prices rose as he spoke." Meanwhile, PML-N leader and former Sindh governor Muhammad Zubair said that offering subsidies on the products is the "acceptance of the failure" that the government couldn't control the prices.

NCOC eases curbs on inbound...

FROM PAGE 01

Low Vaccination Rate were placed in 'Category C' including Armenia, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Iraq and Mexico. However, the High-Risk Countries comprised of Mongolia, Slovenia, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago and Ukraine. Moreover, in the wake of high disease indicators, Russia, Iran, Ethiopia, Germany, Philippines and Afghanistan were placed in high-risk category for continuous monitoring, however, no travel restriction was imposed on these states. All countries (including high-risk countries) less Category 'C' were placed in Category 'B' with no inbound travel restrictions, the Forum decided in its meeting. After the revised policy, Health and Testing protocols for Inbound Air Travel for implementation with effect from November 5, 2021, were 100% vaccination for all inbound passengers, all passengers of 06-year age and above (locals / foreigners) should be in possession of negative PCR test report (maximum 72 hours old) before boarding.

Pakistan welcomes first Uzbek...

FROM PAGE 01

The foreign minister emphasised the importance of enhanced political and economic linkages and operationalisation of the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Transit Trade Agreement (UPTTA) recently signed between the two countries. Highlighting the importance of regional connectivity in Pakistan's "Vision Central Asia" policy, he reiterated Pakistan's continued support of the Trans-Afghan railway project and reaffirmed commitment for its early completion. He said that peace and stability in Afghanistan were vital to reap the benefits of regional connectivity projects for the entire region.

Qureshi meets...

FROM PAGE 01

The Lahore chapter of the Entrepreneurs Organization comprises 70 members of leading business groups, representing a cross section of Pakistan's industries. Foreign Minister spoke to the business delegation about Pakistan's vision for economic diplomacy and highlighted the measures taken thus far. He called for win-win partnership between the Government and the private sector to work on shared objectives of economic development and prosperity. He also shared Prime Minister Imran Khan's emphasis on developing greater trade and investment opportunities for and in Pakistan. Members of the visiting delegation apprised the Foreign Minister about steps they have taken to contribute to Pakistan's economy and their future plans for expansion. The meeting was part of Pakistan's overall shift from geo-politics to geo-economics and was a continuation of the Foreign Minister's regular interactions with different stakeholders on economic diplomacy.

Briefs

Dutch king, queen visit the UAE



ABU DHABI: The king and queen of the Netherlands visited a strawberry farm Wednesday as part of a tour of the United Arab Emirates, which will see the royals also stop by Dubai's Expo 2020.

King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima visited a strawberry farm in the deserts of Abu Dhabi near the city of Sweihan. While there, they toured the facility, walking among the rows of strawberries growing inside the facility. The king and queen later will visit the Netherlands pavilion at Expo 2020, the world's fair now ongoing in Dubai. — APP

US weighs sanctions on Ethiopia over Tigray war

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration is ending Ethiopia's special trade status under U.S. law — the latest penalty imposed on the Ethiopian government amid its ongoing war with the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, the regional force that once controlled the federal government. The decision, announced Tuesday by the White House, comes amid an expansion in the conflict, which has its anniversary Wednesday. The U.S. special envoy for the Horn of Africa warned it could spill out into a wider civil war, threatening even more suffering for the Ethiopian people and more instability in the region. To halt that expansion and push both sides to negotiate, the administration has prepared targeted U.S. sanctions against figures on all sides, according to two sources familiar with the plans. The State Department has also prepared a declaration that the Ethiopian government's atrocities against Tigrayans constitute a genocide, both sources said, although it's unclear whether Secretary of State Antony Blinken will sign it and when. A State Department spokesperson declined to speak to a possible genocide declaration, but told ABC News they are "deeply alarmed by the continuing violence in northern Ethiopia" and "undertaking a review of available facts to assess whether atrocity crimes have been committed." Every side in the conflict was being accused of atrocities, including rape and sexual assault, executions, displacement and the destruction of hospitals, farms and food stores.

European lawmakers meet Taiwan Premier

AGENCIES

TAIPEI: Bumping their elbows in greeting, European Union parliamentarians met with Taiwan's premier on Wednesday in the first official visit of an EU delegation to the self-ruled island, which is also claimed by China. Thirteen members of the EU committee on foreign interference in democratic processes are visiting Taiwan, after the European Parliament passed a resolution last month calling for the body to "intensify EU-Taiwan political relations." "Although we are geographically very far away, between our two sides, we share the same values, such as freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law. ... In those regards, we are actually very close," Taiwan's Premier Su Tseng-chang said. The European delegation will also meet President Tsai Ing-wen and Digital Minister Audrey Tang, and NGOs and others working on countering disinformation. The visit comes amid growing support for the democratic island, which China claims as part of its territory to be annexed by force if necessary, and rising negative perceptions toward Beijing in Western countries.

Azerbaijan follows up appeal on Armenia's war crimes at ICJ

Prosecutor-general stressed that the evidence forms a strong basis to accuse Armenia and its military-political leadership of committing war crimes against Azerbaijan. "This work is of historical importance. The future generation must know about this and must be informed"

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani Prosecutor-General Kamran Aliyev has said that measures related to Azerbaijan's appeal to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over Armenia's war crimes are being taken, local media reported on November 2. Aliyev underlined that the Prosecutor-General's Office has collected the necessary evidence about Armenia's war crimes against Azerbaijan, the report added. "Physical evidence is used during these processes. Prosecutors thoroughly conduct an investigation into each crime," Aliyev said. Azerbaijan has been collecting evidence about Armenia-committed crimes since the occupation of the country's territories, he noted. Aliyev added that prosecutors inspect each liberated region to collect proof of war crimes. "The destroyed houses, historical monuments, and environmental crimes were documented separately, photos and videos were taken during the inspection," Aliyev said. The prosecutor-general stressed that the evidence forms a strong basis to accuse Armenia and its military-political leadership of committing war crimes against Azerbaijan. "This work is of historical importance. The future generation must know about this and must be informed," Aliyev emphasized. Meanwhile, the prosecutor-general stressed

Azerbaijan, Russia eye border demarcation

BAKU: The tenth meeting of the Azerbaijani-Russian joint demarcation commission was held in Russia's Pyatigorsk city on October 27-28, the Foreign Ministry reported on November 2. During the meeting, the participants discussed issues related to the continuation of the Azerbaijani-Russian state border demarcation process. In addition, the commission's work plan for 2022 was approved. The parties stated that the work plan of the Azerbaijani-Russian joint demarcation commission for 2021 was fully implemented. It should be noted that the next meeting of the commission is planned to be held in Azerbaijan. The dates of the meeting will be agreed upon through diplomatic channels. The border between Russia and Azerbaijan

that police seized drug crops in the Azerbaijani lands liberated from Armenia's occupation in 2020. "After the liberation of Azerbaijani lands from occupation, representatives of the Interior Ministry reported such facts," Aliyev added. Over its 30-year occupation of Azerbaijani territories, Armenia has used Karabakh and adjacent seven regions for its illegal activities,

including arms and drugs trafficking. Although Azerbaijan repeatedly raised the issue before the international organizations, Armenia continued in the same vein, creating all the necessary conditions there for the illegal cultivation, production, and further distribution of narcotic substances. The clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan resumed after Armenia launched large-

scale attacks on Azerbaijani forces and civilians on September 27. During the second Karabakh war, Ganja, Barda, Yevlakh, Beylagan, Tartar, Gabala, Goranboy, Aghjabadi, Khizi and other Azerbaijani cities and regions came under Armenia's missile and artillery fire.

International human rights watchdogs Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch verified the use of banned cluster bombs and rockets by Armenia in its attacks against Azerbaijani cities.

As a result of the military aggression by Armenia, 100 Azerbaijani civilians were killed, including 12 children and 27 women. As many as 454 people were injured, including 35 children. Some 181 children lost one parent, five children lost both parents, one family died. In total, 12,292 residential and non-residential buildings and 288 vehicles were damaged.

A criminal case has been initiated into the death of every civilian in Azerbaijan caused by the Armenian terror, and appeals have been sent to international courts and organizations. A Moscow-brokered ceasefire deal that Baku and Yerevan signed on November 10, 2020, brought an end to six weeks of fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani army declared a victory against the Armenian troops. The signed agreement obliged Armenia to withdraw its troops from the Azerbaijani lands that it has occupied since the early 1990s.

Uzbekistan: No special places for Afghan refugees

DNA

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan initially stated that it would not accept refugees from Afghanistan. Uzbekistan will not create special places for refugees from Afghanistan. This was stated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov in an interview with Russian media. "I will say right away - there is no flow of refugees, there are no refugees at all. We initially stated that we would not accept refugees. Our position was to help Afghanistan, but not by transporting a group of Afghans to the territory of a third country, and then as refugees to take care of them, feed and take care of them," the minister said.

"Secondly, we provided assistance in transit and transportation to third countries, representatives of the diplomatic corps and people who were threatened with a really concrete threat of reprisals. This was a category that entered the territory of Uzbekistan and immediately transported to a third country. In this regard, we provided assistance, if there is a need for someone to help, leave Afghanistan through Uzbekistan, we are ready to provide such services. But creating special places for refugees will not happen," added Abdulaziz Kamilov. "Moreover, when a large



mass of people poured out from Afghanistan, among whom, perhaps, some were really refugees, others just wanted to take advantage of the situation and in search of a better life to leave Afghanistan, hoping that they would be taken from Uzbekistan to Western countries, Europe. We calmly agreed with the Taliban to prevent an influx of uncontrolled refugees. They helped us, calmed people down, told them: come back home and live in peace," he said. "Since then, practically no one has tried to illegally cross the border. We also do not observe an uncontrolled flow of refugees. The situation on the border is calm," the Uzbek FM said.

"Moreover, we have established special relations with Balkh province - it is directly adjacent to Surkhandarya. We have established cooperation between governors, economic structures, especially in terms of transit. Because everything - the bridge, the railroad and the road - rests on Balkh province," Kamilov emphasized.



BAKU: Pakistan ambassador to Azerbaijan join the literary giants of Azerbaijan National Academy of Science. The ceremony marked the launch of poetic translation of the selected works of Allama Mohammad Iqbal, Pakistan's national poet and great thinker of the 20th Century. — DNA

China, Russia urge UNSC to end key sanctions on N. Korea

AGENCIES

NEW YORK: China and Russia are urging the U.N. Security Council to end a host of sanctions against North Korea ranging from the export of seafood and textiles to the cap on imports of refined petroleum products and the ban on its citizens working overseas and sending home their earnings. A draft resolution circulated to council members and obtained Tuesday by The As-

sociated Press stresses the economic difficulties in North Korea and says these and other sanctions should be lifted "with the intent of enhancing the livelihood of the civilian population."

The Security Council initially imposed sanctions on North Korea after its first nuclear test in 2006 and made them tougher and tougher in response to further nuclear tests and an increasingly sophisticated ballistic missile program. Former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley said in

2018 that the sanctions had cut off all North Korea exports and 90% of its trade and disbanded the pool of workers whom North Korea sent abroad to earn hard currency. The draft resolution expands on a similar resolution Russia and China had circulated in December 2019. It faced opposition from Western nations when it was discussed and was never formally introduced at the council for a vote. Several U.N. diplomats, speaking on condition of an-

onymity because the draft has not been made public, indicated it would likely face a similar uphill struggle today, pointing to North Korea's continuing violations of U.N. sanctions. The U.S. Mission to the United Nations said North Korea has failed to comply with sanctions on its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and the Biden administration "remains committed to the sanctions regime" and calls on all member states to enforce the measures.

Poland summons Belarus envoy

WARSAW: Poland's foreign ministry said Wednesday that it summoned a Belarusian diplomat over an "intrusion" into Polish territory of "uniformed individuals armed with long guns." Polish soldiers noticed three uniformed people with long weapons, said Stanislaw Zaryn, the spokesman for Poland's security services. "After meeting a Polish patrol, they reloaded their weapons and then departed towards Belarus," Zaryn said. Zaryn told The Associated Press that the incident occurred about 300 meters (300 yards) into Poland from the border with Belarus. — APP



BAKU: A group of visiting journalists from Pakistan pose for a group photo on their arrival at the Baku Airport. — DNA

Gulf States doubt US commitment to Middle East

Two failed military campaigns in as many decades have brought Washington's influence into question, Turki al-Faisal said, citing the chaotic withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover in August and the planned departure of combat forces from Iraq

WEB DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's former intelligence chief has claimed that the US' military and policy failures in the Middle East have caused the Gulf states "strategic confusion" over the Biden administration's commitment to the region. Two failed military campaigns in as many decades have brought Washington's influence into question, Turki al-Faisal said, citing the chaotic withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover in August and

the planned departure of combat forces from Iraq. Noting that the relationship between the US and the Gulf states was "imperative to peace and stability in the region," al-Faisal — a former ambassador to the US — warned US President Joe Biden to "weigh [the issues] carefully" before taking "any steps ... that impact this historical bond," and suggested "[building] on it" to create a "new security structure for the region."

This failed experience in Afghanistan and, I would say, semi-failed experience in Iraq, are respon-



sible for the perceived failure or defeat of a great power, the US, and the greatest military alliance, NATO, in sustaining a regime and project of their creation. After its run as the "dominant power for the last seven decades,"

al-Faisal said "doubts" about the US were "accumulating" and causing "strategic regional confusion" that, in turn, would lead to "more conflicts and crises." He added that the Middle East greatly feared the "danger" posed by this confusion.

In previous remarks criticizing the US pull-out from Afghanistan, al-Faisal described it as a combination of "incompetence, carelessness, [and] bad management." He also warned that the stockpile of weapons and military tech that had been left behind could end up being used against Riyadh. Also on rt.com "Threat to the plan-

et?" Exiled Saudi spy master claims Mohammed bin Salman is 'KILLER, PSYCHOPATH' in explosive interview.

These latest comments are in keeping with al-Faisal's recently expressed views about the strained relationship between Riyadh and Washington. In a CNBC interview in September, he called on Biden to reconsider US plans to withdraw its defense equipment from Saudi Arabia. In 2019, the US deployed two Patriot missile artillery batteries in the kingdom, following attacks on Saudi oil facilities.

FB to shut down face recognition system

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Facebook said it will shut down its face-recognition system and delete the faceprints of more than 1 billion people amid growing concerns about the technology and its misuse by governments, police and others. "This change will represent one of the largest shifts in facial recognition usage in the technology's history," Jerome Pesenti, vice president of artificial intelligence for Facebook's new parent company, Meta, wrote in a blog post on Tuesday. He said the company was trying to weigh the positive use cases for the technology "against growing societal concerns, especially as regulators have yet to provide clear rules." The company in the coming weeks will delete "more than a billion people's individual facial recognition templates," he said. Facebook's about-face follows a busy few weeks. On Thursday it announced its new name Meta for Facebook the company, but not the social network. The change, it said, will help it focus on building technology for what it envisions as the next iteration of the internet — the "metaverse." The company is also facing perhaps its biggest public relations crisis to date after leaked documents from whistleblower Frances Haugen showed that it has known about the harms its products cause and often did little or nothing to mitigate them. More than a third of Facebook's daily active users have opted in to have their faces recognized by the social network's system.

Azerbaijan, WB mull renewable energy co-op

FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijan and the World Bank have discussed cooperation prospects in the fields of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, the Energy Ministry reported on November 3. The discussion took place at the meeting between Azerbaijani Energy Minister Fariz Shahbazov and World Bank Country Manager for Azerbaijan Sarah Michael. During the meeting, the parties discussed ongoing successful bilateral cooperation and the status of the implementation of joint projects. Issues arising from the memorandum of understanding signed between the ministry and the IFC, a member of the WB Group, on cooperation in the use of offshore wind energy resources were discussed. The parties also exchanged views on the work done to assess the potential of wind energy of the Azerbaijani section of the Caspian Sea and the development of a road-map in the field of energy. The sides expressed their confidence that joint cooperation efforts will contribute to the development of "green energy" production in Azerbaijan, as well as to reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere. A number of other issues of mutual interest were discussed at the meeting. Azerbaijan joined the WB in 1992. Since then, the bank has financed over 50 projects with total commitments of \$4.4 billion.

Slovenia records highest daily Covid cases

ZAGREB: Slovenia registered a record high 3,456 COVID-19 infections on Tuesday, or 44.7% of the number of people tested, the state health institute said, as medical experts suggest tighter restrictions to rein in the pandemic. Currently there are 29,354 active COVID-19 cases in the small Alpine state of some two million people. There are 1.12 million fully vaccinated people, or 53% of the overall population. Medical experts this week proposed tightening curbs on gatherings, including shorter opening hours for bars and restaurants and work from home for public sector employees, national television reported. The government is expected to discuss the pandemic on Thursday. — APP

Briefs

Pak, China to develop Sindh, Hubei as sister provinces

DNA

WUHAN: Pakistan and China inked a deal to develop Sindh and Hubei as sister provinces to foster cooperation in diverse fields, including education, science and technology.

Pakistan's Ambassador to China Mo'in-ul-Haque and Governor of Hubei Provincial People's Government Wang Zhonglin signed the agreement during a meeting in Wuhan.

The objective of the agreement is to foster cooperation in the fields of education, science and technology, as well as technical and vocational training. Speaking on the occasion, the envoy lauded the Hubei governor for his support in strengthening China-Pakistan ties.

Governor Wang said that China and Pakistan are "All-Weather Strategic Co-operative" partners and their iron clad friendship enjoyed strong support and consensus of leaders of both countries.

The two countries stood in solidarity with each other and worked closely to strengthen and deepen their bilateral relations during the last 70 years, he added. He hoped the agreement would lead to cooperation in the fields of education, science and technology, technical and vocational training and people to people exchanges.

Dollar falls below Rs170 against rupee

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee continued to perform well against the US dollar, as the greenback declined by a fresh Rs0.57 to Rs169.97 in the inter-bank market.

Analysts believe that the rupee is recovering on the back of a 7% month-on-month decline in the trade deficit and clarity on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

With a fresh increase of 0.34%, the currency has gained around Rs5.30 against the greenback during the last six sessions. While it has appreciated by 3.12% since its all-time low of Rs175.27 recorded on October 26. — APP

Germany witnessing pandemic of unvaccinated

AGENCIES

FRANKFURT: Germany is experiencing a "massive" pandemic of the unvaccinated, Health Minister Jens Spahn said Wednesday, calling for curbs targeting those not inoculated to tame a resurgence in Covid cases.

The fourth wave is raging "with exceptional force", Spahn said.

"We are currently experiencing mainly a pandemic of the unvaccinated and it is massive," he told reporters, warning that "in some regions in Germany intensive care beds are running out again."

Germany, the EU's most populous country of some 83 million people, has been grappling with a fourth wave of Covid-19 cases in recent weeks that has pushed up the seven-day incidence rate to highs not seen since May. The country added 20,398 cases over the past 24 hours, according to the Robert Koch health institute, while another 194 people died.

Outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has called the coronavirus trend "very worrying", signalled she was in favour of stricter curbs focussed on the unvaccinated.

"If the pandemic situations in hospitals worsens... then further restrictions for unvaccinated people are possible," Merkel said through her spokesman Steffen Seibert.

Republicans jolt Biden with Virginia governorship win

In New Jersey, Republican challenger Jack Ciattarelli performed far better than expected against incumbent Democrat Phil Murphy, even though registered Democratic voters outnumber Republicans there by more than 1 million

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: Republicans pushed Democrats out of the Virginia governorship and had a far stronger-than-expected showing in heavily Democratic New Jersey on Wednesday, signaling trouble for President Joe Biden's party heading into next year's congressional elections.

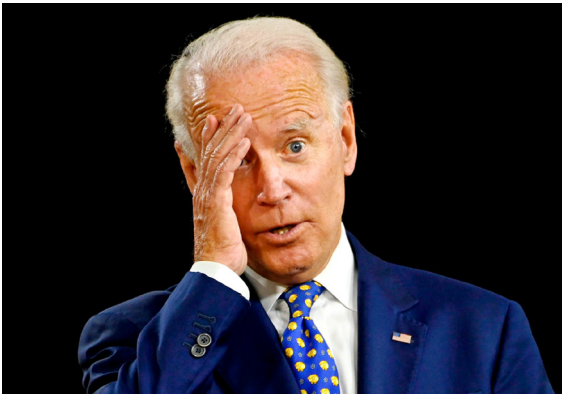
Democratic former Governor Terry McAuliffe conceded to Republican Glenn Youngkin, a former private equity executive, following Tuesday's vote. Youngkin had distanced himself just enough from former President Donald Trump to win back moderates who had supported Biden just a year ago.

In New Jersey, Republican challenger Jack Ciattarelli performed far better than expected against incumbent

Democrat Phil Murphy, even though registered Democratic voters outnumber Republicans there by more than 1 million.

Both saw strong gains in the suburbs from independent voters who had been turned off by Trump's style of politics. The results in states that Biden won easily in 2020 suggested that Democrats' razor-thin majorities Congress were highly vulnerable in the 2022 elections.

Republican control of both, or even one, chamber of Congress would give the party the ability to block Biden's legislative agenda during the final two years of his current term in office. The results could also further complicate Biden's hopes of passing twin bills worth a combined \$2.75 trillion to rebuild the nation's roads and bridges, as well as bolster the social



safety net and fight climate change. They have already been held up by months of infighting between Democrats' progressive and moderate wings and the election defeat could leave some moderates less willing to back the big-ticket bills. Youngkin, 54, declared victory after a campaign in which he focused on parents' anger over schools' handling of COVID-19, as

well as teaching on race and gender issues. He walked a fine line on Trump, taking care to not alienate the former president's hardcore base without offering a full-throated endorsement of his false claims about widespread election fraud. McAuliffe's efforts to paint his rival, a former chief executive of the Carlyle Group Inc., as a Trump acolyte fell flat with voters at a time

when Biden's approval ratings are at the lowest level of his presidency, according to the latest Reuters/Ipsos national poll, conducted last Wednesday and Thursday. "Together, we will change the trajectory of this commonwealth," Youngkin told a rally in Chantilly, Virginia, early on Wednesday.

Republican congressional campaigns may follow Youngkin's model of focusing on culture wars and promising to give parents more control over public schools.

Youngkin leaned into the Republican Party's expressions of outrage over the discussion of systemic racism in schools. He vowed to ban the teaching of "critical race theory," a legal framework that examines how racism shapes U.S. laws and policies, while ignoring the fact that Virginia school officials say the subject is not

taught in classrooms.

He drew sharp criticism from Democrats when he initially hesitated to denounce Trump's insistence that the 2020 election was "stolen" from him, false claims that have continued to rile Trump's supporters and led to a mob of them attacking the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. Youngkin said later that Biden had won legitimately, but then called for an audit of Virginia's voting machines, prompting Democrats to accuse him of validating Trump's election conspiracy theories.

The Republicans also appeared to erase the Democrats' 10-seat lead in Virginia's House of Delegates, appearing to gain a 50-50 split or perhaps a one-seat advantage. The Republican candidates for lieutenant governor and state attorney general were also leading their races in Virginia.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

Iran says foiled US navy's attempt to seize tanker

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran says it has thwarted an attempt by the US navy to seize a tanker in the Sea of Oman carrying its oil, state television reported.

It gave no details of the date of the incident or the country where the vessel is registered in the report which comes amid faltering efforts to revive Iran's nuclear deal with world powers that would see a lifting of US sanctions on its oil exports.

"American forces pursued the tanker by helicopters and warships but failed to capture it," Iran's IRNA news agency said, adding

that the tanker is now in Iran's territorial waters. Iranian state TV on Wednesday described the incident as a failed attempt to "steal" oil. It also fell short of saying when the incident took place. The development comes in advance of the nuclear talks slated to be held later this month. Negotiations with the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal are scheduled to resume at the end of November. The administration of US President Joe Biden has warned repeatedly that time is running out to reverse the US withdrawal from the deal ordered by his predecessor Donald Trump.

Opposition practicing 'negative' politics: Sheikh Rashid

"Everyone showed a collective vision for Pakistan as the government put county's interests first"

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid on Wednesday said the country's political opposition was doing "negative politics". The minister's remarks came while he was visiting Lahore to meet with Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar. During their meeting, the political situation and the law and order of the province were discussed. "The law and order situation in the country, including Punjab, is satisfactory," the interior minister remarked. Minister Rashid added

that "with the grace of God Almighty and Prime Minister's Imran Khan's strategy, the issue was resolved in a better way", he said referring to the recent sit-in by TLP. On the occasion, CM Buzdar said that resolving the issue through understanding was a victory for Pakistan.

"Everyone showed a collective vision for Pakistan as the government put county's interests first," he said adding that the attitude of the opposition parties was against the national interest. He added that the situation was improving and would get better.



Taliban bans foreign currencies in Afghanistan

"The Islamic Emirate instructs all citizens, shopkeepers, traders, businessmen and the general public to henceforth conduct all transactions in Afghanis and strictly refrain from using foreign currency"

NEWS DESK

KABUL: The Taliban has banned the use of foreign currencies in Afghanistan, a move that could further disrupt an economy on the brink of collapse. "The economic situation and national interests in the country require that all Afghans use Afghan currency in their every trade," the Taliban said. The economy is struggling due to the withdrawal of international financial support after the Taliban took control. The US dollar has been used widely in Afghanistan's markets. Dollars are also often used for trade in areas bordering Afghanistan's neighbours such as Pakistan. "The Islamic Emirate instructs all citizens, shopkeepers, traders, businessmen and the general public to henceforth conduct all transactions in Afghanis and strictly refrain from using foreign currency," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement posted online. "Anyone violating this order will face legal ac-

UNICEF to directly fund Afghan teachers

AGENCIES

KABUL: The United Nations children's agency said it was planning to set up a system to directly fund Afghan teachers, after the international community placed a freeze on funding to the Taliban-led administration. "UNICEF is setting up a system that will allow direct payments to teachers without the funds being channelled through the de facto authorities," Jeannette Vogelaar, UNICEF Afghanistan's Chief of Education, told Reuters in an email.

tion," the statement said. After the Taliban seized control of the country in August, billions of dollars of Afghanistan's overseas assets were frozen by the US Federal

In preparation, she said, UNICEF would begin registering all public school teachers. "The best way to support the education of girls in Afghanistan is to continue supporting their schools and teachers. UNICEF is calling upon donors not to let Afghanistan's children down," Vogelaar added. Afghanistan's public services, in particular health and education, have been plunged into crisis since the Islamist Taliban movement took over the country on Aug. 15. Many foreign governments have placed a ban on funding outside of humanitarian aid that is channelled through multi-lateral agencies.

Reserve and central banks in Europe. "We believe that it's essential that we maintain our sanctions against the Taliban but at the same time find ways for legiti-

mate humanitarian assistance to get to the Afghan people. That's exactly what we're doing," Deputy United States Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo told the US Senate Banking Committee last month. The Taliban has called for the release of Afghanistan's assets that are being held overseas as the nation faces a severe cash crunch. Afghanistan has also been hit by the exodus of foreign aid. Grants from overseas previously financed three quarters of its public spending. Earlier this year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Afghanistan will no longer be able to access its resources, while the World Bank also halted funding for projects in the country. Last month, the IMF warned that the country's economy could shrink by 30% this year, pushing millions into poverty and causing a humanitarian crisis. The fund also said that Afghanistan's economic woes could fuel a refugee crisis impacting neighbouring countries, Turkey and Europe. The country is also suffering from a severe drought, which has ruined much of its wheat crop and sent prices soaring.

22 killed as bus falls into ravine in AJK

DNA

RAWALPINDI: At least 22 people, including women and children, were killed and another eight were injured after a Rawalpindi-bound public transport vehicle plunged into a ravine in the Sudhnoti district of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Wednesday, police and witnesses said.

The 40-seat coaster had started its journey from tehsil headquarters Baloch and after hardly seven kilometres developed a technical fault, according to some witnesses, who said the vehicle first hit the mountain on the left side of the road and then suddenly turned right and fell more than 500 metres down the road.

A man who was selling pakoras under a tent nearby saw the bus plunge and informed a prayer leader in Majhiari village, some two kilometres towards Baloch, over telephone about it. The prayer leader then made announcements on the loudspeaker asking villagers to rush to the accident site to aid in the rescue.

Humanitarian aid delivered to Afghanistan



SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Twenty one trucks carrying 202 tons of humanitarian aid including rice, sugar, flour, cooking oil, pulses and medicines were sent to Afghanistan from Pakistan at the Khar-lachi crossing in Kurram district on Wednesday. The items were sent by Pakistan Afghanistan Cooperation Forum and KORT. The goods were handed over by Habib Ullah Khan Chairman PACF, Ch Javed Akhtar Chairman KORT, Asmat Ullah Wazir (ADC KURRAM) to Molvi Umer Mukhlis, Inspector General Police Paktia, Afghanistan. Afghan counterparts gratefully accepted the aid and prayed for better relationships with each other in future.

UK Navy Ship conducts naval drills with Pak Navy

KARACHI: The United Kingdom (UK) ship HMS KINGDOM visited Karachi port and conducted naval exercises with Pakistan Navy.

The Ship was received by officials of Pakistan Navy along with representatives of British High Commission, said a Pakistan Navy media release.

Pakistan Navy and UK Navy enjoy longstanding relations based on training, development, mutual interest and cooperation in naval affairs. The visit of UK Ship included harbour and sea phases. In harbour phase table top discussions on professional matters and bilateral interactions were held. On completion of port visit, sea exercise was conducted between Pakistan and UK Navy covering wide range of naval operations. The exercise was aimed to enhance interoperability and contribute toward international efforts for ensuring maritime security in the region.

UK Navy Ship visit to Karachi and joint naval drills is a testimony of PN resolve to work towards regional peace and it may further strengthen mutual collaboration between the two navies. — APP