



# Islamabad POST

Wednesday, December 08, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

## The EU must have its own defense to avoid being irrelevant

Detailed News On Page-07

## PAC to receive briefing from NAB Chairman

Detailed News On Page-08

## Emma named WTA newcomer of the year 2021

Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

### Fawad Ch visits Sri Lankan HC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry has called on Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohan Vijay Vikrama and expressed regret over the lynching of a Sri Lankan citizen by a mob in Sialkot. During his visit to the Sri Lankan Embassy in Islamabad, Fawad has informed the Lankan envoy regarding the steps taken by the government after the Sialkot tragedy. Fawad said that the accused involved were arrested.

### Shehbaz slams hike in power price

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) president and Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif has lashed out at government for raising electricity price by Rs3.75 per unit terming it proof of the IMF slavery. In a statement issued, the PML-N president said that the cruel decisions of the government were hitting the poor people and country's economy like a bolt from the blue. He said the high power prices would trigger unemployment and inflation in the country thus drowning the economy. He criticized the government for not providing relief to masses after the oil prices were reduced internationally.

### Dr Ijaz Akram appointed RAA chairman

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday appointed Dr Ijaz Akram as chairman of the high-powered National Reformatory Authority (NRA), aimed at countering narratives against Islam and the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Dr Ijaz is a prominent Islamic scholar having teaching experience in a number of international universities, the Federal Education Ministry said in a statement.

## Biden warns Putin against Ukraine war

Russia will face economy-jarring sanctions if it invades neighboring Ukraine; Biden tells Putin



CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke for about two hours over a secure video call on Tuesday in what had been expected to be a highly consequential meeting for the two leaders amid escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine. Biden aimed to make clear that his administration stands ready to take actions against the Kremlin that would exact "a very real cost" on the Russian economy, according to White House officials. Putin, for his part, is expected to demand guarantees from Biden that the NATO military alliance will never expand to include Ukraine, which has long sought membership. That's a non-starter for the Americans and their NATO allies. Possible measures include restrictions on Russia's banks converting roubles into foreign currencies, or even disconnecting Russia from the Swift global financial payment system, reports say. Russia wants guarantees that Ukraine will not try to seize areas captured by Russian-backed separatists in 2014 and has warned the West not to cross "red lines" by adding Ukraine to Nato's military alliance.

During the last several months, Russia has erected supply lines, including medical units and fuel, that could sustain a drawn-out conflict should Moscow choose to invade Ukraine, two sources familiar with the latest intelligence assessments told CNN. And recent US intelligence findings estimate Russia could begin a military offensive in Ukraine in a matter of months as it amasses up to 175,000 troops along the border. The meeting began at 10:07 a.m. ET and ended at 12:08 p.m. ET, according to the White House.

In what was expected to be one of the most pivotal foreign policy meetings of Biden's still-young presidency, the President was expected to lay out to Putin what sanctions and other actions the US could take if the Russian President decides to invade Ukraine. The US intelligence community believes Putin has still not made up his mind to launch a military offensive against Ukraine, and Biden had planned to tell Putin the US is prepared to take "substantive economic countermeasures" meant to inflict "significant and severe economic harm on the Russian economy" should Putin go ahead with a military escalation, a senior administration official told reporters Monday. Video footage of the opening moments showed friendly greetings between the US and Russian leaders. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the talks would last "as long as necessary" and there was no fixed

Continued on Page 06

## 'Will not let religion be used as tool'

"From now on, if anyone uses religion, the govt will not spare them," the premier declares

ANSAR MEHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday said that "from now on, the government will not spare anyone" found resorting to violence in the name of religion. He was addressing a condolence reference at Prime Minister's Office for Sri Lankan national Diyawadanage Don Nandasiri Priyantha Kumara who was savagely lynched

### Cabinet directs Punjab govt to initiate trials

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Cabinet has directed the Punjab government to immediately initiate trials of those arrested in

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06



**RAWALPINDI:** Commander of King Hamad University Hospital, Bahrain Major General Doctor Sheikh Salman Bin Ateyatallah Al-Khalifa calls on COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa. – DNA

## China says US will pay price for winter Olympics boycott

At a media briefing, Mr Zhao accused the US of violating "political neutrality in sport"

AGENCIES

BEIJING: China has condemned a planned US diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing and threatened to retaliate. Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said China would take "resolute counter-measures", but did not give further details. On Monday, the US said it would not send diplomats to Beijing over concerns about China's human rights record. It added that US athletes could go and would have full government support. At a media briefing on Tuesday, Mr Zhao accused the US

### Kremlin slams US Olympics boycott

MOSCOW: The Kremlin on Tuesday criticised the United States for announcing a diplomatic boycott of the upcoming Olympics in Beijing, saying the Games should be "free of politics". "Our position is that the Olympic Games should be free of politics," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, but said that it was positive that athletes were not impacted by the decision. US will not send an official US delegation to the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing. – APP

of violating "political neutrality in sport" and said the proposed boycott was "based on lies and rumours". Tensions are high between both countries. The US has accused China of genocide in its repression of the predominantly Muslim Uyghur minority in the western region of Xinjiang - an allegation China has strongly denied. Relations are also strained over China's suppression of political freedoms in Hong Kong, and because of concerns for the Chinese tennis player Peng Shuai, who was not seen for weeks after she accused a top government official of assault.

Continued on Page 06

### Malik Adnan granted letter of appreciation

Will also be awarded Tamgha-i-Shujaat, or the Medal of Bravery



SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday presented Malik Adnan - the man who put his life at risk to save the life of the Sri Lankan national from mob - with letter of appreciation. A ceremony was held at the Prime Minister's Office in Islamabad in memory of the Sri Lankan citizen who was killed in Sialkot in which Prime Minister Imran Khan was also present. The ceremony offered condolences to Priyantha Kumara's family, the Sri Lankan government and the people. Talking to media after the ceremony, Malik Adnan said that his passion that day was to somehow save the Sri Lankan citizen, he did not want any incident to happen that would tarnish the image of the country. "I hope this incident would be a turning point for the nation and will change the thinking of the whole of Pakistan, because the future generation will be better nurtured if the mindset changed," he said. The Prime Minister also appreciated the courage of Malik Adnan who put his life at risk to save the life of the Sri Lankan national. He said Malik Adnan will also be conferred with Tamgha-e-Shujaat. Pakistan had announced a top civilian award for a man who risked his life while trying to save Priyantha Diyawadanage, a Sri Lankan factory manager, from being lynched by an angry mob over blasphemy allegations. Malik Adnan, a colleague of the slain Sri Lankan citizen, will be awarded Tamgha-i-Shujaat, or the Medal of Bravery.

## Afghan peace is crucial for Pak, region

Qureshi meets NATO Secretary General; discusses bilateral ties and Afghan situation

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi says international cooperation with new setup in Afghanistan is inevitable to avert a refugee crisis and prevent that country from once again becoming a terrorist haven and a drug centre. He was talking to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at NATO headquarters, Brussels on Tuesday. They discussed emerging situation in Afghanistan, bilateral cooperation and regional situation. He said Pakistan is pursuing a policy of peaceful neighbourhood for peace and stability in the entire south Asian region. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Pakistan is desirous of amicable resolution of all outstanding disputes including Jammu and Kashmir through dialogue. The Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's resolve for peace and stability in Afghanistan and said the looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is worrying.

### Qureshi meets with Belgian Deputy PM

DNA

BRUSSELS: Foreign Minister also met with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Belgium Sophie Wilmes in Brussels on Tuesday. The Foreign Minister said Pakistan is hosting an extraordinary meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on the 19th of this month to draw the world's attention towards the grave economic situation of Afghanistan. He said a peaceful Afghanistan is not only in Pakistan's interest, but the entire region. Shah Mahmood Qureshi also apprised his Belgian counterpart about the human rights violations being committed by occupation forces in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.



www.themonal.com

## Inside...

FJWU organizes 3 day workshop on performing gender – Page 02

President terms cyber security country's strong defence line – Page 03

Women's socio-economic mainstreaming crucial – Page 04

Dividing the world in the name of democracy – Page 05

As Afghanistan fell, UK abandoned supporters – Page 06

Turkey, Qatar boost co-op with 15 new bilateral accords – Page 07

Leading Ulema condemn Sialkot lynching incident – Page 08



# FJWU organizes 3 day workshop on performing gender

Vice Chancellor, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Dr. Saima Hamid appreciated the department for initiating discussion the emerging concept of gender as performance

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHAN: Department of Gender Studies at Fatima Jinnah Women University collaborated with Bedari organized and conduct a 3-Day Workshop on Performing Gender from December 1st to 3rd, 2021.

Dr. Shahla Tabassum, Ms. Nadia Bukhtawar, and Ms. Nashia Ajaz, were co-trainers at the workshop. Guest resource person, Ms. Maliha Husain, Managing Director, Mehergarh, conducted a session on clarifying the concept of gender and sex and sexual

harassment. Another guest resource person, Inspector Shahida Yasmin, Station House Officer (SHO), Rawalpindi, talked about life choices in context of gender roles and relationships. Another guest resource person, Ms. Anbreen Ajaib, Executive Director, Bedari, discussed social disability and inclusion of persons with disabilities in her session. Near the end, guest resource person Ms. Reem Shareef, Transgender Rights Expert at the Ministry of Human Rights talked about social inclusion and history of Transgender community in the Subcontinent. At the end of the workshop, Vice Chan-

cellor, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Dr. Saima Hamid appreciated the department for initiating discussion the emerging concept of gender as performance. The Vice Chancellor, the Dean Faculty of Science and Technology, Prof. Dr. Uzaira Rafiq, and the advisor to Vice Chancellor, Dr. Bushra Yasmin presented souvenirs to the resource persons and organizing team. Dr. Yasmin extended her appreciation to the Department of Gender Studies. The workshop was concluded with distribution of certificates to the participants by their fellow peers; empowering each other.



## DC for prompt redressal of public complaints

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad has said that open door policy is underway on daily basis and public complaints are being resolved on the spot. He directed the heads of district departments to satisfy the grievances of the complainants in a satisfactory manner and to abandon the practice of ignoring public issues, undue and unwarranted delays would not tolerated in this regard. Listening to the problems of the citizens in the office, the Deputy Commissioner said that departmental action against the officers who do not listen to the public issues will not be avoided so they should increase the standard of departmental performance in relation to public relief.

He asked the Assistant Commissioners to address the grievances and problems of the people at their level responsibly and keep a close watch on the performance of the tehsil offices so that the people do not face any problem in their affairs.

He said that there should be no delay in

resolving issues that need to be solved immediately. He listened to the concerns of citizens about WASA, Waste Management Company, Revenue and other departments and issued instructions to the concerned officers on the spot by calling them. He listened to the problems of senior citizen, men and women and assured them that there would be no delay in departmental action for immediate resolution of their grievances and problems.

Later, Deputy Commissioner chaired a District Management and Operational Committee for NGOs and reviewed the registration process of NGO under Punjab Charity Commission. It was informed that as many as 194 NGOs have made functional after counter checking of their matters by officers of district administration.

DC asked the relevant departments to speed up the process of left over NGOs of category B & C. ADCs Fazel e Rabi Cheema, Muhammad Khalid, ACs Sahibzada Muhammad Yousaf, Mansoor Qazi, DO Industries Shahbaz Khan and other officers attended the meeting.

## Five arrested over violence against women

FAISALABAD: The police of Millat town arrested five shopkeepers, allegedly on the charges of mistreating four women beggars and making their video after tearing off their clothes here at Yousuf chowk bazaar in chak Bawa area.

RPO Imran Mehmood and City Police Officer (CPO) Dr. Abid Khan took serious notice of the incident and directed concerned police to immediately arrest the accused.

Police said here on Tuesday that accused Saddam r/o Muslim Town, owner of an electric shop, suspected that four women beggars -Aasiya Bibi w/o Bahadur, Nasira, Saima Zafar and Nasira Khatun, who came to his shop for drinking water, attempted to steal some items from his shop. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain held a meeting with Sri Lankan High Commissioner Mohan Wijewickrama. - DNA

## Police introduces 'Khidmat Markaz' system

"Immediately after the commitment of a crime, suspects are being identified, investigated and challaned so that they could be convicted from the competent courts. Regarding "abduction for ransom"

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Two-pronged strategy has been evolved with a focus on prevention and detection of crimes purely on scientific lines, said Mr. Imran Mahmood Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad.

Addressing a function in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said that for first-time crimes mapping has been introduced in addition to the classification of crimes. "This data is analyzed and preemptive steps are being taken with abrupt changes in Police patrolling", he added. About detection of crimes, he said that it has been further divided into two parts. "Immediately after the commitment of a crime, suspects are being identified, investigated and challaned so that they could be convicted from the competent courts. Regarding "abduction for ransom" cases, he said that only one such incident was reported during the last four

months. "We took it as a challenge and have successfully traced the culprits and hopefully, they will be arrested very soon. About shortage of Police personnels, he said that enhancing police force is not within his domain and local communities in collaboration with FCCI must contact their elected representative to raise this issue at the appropriate forum. However, he said that one Police man is required for 450 people as per the given yard stick. He further said that a safe city project has been pending for the last many years; however, the business community could set up a mini monitoring system in congested economic centers on a self help basis. "We could support them through technical help so that this system could be linked with the main safe city project in later phase", he added. About revival of E-Police station in FCCI, he said that Punjab Police has introduced a comprehensive system of "Khidmat Markaz which has lessened the burden on the Po-

lice station up to 80% as people are getting 14-15 different Police related services through this innovative intervention. He said that now only accused, complainant and persons required in investigation have to visit police stations. Highlighting the importance of "Khidmat Markaz", he said that its presence should be extended up to the sub division level to facilitate the masses. He directed the CPO to review the FCCI E-police station so that most of the facilities could be provided through this station. Responding to a question, RPO said that the minimum posting period for a SHO has been fixed at three months. He further said that each department has its own accountability system but we have further improved it through human resource and management systems.

He said that under the arrangement, 435 transfers and postings were made and it was ensured that no police personnel should be posted more than thrice in a police sta-

tion. About Alternate Dispute resolution Committees (ADRC), he said that under existing police rules, we could not adopt this system and fresh legislation is required for the formulation of such committees. Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan City Police Officer (CPO) said that in view of street crimes more than one hundred police jawans have been deputed while Elite and Dolphin patrolling has been expedited in Kharriarwala industrial area. Quoting the Sialkot incident, he said that when foreigners arrive in a factory, then police are informed. He said that it creates problems for police to provide immediate security to the foreigners.

He requested factory owners to inform concerned police well ahead of the arrival of the foreigners. He said that they should also inform police if they smell internal disturbance in their factories. He further said that factory owners should also install CCTV cameras outside their premises to discourage street crimes.

## Palestine ambassador visits Allama Iqbal mazar



DNA

LAHORE: Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei visited shrine of great poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal and recited Fatiha. I carried the message of his great soul that Al Aqsa mosque is the first Qibla for Muslims, while Holy Jerusa-

lem is under the Israeli occupation.

Visiting the historical Badshahi mosque, which was built by the Mongols hundreds of years ago and its old mosque, the shrine, and the lighthouse of Lahore that resembles the strong will of the Pakistani people. The ambassador said he was humbled and honour to have visited the shrine adding his dream had come true.

## FCCI demands re-fixation of properties' DC rates

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has rejected the unjustified and unrealistic increase in the fair market value of immovable properties by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and demanded immediate consultation with stakeholders to re-fix its prices compatible with the ground realities.

Addressing a press conference Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh President FCCI said that the Government was trying to stabilize the economy through mobilization of untapped potential of the real estate sector.

He said that FBR just one week ago had unilaterally increased the value of immovable properties without consulting the real stakeholders. Expressing deep concern over this situation prompted with the upward increase in prices of immovable properties, he said that it has all together shattered the dreams of poor people who were

planning to build their own houses through subsidized loans offered by the Government.

Similarly, the real estate sector was also pushed at the brink of collapse, however it was encouraging that the standing committee of the Senate has revoked this increase and directed FBR to re-fix the value of properties. He also criticized the proposed master plan of Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) and said that in the presence of a peri-urban plan, there was no need for a new master plan for 2035 but FDA entrusted this job to Osmani & Company.

He alleged that this company has prepared an unrealistic master plan by sitting in Karachi and through Google map totally ignoring the futuristic needs of this metropolis. He claimed that this master plan is pending only due to the in-time intervention of FCCI but the authorities have made payments up to 70-80% to this company. He said that a large number of foreign investors are planning to

set up their industrial units in Faisalabad while the proposed master plan is contradictory to the emerging and enhanced industrial, commercial and business activities. He said that a new master plan must be discussed with stakeholders to fulfill the future needs of this fast-growing city.

Mr. Zafar Iqbal Sindhu executive member FCCI said that FBR without considering the ground realities have increased valuation of immovable properties which has created ticklish problems in the wake of current inflation. Responding to a question, he said that realtors had accepted the DC rate although they had some genuine reservations.

He said that the current increase in property rates is a deep-rooted conspiracy against the Government. He appreciated the role of FCCI and said that its in-time stand has saved this sector from total collapse. Mr. Javed Iqbal Bhatti chairman FCCI standing committee on Real Estate was also present during this press conference.

### CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY Development Division (G&P) (Directorate of Parks Environment Wing)

## TENDER NOTICE

Scaled tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis from contractor having valid license by PEC in relevant category for the under mentioned works on the date and time mentioned below:-

S.No.	Name of Work	NIT Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date & Time of Receiving Tender	Date & Time of Opening Tender
1	P/F Wire Mesh fencing of 02 Nos Grave Yards at Sector I-11/1&2, Islamabad.	Rs. 7,329,423/-	Rs. 219,883/-	27.12.2021 11.30 A.M	27.12.2021 12.00 Noon
2	P/F Wire Mesh fencing around Grave Yard at St. No. 71, 72, Sector I-16/1, Islamabad.	Rs. 2,246,389/-	Rs. 67,392/-	27.12.2021 11.30 A.M	27.12.2021 12.00 Noon

#### Conditions:

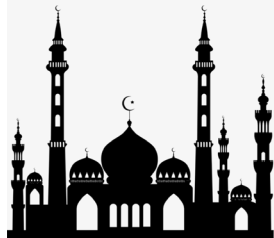
- Detail of Tender Notice can be seen on CDA website [www.cda.gov.pk](http://www.cda.gov.pk) and PPRA website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)
- Tender application should accompany with earnest money in shape of deposit at call in favor of Dy. Director Development Division (G&P), CDA issued from any scheduled local bank against firm's account. Name of firm should be clearly mentioned on instrument (Deposit at call). Tender documents shall not be issued without earnest money.
- In case of total bid amount is less than 10 % below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit additional call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10 % of NIT amount. The additional performance guarantee (Call Deposit) shall be submitted along with bid. Bids having rates below 10 % of NIT without additional call deposit will be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of project.
- Tender documents can be obtained from the office of Dy. Director Development Division (G&P), Environment Wing CDA located at Mehran Gate No.01, Fatima Jinnah Park, Directorate of Parks (West), CDA, Islamabad on cash payment of Rs. 2000/- (Rupees Two thousand) **Per Each Set** (Non-Refundable) during working hours on any working day before date of opening against written request which should be on letter head pad having Name, Address, Telephone (Land line) Numbers and signature of the contractor alongwith attested copies of NTN Certificate, valid Professional Tax Certificate, Sole proprietorship/partnership deed, Valid PEC license in relevant category, Moreover General/Special Power of attorney may be attested through respective court. The attorney holder may not be the employee of any Government, semi Government institute./That Only legitimate attorney holder may be allowed to get tender documents. No tender will be sold on the date of opening of the tender. **Tenders will be sold upto 12:00 Noon on last working day before date of opening.**
- The bid security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank account and same may be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder. The eligibility criteria of the firm with the relevant experience i.e. at least three number of works in last two financial years may be observed/fulfilled before issuance of tender documents.
- The intending bidder will have to provide telephone no of the relevant office/formation issuing work orders for verification purpose.
- No tender will be issued without showing the required documents in "ORIGINAL".
- Tender bids will be received and opened on above date and time in the office of Director Parks (West), Environment Wing, CDA located at Mehran Gate No.01, Fatima Jinnah Park, Islamabad.
- Tender rate on percentage basis should be filled in figures as well as in words.
- The tender documents must be accompanied with non-relationship certificate, NTN Certificate, Non-Judicial Stamp Paper worth of Rs.50/- or above and. No tender will be entertained without these documents.
- CDA reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tenders as per PPRA Rules. No conditional tender will be entertained.

Dy. Director Development Division (G&P)  
Directorate of Parks (West), Env't Wing, CDA

PID (I) No. 3764/21



## SERVICES



### Namaz Timings

Fajr..... 05:30 am  
Zohr..... 11:59 am  
Asr..... 03:21 pm  
Maghrib..... 04:49 pm  
Isha..... 06:28 pm



### Hotels & Restaurants

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



### Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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



### Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489  
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International.4603666



### Departments

CDA.....9221334-43  
CDA.....9208301-04  
Met Office.....9250360-6  
RDA.....5555864  
TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



### Complaints

**Water Tanker Service**  
E-7, F-10 & F-11.....9204654  
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8.....9203883  
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12,  
H-8.....9266316  
Wapda Islamabad....9217579  
Wapda Rawalpindi 111-309-309

### Islamabad Metropolitan

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

### Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....0331-5022125



**ISLAMABAD:** Turkey, Kenya, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Bangladesh's Ambassador's wives visited Bait-ul-Mal's school in Tarlai Colony. Thanks to the book "Culinary Diplomacy" published by HoMS Group, the funds raised from it were used to buy 240 school bags and donated to children studying under the program for "abolition of child labor" at Bait-ul-mal. – DNA

# President terms cyber security country's strong defence line

Dr Alvi said for a country, the connotation of a strong defence was not limited to the physical buildup of weapons or fighter jets, but to what extent its professionals could decipher or jam the telecommunication signals of the enemy

RAWALPINDI: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday, terming data protection the dynamic facet of a nation's defence line, said Pakistan needs to train a bulk of human resource capable of fulfilling the needs of cyber security. Addressing here at the 28th convocation of Military College of Signals (MCS), the president said cyber security was a rapidly growing field that required a targeted approach in education to continually update the set of relevant skills and resources. President Alvi said globally, millions of people with skills in information technology and

telecommunication were in demand to analyze the flood of available data. In Pakistan, he said, the capacity to process data was only five percent, which needed professionals through capacity building, skill development, and training programmes. He emphasized setting the direction of students right from the primary level up to higher education to make them aware of the importance of information technology in the contemporary world. He said enhancing the security of national information systems was of dire significance in view of the fre-

quent cyber attacks faced by the country. Dr Alvi said for a country, the connotation of a strong defence was not limited to the physical buildup of weapons or fighter jets, but to what extent its professionals could decipher or jam the telecommunication signals of the enemy. He lauded the Military College of Signals for preparing the highly skilled force of graduates in the field of information security, and electrical and computer software engineering, saying that Pakistan needed such 'smart and intelligent' professionals. He also

stressed the need for an 'intellectual investment' in the rapidly changing era of technological development. Transforming the energies of the country's big youth bulge can make the country stand strong among the comity of nations, he added. The president recalled that around two million youth had applied for basic skills under the Digi-Skills Programme of the Ministry of Information Technology, of which 1.6 million reached the next level. He said fulfilling its responsibility, the government had introduced a single national curriculum to provide uni-

fied opportunities to the students across the country. Commandant Military College of Signals Brigadier Syed Ali Raza said MCS was focusing on communication, information technology, information assurance, cyber security and cryptography. Established in 1947, he said, the MCS was selected as the first constituent college of the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), the country's premier institution. The President awarded degrees to the PhD, Master and Bachelor of Engineering degrees to the students on successful

completion of their engineering programme. Captain Ahsan Bilal Tariq was given the President's gold medal and also the Chief of the Army Staff gold medal for bagging first position in computer software engineering. Others, who received the President's gold medal included Eng. Wajeeha Munir, Eng. Maliha Safdar, Sq Ldr Ahsan Waleed Nazar, Maj Jawad Ahmed Jamil, Eng. Aiman Sultan, Lt Col Khurram Shahzad, Maj Aamer Latif Malik, Maj Umer Malik, Eng. Mahnoor Ehtasham, Eng. Rabia Ramzan, and Capt Nabeel Ahmed. – APP

# Afghan education Minister seeks cooperation with AIOU

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Afghan delegation of Ministry of Higher Education highly appreciated the role of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in promotion of education, especially educating the poor strata of the society and requested AIOU to help Afghanistan in reconstruction of its educational infrastructure as well as training of Afghan teachers. The delegation which was led by Alhaj Molvi Abdul Baqi Haqqani, Acting Education Minister of Afghanistan visited AIOU today (Thursday). During the detailed meeting, Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum, VC, AIOU assured the Afghan delegation of maximum co-operation of the university to reconstruct higher education sector in Afghanistan. AIOU will not only provide



technical assistance in digital transformation of Afghan universities but would also train their teachers in latest teaching pedagogies and courses development, he said. He, further, added that AIOU will provide scholarships to Afghan students for seeking education at this prestigious national institution of Pakistan. He viewed that AIOU can provide educational facilities to Afghan

youth through the regional centers established in KPK and Baluchistan near Afghan borders. Moreover AIOU has, also, planned to establish its campus in Afghanistan and a proposal in this regard has already been shared with education ministry, the Vice-Chancellor said. Alhaj Molvi Abdul Baqi Haqqani, in his address, thanked Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum in reconstruction

of education sector in Afghanistan. He, greatly, admired the proposal of AIOU of extending educational facilities to Afghan nation through regional centers located near Afghan borders. The members of Afghan delegation included Dr Lutf Ullah Khair Khawa, Dr Usama Aziz, VC, Kabul University, Irfan Ullah, Chief of Staff, Dr Dilawar Silaab, Director Information and Publication as well as Engineer Roh Alah Haqqani, Director, Developmental Programs. On the other hand, Registrar, AIOU, Raja Umar Younis, Deans of all four Faculties, DGRS, Inaam Ullah Sheikh, Controller, Examinations, Director, Admissions participated in the briefing from AIOU. Dr Abdullah Jan Abid, Chairman, Pakistani Languages served as the translator and interpreter during the meeting.

## Industrial Area SP holds Khuli kacheri

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Superintendent of Police (Industrial-Area) Fida Hussain Satti held a Khuli kacheri in Rimsha Colony H-9/2 and interacted with citizens to resolve their issues, a police spokesman said. He said, the SP Industrial-Area listened the problems of the participants and ordered the concerned officials on spot to resolved them. SDPO and SHO were also present on the occasion. Following directions of Deputy-Inspector General of Police (DIG) operations Afzaal Ahmed Kausar, Raabta Campaign has been launched by Islamabad police to improve relations with the citizens and boost their trust in the police.

## HDIP labs' up-gradation to complete in current FY

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Division is likely to complete the up-gradation of testing laboratories of Hydrocarbon Development Institute of Pakistan (HDIP) during the current fiscal year, which would help ensure the provision of quality fuel across the country. Under the project, the government in Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2021-22) has allocated an amount of Rs 143.446 million to upgrade petroleum testing facilities of HDIP at Islamabad, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and Quetta, besides getting the ISO certification of Petroleum Testing Laboratory at Islamabad. According to an official document available with APP, the project scope included procurement of the latest equipment for complete testing of indigenous and imported petroleum products at the HDIP facilities in line with the international standards and specifications. With completion of the project, the country's oil industry and general consumers would benefit from the upgraded testing facilities. "Moreover, this will have a positive impact on the environment as new equipment and other resources will help maintain the quality of POL products as per Euro standards." – DNA

# Islamabad POST

**Available in following cities**

**ISLAMABAD**  
Qamar News Agency  
03105460372

**RAWALPINDI**  
Asim News Agency  
03435802610

**KARACHI**  
Nazir Siyal  
03337554016

**PESHAWAR**  
Zarbagh News Agency  
03005412069

**FAISALABAD**  
Ishfaq Mughal  
03007689850

**JEHLUM**  
Iqrash News Agency  
03005412069

**KHARIAN**  
Ijaz News Agency  
03068863870

**SARA-I-ALMAGIR**  
0300 5428178



## Briefs

Int'l digital exhibition  
"Women: Kindness in action" starts

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (NIFTH) - Lok-Virsa in collaboration with foreign and Pakistani artists on Tuesday inaugurated a month-long International Digital Art Exhibition titled "Compassionate Women: Kindness in action". British-based education-ist-cum artist Anum Farooq is the initiator of the project which was aimed at providing a unique opportunity to participate in an international digital exhibition with a focus on 'women and compassion', said Executive Director LokVirsa Talha Ali. The exhibition will be viewed at Arrhaze.com from today till January 7, 2022.

Emerging to established artists, as well as self taught artists were encouraged to participate to lead a change in the cultural zeitgeist on a global scale. This is an opportunity for the women of the nation to initiate a conversation through art about their experiences on a global arena. It would help establish impact of acts of compassion that the artist had received or given.

The top position holders were selected for this international digital exhibition. Selected artists would also be considered for a physical rotating exhibition in prestigious Community Arts Platforms within Pakistan. The international exhibition is an intimate art conversation with global perspectives with artists from Pakistan, Ukraine, Russia, UAE, Nigeria, Morocco, USA, France, Belgium and Romania. - APP

## 1st European Film Festival starts

ISLAMABAD: First European Film Festival in Pakistan would be starting from December 8 at five different cities including Islamabad. In a statement Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) said that the Arts Council is delighted to present First European Film Festival Pakistan 2021 in collaboration with Olomopolo media. In this regard, the first European Film Festival would be held on December 8 in Islamabad at PNCA. Similarly, the second event would be held at Faisalabad on December 9 at Stora Art Gallery, Peshawar, Sethiyan Di Haveli on December 10, 11 Dec Karachi, District 19, December 11 and Lahore, Olo Junction on December 12. Entry would be free into the festival. The COVID-19 pandemic would be strictly maintained wearing mask and social distancing. - APP

## RISC hosts oath taking ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Wellington branch of Roots International Schools and Colleges (RISC) hosted a Student Council Oath Taking Ceremony in an effort to encourage young individuals to regularize the student body and become responsible citizens. Pakistan BaitulMaal (PBM) Managing Director Malik Zaheer Abbas Khokhar, on Tuesday, took oath from the members of Student Council of Roots International Schools and Colleges as the Chief Guest of the ceremony held at Wellington Campus in Islamabad. Khokhar was greeted warmly at the premises, and he was taken on a tour of the campus, where he was shown several student-designed projects. The students briefed the chief guest about their projects and received great appreciation and encouragement for their work. All the students of Student Council took an oath to be active and responsible members and would abide by the laws made by the school and managing body to guarantee themselves and the student body, a better campus life. The students promised to strive for the betterment of not only the school but the betterment of the society in general. After administering oath, the guest of honours along with CEO, RISC Walid-Mushtaq awarded sashes and badges to members of the council which were received with immense pride and diligence. The chief guest congratulated and advised the students to work with responsibility and honesty and to uphold those honourable positions with integrity. - APP

## Women's socio-economic mainstreaming crucial

Similarly, Ehsaas interest free loans for poverty graduation aims to impact 14.7 million vulnerable people in four years with half of them women

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar Tuesday stressed the importance of socio-economic mainstreaming women in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. She was invited to keynote the inaugural session of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Bilateral Dialogue on "Women for Peace Initiative - Road to an Inclusive Future" organized by a local think tank, the Regional Peace Institute (RPI) in Islamabad. Dr. Sania was joined by SAPM Raoof Hasan, who is also the CEO of RPI, Per Albert Isaacs, Ambassador of Norway, Sharneela Rasool, UN Women Country



Representative for Pakistan and distinguished women delegates from Afghanistan. Keynoting the session, Dr. Sania reiterated Pakistan's resolve to empower underprivileged women and said, "More than three-quarters of the entire Ehsaas' benefits go to women and girls under the Ehsaas 50%+ benefits policy for women

and girls." "Also, gender data disaggregation and its use for accountability is cardinal to the programme review, monitoring and reporting", she said. She further highlighted that all the twelve million beneficiaries of the Ehsaas cash this year are women. "In addition to the Ehsaas Education Stipends, Ehsaas Nashonuma, which provides specialised nutritional food and cash transfers to mothers and their children under two to prevent stunting also has a higher stipend policy for the girl child. Under Ehsaas' Undergraduate Scholarships, over 142,000 need and merit-based scholarships have been given in

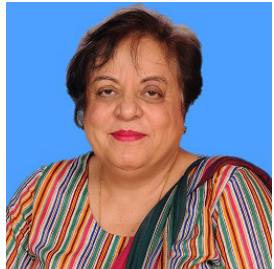
two years, with strictly half of all scholarships reserved for girls." "Similarly, Ehsaas interest free loans for poverty graduation aims to impact 14.7 million vulnerable people in four years with half of them women." "Enabling 1.4 million individuals to come out of shackles of poverty, 60% of small livelihood assets

have also been allocated for women under the 4-year Ehsaas Amdan programme", she further added. The distinguished women delegates of Afghanistan affirmed to cooperate on various aspects of common aspirations in poverty reduction and women empowerment. The two-day dialogue includes working sessions around education for women, governance and development, and legislative processes and procedures. RPI is focused on peace and stability through working for regional peace, development and the elimination of terrorism and extremism in South Asia. The Institute is an outcome of intense dialogues and discussions that took place among research, diplomats, academics, and journalists, in South Asia.

## Media professionals act 2021 to safeguard journalists' rights

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Human Rights Dr Shireen M Mazari on Tuesday said inputs of relevant bodies and stakeholders have been sought and added in Protection of Journalists and Media professionals Act, 2021 which has been passed to safeguard their rights including security, privacy and life protection. The Minister, who was honored a shield for her strenuous efforts in passage of Act by journalists community at NPC, was talking to media persons here. She said a long awaited legislation has come into force and hailed Prime Minister Imran Khan, Minister for Information and Broadcasting,



Chaudhary Fawad Hussain for their tireless efforts and vital role in passage of the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act. She thanked Chaudhry Fawad Hussain for floating idea of journalist's protection. Mazari said the Ministry of Human Rights had conducted various meetings and circulated copies of the Act to different journalists and other stakeholders for their

inputs to finalize the draft. She said the salient features of the Act showed that these were more progressive than such laws in developed world. Shireen Mazari said that the "Definition" of Journalist is made of from IFJ and the term for journalists for accreditation card was necessary was removed in this Act. She said that a group of Photo Journalists and Media professionals met her and assured there were two ways to remove lacuna in definition of Journalists Act, the first is to amend the Act which is long procedure and the second way is that the Ministry should discuss legally to amend the rules and include Video Journalists and Video Photographers and others in journalists category.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan Sheikh Saoud bin Abdul Rahman Al Thani received ambassador of Japan, Wada Mitsuhiro. The meeting was held in cordial atmosphere and the issues of common interest were discussed. - DNA

## Public level committees will be set up across the country



ISLAMABAD: Syed Kaleem Imam, Secretary, Narcotics Control Division, said that the drug menace was spreading rapidly in the society and to eradicate this menace, the mission would be carried out by setting up public committees across the country. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by SM Munir, Patron in Chief of United Business Group at his office yesterday. SM Munir, Patron in Chief of United Business Group, said that all the chambers of commerce across the country would support him in this campaign. He further said youth of the country is rapidly being involved in this menace and we must come forward to eradicate it. Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the Islamabad Chamber would work for drug prevention in every sector and colleges. Mian Akram Farid, Abdul Rauf Alam, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Iqbal Malik, Shaikat Masood, Amir Waheed, Chaudhry Waheed-ud-Din, Zahid Maqbool, Tariq Sadiq, Jamshed Akhtar Sheikh, Fahim Khan, Naveed Malik, Saif-ur-Rehman and Zia Chaudhry grace the occasion. - DNA

## PHA's flower show concludes

RAWALPINDI: A four-day winter flower show organized by PHA Rawalpindi concluded here Tuesday. According to Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab for PHAs and Tourism & Chairman PHA Rawalpindi, Asif Mehmood, the authority on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab was striving to make the city more beautiful and providing the best tourism and recreational facilities to the citizens. He said that the authority was trying to provide an attractive and healthier natural environment to residents. The PHA was planting maximum saplings and enhancing greenery particularly in parks and green belts of the city, he added. He said that PHA was using Miyawaki urban method to enhance greenery in city areas. He said that the initiative taken on the directives of the Prime Minister Imran Khan was to improve the environment and to create a safe and healthy environment for the future generations. He informed that several Miyawaki mini urban forests were grown in Rawalpindi like a number of such projects which were also developed in different districts of the province. Thousands of saplings were planted on small piece of land, he said adding, local plants were being promoted under Miyawaki urban forest project. Asif Mehmood said that the Miyawaki urban forest projects were the incumbent government's gift for the citizens and they would be able to live in a clean and healthy environment, adding, past regimes could not launch such projects which were need of the hour due to environmental pollution. He said that in the light of the directives of the government of Pakistan and Punjab, all resources were being utilized to make the city clean and green. The Advisor informed that few days ago, a beautiful Chrysanthemum flower show was also jointly organized by PHA and Pir Mehr Ali Shah-Arid Agriculture University. - APP

## Three-day food fest to start from Dec 10

ISLAMABAD: A three-day food festival titled "Taste Plus" organized by Media Sniffers would be held at Jinnah Convention Center from December 10. According to organizer Raza Saeed, "the taste plus is all set to bring joy in form of food, entertainment and culture all under one roof". "We extend our invitation to the families of Islamabad, Rawalpindi and surrounding areas to come and visit us to have fun-filled evenings", he added. Singer Mustafa Zahid and MZ and rapper Abid Brohi will also entertain visitors at Taste Plus. - APP

## Capital Startup Conference on Dec 16

ISLAMABAD: National Science and Technology Park (NSTP), National University of Science and Technology (NUST) is organizing a Venture Capital Startup Conference on December 16 to seek input from experts in different fields on the National Venture Capital Policy Framework being formulated by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST). According to an official source, the ministry is in the process of formulating a National Venture Capital Policy Framework intended to improve the enabling environment for Venture Capital investments and Startup financing, alleviate any inadequacies and hurdles in attracting foreign investments, and optimize the overall investment climate of Pakistan. MoST is inviting all relevant stakeholders from government, Venture Capital firms, expats, start ups and the industry at large, to draw on their experiences and international best practices, for an inclusive and forward-looking policy making exercise.

The participants can become a sponsor or outreach partner for the event, participate as a member of one of the working groups at the event, or simply attend the event as an audience member to witness and network. The intended participants can register to receive an invitation to attend this invite-only event hosted by National Science and Technology Park (NSTP), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) through the web link: <https://lnkd.in/d7CEPyGg>. The event will be held at Islamabad and the last date for the intending participants to apply is December 14, the source said. - APP

## 38,009 Corona patients recover in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: As many as 38,009 COVID-19 patients had been discharged after getting treatment from the district's health facilities, out of which 35,003 Rawalpindi's residents and 3013 from other districts. According to data shared by the district health authority here Tuesday, 12 more cases have arrived during the last 24 hours, including five from Rawal town, four from Taxila, two from Potohar town and one from tehsil Kahutta. - APP

## "Mountain in the Changing Climate" put on display at PAC

Seemabiah Tahir said students need to observe environment friendly practises while visiting mountains and check their consumption behaviour. Also sensitise and educate others to reduce carbon emissions

## DNA

RAWALPINDI: An exhibition of paintings "mountains in the changing climate" inaugurated on Tuesday at Rawalpindi Art Gallery. The exhibition is jointly organised by the Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi and Development Communications network (Devcom-Pakistan) in connection with the ongoing 11th edition of Pakistan Mountain Festival. The advocacy festival is an annual flagship event of Devcom-Pakistan to commemorate International Mountain Day that falls on December 11. Founder and Director Pakistan Mountain Festival Munir Ahmed told this scribe that more than 50 paintings by the students of different universities and colleges from Rawalpindi and Islamabad were put on display. The young emerging artists participated in the live painting competition organised at the Fatima Jinnah Women University a week back. Arfaallyas, a student of the Fatima Jinnah Women University, painted mountains on fire to win the first prize. Haya Aslam, A-level student of the Westminster Academy, Islamabad, was the other first prize winner for showing melting down the human-shaped icebergs. Sara Khan, a student of the National College of Arts,

Rawalpindi, won the second prize for symbolically presenting unsustainability and deteriorating mountains in a bubble of water. Zaneera Ghaffoor of the Rawalpindi Women University also won the second for showing breeding trophies of Markhor on the rocks. Her painting symbolically reflected the loss of wildlife in our mountains due to illegal hunting. Other winners included Hadia Aroob from Rawalpindi Women University, Mohsinur Rehman Baig from National College of Arts, Rawalpindi, Hifza Naseeb from Fatima Jinnah Women University, and Midhat Fatima from Na-

tional College of Arts, Rawalpindi while Devcom Director's Choice consolation prize went to Zainab Masood, a student of the Westminster Academy, Islamabad. Certificates of participation were distributed among the participating artists. Two MPAs from the Punjab Assembly Seemabiah Tahir and Shamim Aftab and Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) chairperson Rina Saeed Khan were the chief guests. Former arts council resident director Nahid Manzoor was the guest of honour. Speaking on the occasion, Seemabiah Ta-

hir said students need to observe environment friendly practises while visiting mountains and check their consumption behaviour. Also sensitise and educate others to reduce carbon emissions. All can be done with little efforts for larger common gains. Rina Saeed Khan said climate change has been affecting mountain communities badly but the poor communities have no choice but to bear the brunt. Pakistan has no contribution to global warming for having less than one percent global emissions. Pakistan's climate action is ahead of the global com-

mitments but we need to engage youth for a larger common good. Nahid Manzoor said visual arts could be the best medium to highlight the impact of climate change as we can see the disasters and droughts affecting our lives. She said the arts council is the hub of such activities engaging youth and citizens. Waqar Ahmed, Director Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi said the paintings have reflected the vulnerability of our mountains in a very artistic way. He said the art council is all out to encourage young people for their creative pursuits.





## Worker protection

THE federal government has taken a step forward in improving bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia after signing two agreements pertaining to worker recruitment and skill verification. By fostering this strategic partnership, we have also ensured the protection of worker rights in the Kingdom and have enhanced the potential to export skilled individuals in improved working conditions.

The Pakistani workforce in Saudi Arabia currently falls in the category of unskilled or semi-skilled labour which, more times than not, left the country through questionable avenues. The provision of faulty documents, fake visas and identification and an overall lack of knowledge in regards to seeking and securing employment abroad are concerns that have plagued the process for some time. With the formalisation of recruitment and skills verification, the leeway to partake in such dubious activities is reduced significantly.

The Foreign Office promised that worker streamlining will improve the process of exporting a workforce that is diverse in its professions. Simultaneously, it will also safeguard worker rights and provide each employee with legal protection against any kind of exploitation and all contractual disputes and violations will be held legally accountable. These steps ensure that a protective environment is created for all the citizens that are working abroad, especially valuable considering that many will lack the knowledge and awareness to protect themselves.

Outside of expanding potential job opportunities for the population, the agreements will also ensure that each worker gets a higher earning job which would not only improve their quality of life but would benefit the our economy as well, through remittances. Saudi Arabia is our biggest source of income through remittances and if a greater chunk of the population secures employment there, the rate of income is bound to improve significantly. The efforts of the government of Pakistan are undoubtedly proving to be rather advantageous for all stakeholders involved.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti  
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 180

Email: [dailyisbpost@gmail.com](mailto:dailyisbpost@gmail.com)

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



## Myanmar: The military jails its famous ally

A COURT in Myanmar on Monday sentenced Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel laureate politician and once pro-democracy activist, to four years in pris on on charges of inciting violence and “violating Covid-19 rules”, in a move that analysts said will deal a significant blow to international efforts to return civil rule to the military-administered country.

The arrest of Suu Kyi and other top officials close to her came in the predawn raids on February 1 to end a 10-year experiment with democracy in Myanmar, which had been ruled by the military for 50 years. The military took over in February after it said the November 2020 elections was rigged to give Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party an absolute majority in parliament.

Monday's court ruling is the first of several expected against Suu Kyi who faces 11 charges in total, including for corruption and the sharing of state secrets. If found guilty, sources say, she may be sentenced to nearly 100 years in prison.

Suu Kyi was for decades seen worldwide as the ultimate democracy and human rights advocate. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 in recognition for her long fight against the military rule in her country and her human rights work. In the 10 years that followed, she was awarded at least 10 internationally prestigious awards for her advocacy including the famed Sakharov Prize, the US Presidential Medal of Freedom and the International Simón Bolívar Prize.

However, many in the West realised that their long-held reverence of Suu Kyi was actually misplaced when she supported the military's cleansing campaign against the Rohingya in 2016, which drove more than 700,000 of the Muslim ethnic minority into refugee camps across the border in Bangladesh.

To the shock of the world, she even flew to The Hague in 2019 to defend the military against charges of genocide. In other words, she was complicit in the ethnic cleansing of that vulnerable minority.

Suu Kyi's jailing is wrong and unfortunate. But she should have known better. She should not also expect the poor Rohingya to shed any tears for her.

# Dividing the world in the name of democracy

Prof. Zhou Rong



Is it any secret that what kind of authoritarian governments and absolute monarchies the US has been promoting and siding with, as long as they have been toeing the American line in global affairs?

THE United States plans to host the so-called 'Democracy Summit' via video-link from December 9 to 10. The intended event would essentially drive the world towards further divisions, and promises no future. Wang Yi, China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister, believes that the U.S. is essentially doing anti-democratic things under the banner of democracy. It is ironic to classify the United States as a democratic country.

The world is well aware of the recent unfortunate examples. After losing the election, Donald Trump not only blamed the entire election process as the problem, but also incited violent protestors to storm the U.S. Congress. What brand or version of democracy it was, the world still fails to understand? Racial discrimination in the United States is deeply rooted; exposed only further and deeper by the pandemic.

Researches around the world are debunking the myth of American democracy, and it being a model. A poll conducted in 16 countries that are considered democratic and U.S. 'allies' found that only 17 percent of people think the U.S. is still the benchmark for democracy; another 23 percent think it never was so. That indeed is a big global disapproval for American democracy, which is not seen in the positive light even in the Western world.

Is it any secret that what kind of authoritarian governments and absolute monarchies the US has been promoting and siding with, as long as they have been toeing the American line in global affairs? The United States is simply taking democracy as a cover and a card, and what it is actually doing is dividing the world. After the division of the world in the cold war of the last century, nations were trying to bridge the world, and people all over the world looked forward to and wanted to see globalization.

The list of invitees to the summit makes it clear that countries have been chosen on the basis of their alignment with the US' strategic objectives, not the democratic ideals and models in any way. Although India boasts to be the world's largest democracy, but the some time ago when U.S. Secretary of State Blinken visited India, he minced no words in pointing out that Indian democracy was going in retreat – and admitted that both India and the US were far from achieving the democratic ideals. So what is the objective of inviting India? Because India is a very important partner in the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy, to counter China. Once tensions are high along the border between China and India, the United States would pull away from India, whether India is a democracy by American standards or not.

In the Middle East, the United States invited Israel and Iraq. In fact, inviting Iraq is to dilute Israel's participation, otherwise the explicit and embarrassing US-Israeli partnership is well known. Of course, the United States has also invited China's strategic partner Pakistan. Yet, there is not any goodwill involved here, but the decision of driven by US' continuous need for Pakistan to serve American strategic interests. The United States does not like any hold any positive view of Pakistan; inviting Pakistan is only a strategic need.

It is important to note that the only EU union member not invited to the summit is Hungary. The entire EU is the 'western camp' so why no invitation for Hungary? Because the Hungarian prime minister has some views that the US dislikes and does not go well with. It is clear that Biden administration is not displaying the spirit of a host but that of a dominant hegemon. By this very way of picking and choosing that who participates and who remains outside, the US is very clearly sowing the seeds of another global division. The very approach of choosing who should participate and who should not, is undemocratic. The U.S. has initiated the so-called 'democracy summit' because it can set standards in all areas, including democracy. But the effect actually is manifesting in the form of a split. All countries and regions that are seen posing a challenge to America's national interests are destined to be 'undemocratic.' Whether it is business, economic model, governance system of framework of human rights; if it does not suit US' interests, it is not viewed as democratic.

Indeed, there is actually a systemic tussle between the United States and China. Especially under the epidemic, many countries have seen an advantage of the Chinese system, but the United States with its absolutely closed eyes cannot accept this, so it wishes to use the 'democratic stick' to hit at China, but this stick actually hit back, in reaction, in a very damaging way.

(The author is Senior Research Fellow, Zhongyong Institute of Financial Studies, RenMin University, Beijing)

# What is Israel's word worth?

Mark Muhannad Ayyash

“The misuse of counter-terrorism measures in this way by the government of Israel undermines the security of all”

ON October 22, Israel issued a military order designating six prominent Palestinian human rights groups – Addameer, Al-Haq, Defense for Children International-Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, the Bisan Center for Research and Development, and the Union of Palestinian Women Committees – as “terrorist organisations”.

The Israeli Ministry of Defence said the decision was taken on the basis of “links” they established between these groups and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) – a left-wing movement with a political party, as well as an armed wing that has carried out deadly attacks against Israel.

The Palestinian Authority, many international rights groups and the United Nations swiftly condemned the move. In interviews, comment pieces and statements, officials, analysts and experts expressed their belief that Israel “has gone too far this time”. The most prominent line of argument against the designation was that these six groups are clearly human rights organisations and they cannot be placed in the same “terror” category as groups like the PFLP that consider violence a legitimate means to achieve political ends. “The misuse of counter-terrorism measures in this way by the government of Israel undermines the security of all,” UN human rights experts said in a statement.

For its part, Israel defended its decision by claim-

ing that these groups are “controlled by senior leaders” of the PFLP and that they employ its members, including some who had “participated in terror activity”. The Israeli Ministry of Defence also accused the groups of serving as a “central source” of financing for the PFLP.

In response to these claims, Michael Sfard, a prominent Israeli lawyer who often represents Palestinians, said that Israel's argument “amounts to absolutely nothing” and that its whole case against these organisations is built on “guilt by association”. “Even if it is true that people who work in certain organisations are PFLP operatives, it does not follow that the organisation itself is part of the PFLP,” he told the AP news agency.

Sfard's point of view, shared by many others, helped raise some important questions: So what if people working in these organisations are also members of the PFLP? Does it mean anything that Israel considers the PFLP a “terrorist organisation”? What is, after all, “Palestinian terror”? The PFLP lost its prominence in Palestinian politics some time ago, but it still has significant support among Palestinian leftists, and especially among Marxists and socialists.

It is a well-established political organisation that provides Palestinians with social services, communal support and a world view that helps them make sense of their reality and find ways to change it. The PFLP holds the position that armed resistance is a valid path towards liberation from Israeli settler colonialism, but not every member of the group participates, supports or agrees with armed resistance. The overwhelming majority of the group's actions are, in fact, unarmed: it organises strikes, demonstrations and educational activities, provides social services, collects donations, gives economic support to those in need, and so on. Thus, the PFLP's complex history and contemporary dynamics, its ever-evolving status and positions, and the role it plays in Palestinian life cannot be reduced to “terror”. Israel's designation of the group as a “terrorist organisation” and labelling of all its members, supporters and associates as mindless terrorists are nothing but political moves that aim to maintain Israeli power and dominance over Palestinian life.

The PFLP carried out violent operations against

the Israeli state and society. And some of its attacks harmed and killed Israeli civilians.

Palestinians are not denying this. In fact, many Palestinian activists, journalists, politicians, academics and artists, myself included, have critiqued the group's path of armed resistance. I find the targeting of civilians in the name of resistance horrifying and I am categorically opposed to it. And I am not alone. There have always been, and continue to be, vibrant debates within the Palestinian society in Palestine and beyond about the use of violence as a means to achieve liberation.

It is worth everything because, by officially designating six prominent Palestinian rights groups as “terrorist organisations”, Israel made it easier for itself to control and destroy Palestinian lives. Now, these six groups that have long been providing important services to the Palestinian population will struggle to carry out their work. Simply put, by labelling these groups as “terrorist”, the Israeli state increased its already substantial ability to violate Palestinian rights without hindrance and accountability, and with little to no political, juridical, economic, or diplomatic consequence.

But, at the same time, Israel's word is worth nothing. It is worth nothing in the sense that a designation of “terror” made by Israel reveals nothing about the complex reality of violence.

Israel's word on violence, as it is the case for Euro-American imperial hegemony writ large, is completely shallow and empty, divorced from the reality on the ground. It is a word that is solely guided by the political impetus to conceal Israeli violence – the unspeakable brutality of their own violence.

This, and nothing else, is what the designation of “Palestinian terror” does for Israel. It teaches us nothing about reality, and instead actively conceals it. And therefore, I repeat the critical question that is being buried underneath this latest story from Palestine: So what if members of the PFLP are also members of these six organisations? The reason why Palestinians join any group is simple: They are doing everything that they can in their desperate yet steadfast efforts to resist the Israeli state's settler-colonial project which kills, maims, dispossesses, and expels them.

— Courtesy: Al Jazeera

# Palestinian issue is expanding, not shrinking

Chris Doyle

The major E1 project is being pushed ahead when even his hawkish predecessors had balked at doing so. This will cut Jerusalem off from the West Bank. The Givat Hamatos settlement will sever Jerusalem from the Bethlehem hinterland and the southern part of the West Bank

DWIGHT Eisenhower, the former US president, once observed that “if you can't solve a problem, enlarge it.” Put a challenge in its broader context and opportunities may open up. Eisenhower, who commanded the Allied forces in Europe during the Second World War, was no slouch in terms of devising strategy, so does the opposite work, too? If you shrink a problem, does it make it more difficult to solve? This has been the governing principle of Israeli strategy regarding the Palestinians for decades. Israeli strategists want to make the Palestinian issue a little local difficulty, a minority rights issue. Every time any party wishes to expand the problem, or to internationalize it, the Israeli anti-Arab hasbaristas, or propagandists, kick in to complain.

Initially, the Israeli, and indeed US, strategy was to peel off Arab states from the Palestinian cause. From 1967 to 1993, the Israeli policy was never to negotiate with the Palestinians, but only with Arab states where possible. The Trump administration resumed this stance, closing down the Palestinian Liberation Organization office in Washington, with Jared Kushner, then Trump's senior adviser, bizarrely proclaiming that the Palestinians were not ready to govern themselves.

For Israel, the Palestinians were less of a problem the fewer Arab states actively backed the Palestinian national movement. The 1991 and 2003 wars, which Israel pushed, took Iraq out of the equation. The Abraham Accords have led to tensions between the PLO and other Arab states.

Back in the 1970s and in the Camp David Accords with Egypt, the Palestinians were to be offered autonomy. It was functional rather than territorial, so that Palestinians could manage their own education and health, but never permitting them to have anything approaching sovereign control over the land and its resources. Even then, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin objected strongly and finished the plan off with the 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

Yet all of this reappeared during the Madrid talks and, ultimately, in the Oslo Accords. Not once in the Oslo Accords was a mention of a Palestinian state made, nor did they refer to Palestinian self-determination. Once again, the far right objected that even this was too much.

This is again the position under Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. It is merely the repackaged model that Begin adopted. Bennett has always believed that the Palestinian issue can just be magicked away. He ran an entire election campaign on what he referred to as his relaxation strategy. Essentially, Bennett believes that Israel can just plow on, take Jerusalem, expand the settlements and keep the Palestinians hemmed into their ever-shrinking spaces, while the international community will busy itself with copy-and-paste press releases stating

their concern.

Bennett sums this up by the extraordinary misnomer “shrinking the conflict.” Let us be very clear, the conflict has not shrunk at all. The Palestinians are going nowhere. The extraordinary Palestinian civil society efforts in Jerusalem in May show that the youth are a long way from giving up. The people of Gaza will not give up, while Hamas will look to boost the potency of its rocket arsenal still further. Palestinians want their rights, not a few extra dollars or the odd permit when Israel feels in the mood.

Bennett is determined to finish the conflict, using force and coercion to impose a fait accompli. The Palestinian Authority is bleeding credibility, as well as funds, as it tries to hold on, but should it collapse, as it might well do, instability and insecurity will reach new heights.

Only in the eyes of the Israeli right is the conflict shrinking. For them, the less territory Palestinians have to live on, the better. Bennett is de facto expanding Israel, as every prime minister since 1967 has done. He has advanced massive settlement announcements, major programs of forced dispossession in Jerusalem and the South Hebron Hills, and a crackdown on the most effective and functional part of the Palestinian political system: Civil society.

The major E1 project is being pushed ahead when even his hawkish predecessors had balked at doing so. This will cut Jerusalem off from the West Bank. The Givat Hamatos settlement will sever Jerusalem from the Bethlehem hinterland and the southern part of the West Bank. Only an intervention from US President Joe Biden has seemingly slowed the process for approving the city-sized Atarot settlement plan that will further separate Jerusalem from southern Ramallah.

Inciting and inflaming conflict is de rigueur. “Death to Arab” marches in April and May went ahead with no consequence. The hard-line Israeli settlers have got the message, ramping up their state-sanctioned violent attacks, which by most definitions would be deemed terrorist. Bennett has done nothing to stop them. The settlers aim to create the circumstances where Palestinians flee from their rural agricultural areas into increasingly crowded Palestinian cities.

Anti-Arab commentators praise Bennett for ditching his ideological fervor for a more pragmatic approach. It is nothing of the sort. His actions are in line with his far-right, pro-settler roots, while the pragmatism serves only to hold his curious coalition together. The question people should be asking is why the center and left-wing parties are doing so little to halt this, with the alarming suspicion that holding on to power has trumped principle and responsible governance.

Extending the conflict is something that Bennett, like Benjamin Netanyahu and Sharon before him, is happy doing. Israel always plays the long game. First, it never rushes the negotiations if there are any. Leaders are routinely happy to let things just drag on. This was one reason there were 10 rounds of Madrid negotiations over 20 months. Bennett could not wait to confirm that his coalition has no mandate for negotiations, as this is the last thing he wants.

The international community should stop playing Bennett's game. The conflict is more likely to explode than shrink. Israel has tried to shrink the diplomatic space into some local dispute. Responsible international actors have to reverse that. They can do so by asserting the primacy of international law, with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 2344 as the foundation for finding a solution. Working together, pressure must be applied on all parties to end violations, including the doomsday settlement projects. A failure to do so must trigger consequences.

Most importantly, they can reassert the fundamental principles of a resolution that has to include an end to the Israeli occupation. This is a major international conflict and it is in the clear interest of the global community to bring it to an end. As with all other Middle East conflicts, allowing this to fester only exacerbates the accompanying dangers.

—Courtesy: Arab News



## Briefs

Biden warns  
Putin against  
Ukraine war

FROM PAGE 01  
time limit. Russian news agencies reported that they lasted more than two hours. Mr Putin held the talks from his residence in the southern resort of Sochi, according to Tass. Later Tuesday afternoon, following the call, Biden will speak with President Emmanuel Macron of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Mario Draghi of Italy and Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom – the same group of European allies he conferred with Monday night. Tuesday marks Merkel's final full day in office.

China says  
US will pay  
price...

FROM PAGE 01  
The Women's Tennis Association last week suspended all tournaments in China because of "serious doubts" about Ms Peng's safety. High-level government representatives - from the US and other countries - are usually present at Olympic Games. Earlier this year, First Lady Jill Biden led the US delegation at the summer Olympics held in Tokyo. But on Monday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the US would not contribute to the "fanfare" of the Olympics. She said not sending an official delegation to the 2022 Games "could send a clear message". "US diplomatic or official representation would treat these games as business as usual in the face of... egregious human rights abuses and atrocities in Xinjiang," she said. "We simply can't do that." However, Ms Psaki added the US government did not feel it was right "to penalise athletes who had been training for this moment". On Chinese social media platform Weibo, the search topic "US diplomatic boycott of Beijing Winter Olympics" was censored as of Tuesday morning.

Shafqat  
visits Imam  
Mohammad  
Ibn Saud  
University

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture Shafqat Mahmood the other day visited Imam Mohammad bin Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, where he was received and welcomed by Prof. Ahmed S. Al Aameri, President of the University along with Vice Rectors of various departments. According to a press release received here on Tuesday, the president of the university gave a detailed presentation on the scope and contribution of the university in higher education as well as its close networking with top Pakistani universities, which was appreciated by the visiting minister. Minister said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has long-standing brotherly ties, which in education, reflects in the fact that the Pro-Chancellor and President of International Islamic University Islamabad are from KSA. The president in his capacity as Pro-Chancellor of IIUI assured that meaningful efforts shall be made to make IIUI one of the best institutions of higher learning. – APP

Minister  
discusses  
education  
with KSA  
Official

ISLAMABAD: Governor of Technical and Vocational Training Corporation Dr. Ahmed Bin Fahd Al-Fuhaid and Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture, Shafqat Mahmood, discussed in detail the importance of skills education in future and alignment of the same in light of emerging technologies as well as market needs Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood was on an official visit to Saudi Arabia where he met with Dr. Ahmad Bin Fahd at TVTC, HQs Riyadh, said a press release. – APP

As Afghanistan fell, UK  
abandoned supporters

“Some of the criticism seems rather dislocated from the facts on the ground, operational pressures that with the takeover of Taliban, unexpected around world”

LONDON: Britain's Foreign Office abandoned many of the nation's allies in Afghanistan and left them to the mercy of the Taliban during the fall of the capital, Kabul, because of a dysfunctional and arbitrary evacuation effort, a whistleblower alleged Tuesday. In devastating evidence to a parliamentary committee, Raphael Marshall said thousands of pleas for help via email were unread between Aug. 21 and Aug. 25. The former Foreign Office employee estimated that only 5% of Afghan nationals

who applied to flee under one U.K. program received help. He said that at one point, he was the only person monitoring the inbox. "There were usually over 5,000 unread emails in the inbox at any given moment, including many unread emails dating from early in August," he wrote to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, which is investigating Britain's chaotic departure from Afghanistan. "These emails were desperate and urgent. I was struck by many titles including phrases such as 'please save my children'."

Marshall said some of those left behind had been killed by the Taliban. As the Taliban took power in August, the United States, the U.K. and other countries rushed to evacuate Afghans who had worked with Western forces and others at risk of violent reprisals. Britain managed to airlift 15,000 people out of the country in two weeks, and the government says it has since helped more than 3,000 others leave Afghanistan. But an Afghan Resettlement Scheme announced by the government in August with the

goal of bringing another 20,000 people to Britain has yet to get underway. Former Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who was moved from the Foreign Office to become Justice Secretary after the crisis, defended his actions. "Some of the criticism seems rather dislocated from the facts on the ground, the operational pressures that with the takeover of the Taliban, unexpected around the world," he told the BBC. "I do think that not enough recognition has been given to quite how difficult it was."

Tom Tugendhat, a Conservative lawmaker who heads the foreign affairs committee, said Marshall's testimony "raises serious questions about the leadership of the Foreign Office." The committee is due to quiz senior Foreign Office civil servants later Tuesday. The Taliban stormed across Afghanistan in late summer, capturing all major cities in a matter of days, as Afghan security forces trained and equipped by the U.S. and its allies melted away. The Taliban took over Kabul on Aug. 15. Many who had worked for

Western powers or the government worried that the country could descend into chaos or the Taliban could carry out revenge attacks against them. Many also feared the Taliban would reimpose the harsh interpretation of Islamic law that they relied on when they ran Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. At the time, women had to wear the all-encompassing burqa and be accompanied by a male relative whenever they went outside. The Taliban banned music, cut off the hands of thieves and stoned adulterers. – Agencies

Sajid Khan claims six wickets,  
reducing Bangladesh to 76/7

## SPORTS DESK

DHAKA: spinner Sajid Khan struck immediately after Pakistan declared their first innings on 300-4 in the rain-hit second Test against Bangladesh in Dhaka on Tuesday. Sajid took the wickets of openers Mahmudul Hasan (0) and Shadman Islam (three) while skipper Mominul Haque was run out for one as Pakistan reduced Bangladesh to 2-23 by tea on the fourth day. Earlier, Mohammad Rizwan and Fawad Alam each hit a fifty and shared 103 runs in an unbroken stand to put Pakistan in a strong position. Rizwan was on 53 off

94 balls while Fawad was on 50 facing 96 when skipper Babar Azam called back the two batsmen an hour into the post-lunch session. Only 63.2 overs of play were possible in the first three days because of rain and bad light, with Pakistan reaching 188-2 after electing to bat first. Pakistan lost two quick wickets early in the day after yet another delayed start following day three's complete wash-out at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. Ebadot Hossain dismissed Azhar Ali for 56 runs in the second over of the day as wicketkeeper Liton Das took a simple catch after a top-edge. Pace bowler Khaled Ahmed trapped Babar Azam

leg-before for his maiden Test wicket three overs later as the Pakistan skipper was out for 76 runs, adding just five to his overnight 71. Rizwan was given out twice, on zero and 12, off the bowling of Ebadot and Tajul Islam respectively, but on both occasions he survived on review. Resuming the day on 188-2, Babar and Azhar put on 123 runs for the third wicket before the latter topped a delivery from fast bowler Ebadot Hossain (1-79) to be out on 56. The visitors had reached 161-2 at stumps on day one. Left-arm spinner Tajul Islam (2-49) had bowled brilliantly in the first session on Saturday to put

Bangladesh on top after the visitors seemed headed toward a big score. Openers Abid Ali and Abdullah Shafique had brought up a 50-run partnership in the first hour after Babar won the toss and chose to bat first. But Tajul broke the 59-run partnership, taking both wickets with straight deliveries. After his 133 and 91 in the first Test, Abid had appeared set for another big score but fell for 39 when Tajul again struck with a straight delivery that didn't turn as much as he expected. Babar and Azhar survived several tricky moments at the outset of their innings, particularly against Tajul. The hosts could have swung the momentum had Khaled Ahmed not put down a tough chance, offered by Babar on 39 off left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan's bowling. Pakistan leads the two-Test series 1-0 after winning the first Test in Chittagong by eight wickets. The visitors fielded an unchanged squad from the first Test while Bangladesh handed Mahmudul Hasan a Test debut and brought in Shakib and Khaled Ahmed in three changes to the team. Saif Hassan, Yasir Ali, and Abu Javed were dropped from the opening Test.

German parties sign  
coalition deal for new  
Scholz government

BERLIN: Germany's center-left Social Democrats (SPD) signed a coalition agreement with the leaders of the environmentalist Green Party and the neoliberal Free Democrats (FDP) in a ceremony in Berlin on Tuesday. The move comes a day after the Greens voted to approve the coalition deal, the last party to do so. Germany's incoming chancellor, Olaf Scholz, is due to be elected and sworn in as Angela Merkel's successor this week. DW's chief political editor Michaela Kuefner noted that with the signing of the coalition deal, "this is the moment the post-Merkel Era begins for real." Scholz said that tackling the coronavirus pandemic and the surge of fourth wave infections in Germany will initially require all of the new government's "strength and energy." "If the good cooperation that worked while we were forming the government continues to work, it will be a very, very good time for the tasks that lie ahead of us," he said. Greens co-leader and incoming foreign minister Annalena Baerbock said the coalition agreement "reflects the diversity in our country" and that diversity will be the government's guiding principle in the years to come. FDP head Christian Lindner, who is set to become Germany's next finance minister, said that the new government knows "we face great challenges." "We said that we want to venture more progress, and from this week on we want to work on progress," Lindner said at the signing ceremony. What are the foreign policy priorities? During a press conference later on Tuesday morning, Scholz was pressed to clarify his foreign policy goals – particularly in light of the growing tensions regarding the situation in Ukraine. Scholz said his first trip outside of Germany as chancellor will be to Paris and Brussels – emphasizing the new government's push to ensure "Europe is strong and sovereign." Speaking at the press conference alongside Greens co-leader Robert Habeck and FDP head Lindner, Scholz added that transatlantic cooperation and a future call with US President Joe Biden are also likely in the cards. "It is now clear what binds us together," Scholz said. With regards to the latest movements of Russian troops on the border to Ukraine, Scholz said that it must be made "very, very clear" to Russia that further threats to Ukraine would be unacceptable. He was notably less direct when asked to clarify his policy towards China, instead saying that working with the EU and the US would be the most immediate priorities. – DNA

Andreescu to skip  
Australian Open

MONTREAL: Canada's former US Open champion Bianca Andreescu said on Monday she will not take part in next month's Australian Open as she recovers from two seasons disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The 21-year-old world number 46, who missed multiple tournaments this season after contracting coronavirus in April, said she planned to use her absence from Melbourne as an opportunity to recharge. "This year in particular, I spent multiple weeks in isolation quarantining, which affected me greatly - both mentally and physically," Andreescu said in a statement on Twitter. "In addition, my grandmother spent several weeks in the ICU for a Covid infection, something that really hit me hard. A lot of days, I did not feel like myself, especially while I was training and/or playing matches. I felt like I was carrying the world on my shoulders... the collective sadness and turmoil around and it took its toll on me. "I will therefore not start my season in Australia this year, but will take some additional time to reflect, train, and be ready for the upcoming 2022 tennis season." The build-up to the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam of the season, has been overshadowed by speculation over whether men's world number Novak Djokovic will take part. It follows a decision by Australian officials to allow only fully-vaccinated players into the country. The Australian Open went ahead this year but players were forced to spend two weeks in hotel quarantine, crowds were restricted and a five-day snap lockdown was called mid-event. – Agencies

Emma Raducanu named  
WTA newcomer of the year

LONDON: British number one Emma Raducanu has been named newcomer of the year by the Women's Tennis Association. The 19-year-old burst onto the scene in 2021 by winning the US Open, making her the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam title. Her victory came just two months after she made her main draw debut at a major, becoming the youngest British woman to reach the Wimbledon last 16. She finishes the year ranked 19th in the world, having started at 343rd. Australia's world number one Ashleigh Barty was crowned WTA player of the year for the second time after winning a tour-leading five WTA titles in 2021 - including Wimbledon. The Czech Republic's Barbora Krejickova and Katerina Siniakova were named doubles team of the year having won Olympic gold and their third Grand Slam trophy as a pair at Roland Garros. Krejickova was also named most improved player of the year, while Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro was awarded the comeback player of the year prize. Su-



arez Navarro was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma in September 2020, but in April said she had recovered and returned to play at Roland Garros and Wimbledon in her final season before retirement. – Agencies

‘Will not let  
religion be  
used as tool’

FROM PAGE 01  
last week in Sialkot over blasphemy allegations. "From now on, if anyone is found using religion, especially resorting to violence in the name of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the government will not spare them," the premier declared. He said that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as a blessing for the entire human race, not just Muslims. "His message was based on two principles: humanity and justice; these two traits distinguish humans from animals," he said, adding that what happened in Sialkot was an example of "might is right" – a rule that prevails in the jungle, but has no place in human societies. He said that the kind of events we have been witnessing in the country lately, where some people use religion to torture and burn other human beings, are unacceptable. The premier also talked about people who are falsely accused of blasphemy and are sent to jail. "Some people are falsely accused of blasphemy and are thrown in jail to rot in there, as neither any lawyer, nor any judge, wants to support them," he said. "This kind of [sham justice] cannot be found in any humanitarian society of the world." Citing the example of the Army Public School massacre, the premier said that since that day, the whole country has decided not to tolerate any such incident again. "Since then, all Pakistanis have united against terrorism – something which had been unprecedented in the country." The premier said that the business community in Sialkot has accumulated \$100,000 for the family of the deceased, and that they will continue to send his salary to his widow each month. PM Khan then spoke about the establishment of the Rehmatul il Alameen Authority and said that he came up with the idea to bring together Islamic scholars and devise strategies to spread the true message of the Holy Prophet in society. "We want our children to know who the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was and what was his life like," the premier said. "To prove oneself to be a true lover of the Prophet, one has to follow his example." At the end of his speech, the premier reiterated: "As long as I am alive, I will not allow incidents like the Sialkot lynching to happen again."

Cabinet  
directs  
Punjab...

FROM PAGE 01  
connection with Sialkot incident and award exemplary punishment to the culprits. The meeting, which was held in Islamabad on Tuesday with Prime Minister Imran Khan in the chair, strongly condemned the Sialkot incident, resulting in killing of a Sri Lankan national. Later, briefing the media persons, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Chaudhary Fawad Hussain said the cabinet termed the Sialkot incident contrary to the teachings of Islam and declared it tantamount to hurting the image of Pakistan. He said Pakistan is bound to protect the rights of minorities. Alluding to the strong and unified reaction of Pakistani people and leadership to Sialkot incident, he said, we are not India where acts of violence against Muslims are frequent and go unnoticed. The Cabinet was also given a briefing about the use of EVMs in the elections and it was decided to launch an awareness campaign about this system. Chaudhary Fawad Hussain said government aim is to ensure free, fair and transparent elections in the country. He said the PTI will move forward as per its manifesto and the overseas Pakistanis will get the right to franchise. The Cabinet also constituted a committee to further strengthen Public Accounts Committee. Chaudhary Fawad Hussain said the efficacy of the Public Accounts Committee will bring more transparency. The meeting also reviewed the prices of essential commodities in the country. The Minister told media the prices of essential items are on the decline over the last two weeks. He pointed out that a forty kilogram wheat flour bag is available at 1100 rupees in entire country except, Karachi, Hyderabad and Quetta.

## Canadian MP says Canada open to Pak students

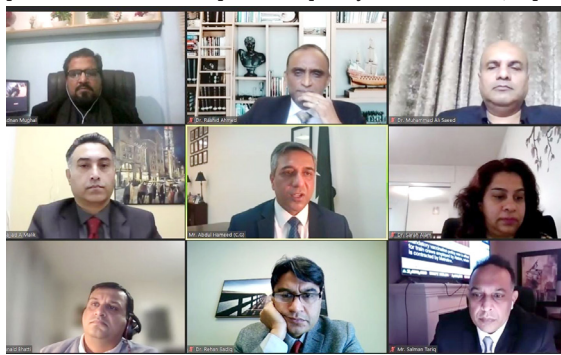
The event was moderated by Consul General of Pakistan Toronto Abdul Hameed while the panelists included MP Shafqat Ali, several educationists, lawyers, consultants, and public policy experts

## DNA

TORONTO: Member Canadian Parliament Shafqat Ali has urged the Pakistan students to actively consider Canada as a choice destination for higher education as the Canadian government openly welcomes international students and provides them enabling atmosphere to complete education and possibly take up work and permanent living in Canada under the immigration policy pursued by the Canadian government. He was addressing a webinar arranged by the Pakistan High Commission Ottawa and Consulate General of Pakistan Toronto on 'Student Direct Stream (SDS) and opportunities for Pakistani students in Canada'. This was

the second of webinars arranged within two weeks to inform and educate the Pakistani students and their parents on the educational opportunities available in Canada following inclusion of Pakistan in Student Direct Stream, an initiative launched by the Canadian authorities to fast-track visa processing of international students from select countries, including Pakistan. The event was moderated by Consul General of Pakistan Toronto Abdul Hameed while the panelists included MP Shafqat Ali, several educationists, lawyers, consultants, and public policy experts, including Dr. Muhammad Ali Saeed, Dr. Rehan Sadiq, Dr. Rashid Ahmed, Dr. Junaid Bhatti, Mr. Sajjad A. Malik, Mr. Salman Tariq, Mr. Adnan

Mughal and Dr. Sarah Alam. MP Shafqat Ali who represents the ruling Liberal Party in the Canadian Parliament, said he knew the Pakistani community and the students were faced with issues related to slow processing of student visa but the issue needed to be seen in a wider context, particularly the number of Pakistani students in comparison with their peers



and populations from other countries. There were also issues related to lack of promotion of Canadian education in Pakistan and the difficulties faced by students in filling out their visa forms for lack of guidance. Consul General of Pakistan Toronto Abdul Hameed noted that the Canadian education system held out certain advantages such as high quality of education, open

and welcoming Canadian society and permission for students to work part time. However, due to factors like higher tuition fee, COVID-19, visa processing time and the lack of awareness among Pakistani applicants about the Canadian education system the number of Pakistani students in Canada had not increased in the last few years. Sharing their views, other panelists noted that Canada had hundreds of educational institutions where the tuition fee ranged between 7000-8000 CAD to 50,000 CAD and the Pakistani students needed to pick suitable institution as well as educational program to reap full benefits of education to further their future goals and aspirations. The panelists urged the Canadian universities and

colleges to consider like their counterparts in Great Britain to start forging partnerships and linkages with colleges and universities in Pakistani to create a favourable eco-system for the Canadian education in Pakistan as the Pakistani students traditionally prefer the UK, the US and the Australian colleges and universities for education. It was noted that the minimum age for international students in Canada was 18 years and they were required to possess at least 12 years, of education to apply for any academic programme in Canada. The panelists advised the students to consider applying to Canadian colleges as many of these colleges offered admissions thrice a year for lower fees and less time in visa processing.



## Briefs

## Biden mulls blacklisting Russian banks

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The U.S. and European allies are weighing sanctions targeting Russia's biggest banks and the country's ability to convert rubles for dollars and other foreign currencies should President Vladimir Putin invade Ukraine, according to people familiar with the matter.

The sanctions – including against some of Russia's largest banks and the Russian Direct Investment Fund – are among the options that President Joe Biden may spell out when he speaks with Putin on Tuesday, according to the people. The U.S. could also restrict the ability of investors to buy Russian debt on the secondary market, they said.

The options were described by two people familiar with the matter who asked not to be identified discussing private deliberations. The most drastic option would be to bar Russia's access to the Swift financial payments system, but that would wreak havoc on ordinary citizens so officials are more inclined to go after Russia's ability to convert rubles into dollars, euros or British pounds, the people said.

## Syrian regime reports Israel 'aggression'

## WEB DESK

DAMASCUS: Israeli warplanes fired missiles on the port of the coastal city of Latakia without inflicting any human losses, the Syrian regime has said.

The regime media quoted an unnamed military official as saying that early on Tuesday several missiles struck the area of the containers in the port setting some of them on fire.

"Around 1:23 am today (2323 GMT), the Israeli enemy carried out an air aggression with several missiles," SANA news agency quoted a military source as saying. "Our air defences repelled the Israeli aggression in Latakia."

It was a rare attack on the port of Latakia, a vital facility where much of Syria's imports are brought into the war-torn country.

Syrian regime media reported that five explosions were heard in the port and a huge fire erupted in the containers area and fire engines have rushed to the port. There was no comment from the Israeli military. Israel has staged hundreds of strikes on targets inside regime-controlled Syria over the years but rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations.

Some of the strikes in the past had targeted the main airport in the capital Damascus.

## Azerbaijan seizes over 137 kg of heroin

## AGENCIES

BAKU: Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee has seized over 137 kg of drugs at the Astara customs checkpoint on the border with Iran, the committee reported on December 3. According to a tip-off received by the operations and investigation department of the Southern Territorial Main Customs Office, a truck trying to smuggle a large amount of drugs from Iran to Kazakhstan via Azerbaijan was detained by officers at the Astara customs checkpoint, the report added. During a thorough inspection of the vehicle, customs officers seized 171 rectangular packages stashed within the cabin, containing 137 kg of heroin.

As a result of the initial interrogation, the truck's driver confessed that the drug was loaded on a vehicle in Iran under a prior agreement and had to be transported to Kazakhstan in order to be sold. It should be noted that the confiscated drugs are assumed to be worth over AZN16 million (\$10m) on the European black market.

## Turkey, Qatar boost co-op with 15 new bilateral accords

Erdogan also visited the joint military command headquarters in Doha and spoke with soldiers and commanders. Speaking there, Erdogan said Turkey does not differentiate between Qatar's security and stability from its own

## AGENCIES

DOHA: Turkey and Qatar on Tuesday signed 15 different agreements to enhance cooperation between the two countries, while President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the ruling emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, met in Doha to co-chair the seventh meeting of the Turkey-Qatar Supreme Strategic Committee.

Erdogan arrived in Doha on Monday upon the invitation of the ruling emir of Qatar on the occasion of the seventh meeting of the Turkey-Qatar Supreme Strategic Committee. After the two leaders' face-to-face meetings, agreements including in fields such as trade, investment, development, culture, youth, sports, diplomacy, health, religious affairs and media cooperation were signed with the participation of relevant ministers. Erdogan and Sheikh Tamim attended the signing ceremony of 12 agreements.

After the signing ceremony, Erdogan and Sheikh Tamim led the committee meeting. At the meeting in Doha, the Turkish president and Qatari emir and with the participation of the relevant ministers reviewed the bilateral relations in all aspects and discussed the steps that can be taken to deepen the cooperation. In addition to bilateral relations, views on regional and international issues were exchanged during the meetings.

Praising strong relations with Qatar, the president said Monday that the two countries signed dozens of agreements in the military, political, economic and cultural spheres, in line with the history of friendly relations. He highlighted that both countries are special in the sense that they have been able to preserve their stance in the face of regional obstacles in the past several years.

New agreements to be made will further strengthen ties between Turkey and Qatar, especially in light of new initiatives and reconciliation steps in the region, the Turkish ambassador to Doha said Monday. Turkey and Qatar will take additional steps



to achieve further rapprochement and enhance bilateral cooperation, the Qatari envoy in Ankara also said Sunday.

Ankara and Doha enjoy strong relations, particularly since the 2017 blockade of the Gulf country by Saudi Arabia and others. The two countries have strengthened military and economic ties in recent years. The sixth meeting of the Turkey-Qatar Supreme Strategic Committee was held in 2020 in the Turkish capital Ankara. Ten agreements were signed between the two countries in the presence of the two leaders. Within the framework of the Supreme Strategic Committee meetings, a total of 68 agreements and protocols were signed between the two countries before.

Erdogan also visited the joint military command headquarters in Doha and spoke with soldiers and commanders. Speaking there, Erdogan said Turkey does not differentiate between Qatar's se-

curity and stability from its own.

He also said that Turkey tries to conduct its cooperation with Gulf countries based on mutual interests and respect.

"As Turkey, we attach great importance to the peace and well-being of the entire Gulf region, along with Qatar," he added.

In the last two decades, relations between Turkey and Qatar have witnessed rapid development in various fields. In a volatile region like the Middle East, the ability of the two countries to maintain strong relations and have a convergence of views on many regional and international matters represent a rare "distinguished experience" that has provided a strong basis for increased interdependence and cooperation between the two allies.

While relations between Turkey and Qatar officially began in 1979 with the opening of the two countries' embassies in Doha and Ankara, they witnessed a major boost

recently. In 2008, the first Turkish-Qatari Business Forum was held in Doha in the presence of Turkish then-President Abdullah Gül. In the same year, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to start comprehensive cooperation between them in various fields. In 2013, Erdogan inaugurated the new headquarters of the Turkish Embassy in Doha, and Qatar was the first Arab country he visited after assuming the presidency in 2014. In December 2014, President Erdogan and Sheikh Tamim signed an agreement to establish the Joint Strategic Committee between the two countries.

Doha hosted the first session of the Joint Strategic Committee and a milestone achievement was made as the two countries agreed to cement relations between their respective armies. Other sessions followed with the two countries taking turns to host them.

## Car bomb in Basra, Iraq kills seven civilians

## NEWS DESK

BAGHDAD: At least seven civilians were killed in a car bomb explosion Tuesday in the southern Iraqi province of Basra, a local security official said. The explosion took place near a hospital in the city center, the official said on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on speaking to the media.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. Neighboring Turkey quickly issued a statement condemning the "heinous act of terrorism," also extending its condolences for those who lost their lives and wishing a swift recovery to the injured. "Regardless of its source, Turkey will continue to stand by the Iraqi people and government in its fight against terrorism," said a Foreign Ministry statement.

The oil-rich Basra province is relatively calm compared to the country's northern and western provinces, where the terror group Daesh/ISIS still maintains sleeper cells.

## "Multidimensional poverty" to be measured

TASHKENT: Monetary and non-monetary methods are used in approaches to determining the poverty threshold. So, at the end of May 2021, for the first time, a preliminary estimate of the cost of the minimum consumer spending (MCS) of the population was announced in Uzbekistan. MCS per household member amounted to 440,000 soums per month, of which food expenditures accounted for 69% and non-food expenditures - 31%. Thus, the country has attempted to measure monetary poverty. Over the next 5 years, using the experience of other

countries, the social protection system in Uzbekistan will be significantly improved. To achieve the set objectives, it is planned to simultaneously study non-monetary methods for measuring poverty. In particular, the UNICEF method - Multidimensional Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) and the UNDP method - Multidimensional Poverty Measure (MPM). To this end, the Center for Economic Research and Reforms (CERR) hosted a seminar on "Measuring Multidimensional Poverty in Uzbekistan".

## EU risks becoming irrelevant without own defense: Borrell

## FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: The European Union risks becoming irrelevant in global politics if it fails to strengthen its defense capabilities and spending on innovation, the bloc's top diplomat said on Tuesday. Speaking at the European Defense Agency Conference in Brussels, the bloc's de facto capital, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned that without a stronger defense policy, the bloc could soon become irrelevant in "power politics". He stressed that without significant investments to integrate new cutting-edge technologies in European defense systems, the bloc will lose interoperability with its partners and advantages vis-a-vis its competitors.

"Either we invest a lot in defense innovation, or we will become defense irrelevant," he stressed, urging EU member states to "do much more together" and "right now." "Innovation is shaping the global balance of power," Borrell said, pointing to how the EU and its member states are lagging behind other global actors in defense innovation spending. Last year, the US spent Euro14 billion (\$15.8 million) on defense innovation, 14 times more than what EU member states invested, he explained. Borrell also said civilian innovation had a huge impact on defense, especially in the cyber domain, noting that in 2020 tech giant Alphabet/Google had spent 10 times more in research and innovation than all EU defense ministries combined. According to

Borrell, his recently revealed defense strategy, the Strategic Compass, offers a remedy to these problems.

The action guide, presented to EU foreign and defense ministers last month, sets forth concrete proposals and timelines for strengthening EU defense, such as setting up a swiftly deployable EU force of 5,000 troops, investing in industrial capabilities, and securing the EU against cyberattacks. The final document is expected to be adopted in March. Based on the lessons from the Yugoslav Wars, the idea of reforming and strengthening the bloc's defense and security policy has been on the table since the mid-1990s. However, EU member states have been unable to advance on the policy due to the high sensitivity of the topic and diverging interests.

## Japan holds drills in north as it faces Russia, China threat

## WEB DESK

ENIWA: The earth shook and explosions boomed in the crisp winter air of Japan's northern island of Hokkaido on Tuesday, as dozens of tanks and soldiers carried out drills at a Japanese army post that has long served to keep an eye on neighboring Russia, while showcasing Japanese military prowess as Tokyo also faces China's rise.

A team of four tanks, each carrying three soldiers, fired shells and machine guns at targets meant to represent enemy missiles, armored vehicles or humans as hundreds of fellow soldiers cheered on the sidelines and waved their unit flags. The drills, which opened this week and continue through Dec. 14, involve about 1,300 Ground Self-Defense Force troops – about 550 of whom are completing the actual drills, according to the Northern Army Headquarters.

The drill focus on training soldiers for speed and accuracy in shooting targets that randomly appear from the range of 300 meters (984 feet) to 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) during a 15-minute session. The training comes as China and Russia have stepped up military cooperation in recent years in an attempt to counter the region's U.S.-led bloc.

Among Japan's biggest worries is China's increased naval activity, which has prompted Tokyo to rapidly step up troop deployment and missile defenses across southern Japan, including on remote islands.

China's buildup of military facilities in the South China Sea has heightened Tokyo's concerns in the East China Sea, where the Japanese-controlled Senkaku islands are also claimed by Beijing, which calls them Diaoyu. China has sent a fleet of armed coast guard boats to routinely circle them and to go in and out of Japanese-claimed waters, sometimes chasing Japanese fishing boats in the area.

## First case of Omicron detected in Maldives

MALE: Maldives has recorded its first case of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus, local media reported Tuesday. Maldives Health Protection Agency (HPA) confirmed that it had detected the Omicron virus after conducting genomic sequencing on samples taken from a tourist from South Africa who arrived in the country on November 27.

The Maldivian government has banned travel to the Maldives from South Africa, Namibia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Eswatini and Zimbabwe following the discovery of the Omicron variant.

Maldivian citizens and work permit holders travelling from these countries must undergo PCR tests and quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.

According to the latest figures from the HPA, a total of 92,368 active cases of COVID-19 have been detected in the country, out of which 1,796 are active cases. The country has recorded 255 deaths from the virus so far. – APP

## End of an era: Angela Merkel bows out after 16 years

## AGENCIES

BERLIN: Angela Merkel was assured of a place in the history books as soon as she became Germany's first female chancellor on Nov. 22, 2005.

Over the next 16 years, she was credited with raising Germany's profile and influence, working to hold a fractious European Union together, managing a string of crises and being a role model for women. Now that near-record tenure is ending with her leaving office at age 67 to praise from abroad and enduring popularity at home. Her designated successor, Olaf Scholz, is expected to take office Wednesday.

Merkel, a former scientist who grew up in communist East Germany, is bowing out about a week short of the record for longevity held by her one-time mentor, Helmut Kohl, who reunited Germany during his 1982-1998 tenure. While Merkel perhaps lacks a spectacular signature achievement, the center-right Christian Democrat came to be viewed as an indispensable crisis manager and defender of Western values in turbulent times.

She served alongside four U.S. presidents, four French presidents, five British prime ministers and eight Italian premiers. Her chancellorship was marked by four major challenges: the global financial crisis, Europe's debt crisis, the 2015-16 influx of refugees to Europe and the coronavirus pandemic. "It's undeniable that she's given Germany a lot of soft power," said Sudha David-Wilp, the deputy director of the German Marshall Fund of the United States' Berlin office. "Undoubtedly she's elevated Germany's image in the world." "When she first came onto the scene in 2005, a lot of people underestimated her, but she grew in stature along with Germany's role in the world," David-Wilp added. Others in Europe and beyond "want more of an active Germany to play a role in the world – that may not have been the case before she was in office, necessarily."

In a video message at Merkel's final EU summit in October, former U.S. President Barack Obama thanked her for "taking the high ground for so many years." "Thanks to you, the center has held through many storms," he said. Merkel was a driving force behind EU sanctions



against Russia over its annexation of Crimea and backing of separatists in eastern Ukraine, and also spearheaded so-far-unfinished efforts to bring about a diplomatic solution there. She was regarded as being "able to have a dialogue with (Russian President Vladimir) Putin on behalf of the West," David-Wilp said. She was steadfast in pursuing multilateral solutions to the world's problems, a principle she set out at a military parade in her honor last week.

The global financial crisis and the migrant influx "made clear how much we depend on cooperation beyond national borders and how indispensable international institutions and multilateral instruments are to be able to cope with the big challenges of our time," Merkel said, identifying those as climate change, digitization and migration. That stance was a strong counterpoint to former U.S. President Donald Trump, with whom she had a difficult relationship. At their first meeting in the White House in March 2017, when photographers shouted for them to shake hands, she quietly asked Trump "do you want to have a handshake?" but there was no response from the president, who looked ahead. Merkel dismissed being labeled as "leader of the free world" during that period, saying leadership is never up to one person or country. Still, she was viewed as a crucial leader in the unwieldy 27-nation EU, famed for her stamina in coaxing agreements in marathon negotiating sessions. "Ms. Merkel was a compromise machine," Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel said recently. When negotiations were blocked, she "mostly found something that unites us to move things

along." That was on display in July 2020, when EU leaders clinched a deal on an unprecedented 1.8 trillion-euro (\$2 trillion) budget and coronavirus recovery fund after a quarrelsome four-day summit. At her 107th and last EU summit, European Council President Charles Michel told Merkel: "You are a monument." A summit without her would be like "Rome without the Vatican or Paris without the Eiffel Tower," he added.

The appreciation from her counterparts was genuine, although there was plenty of friction over the years. Merkel always sought to keep the EU as tightly knit as possible but strongly defended Germany's interests, clashing with Greece during the debt crisis and disagreeing with Hungary, Poland and others over their refusal – unlike Germany – to host migrants arriving in Europe.

Merkel said she was bowing out of the EU "in a situation that definitely gives me cause for concern as well."

"We have been able to overcome many crises in a spirit of respect, in an effort always to find common solutions" she said. "But we also have a series of unresolved problems, and there are big unfinished tasks for my successor."



## Briefs

Rashid  
asks PDM to  
review march  
decision

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Tuesday asked the multi-party opposition alliance—Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to review its decision for holding an anti-inflation march in Islamabad on Pakistan Day.

His remarks came in the backdrop of the PDM's decision of holding a march in Islamabad on March 23. "Everyone has a right to hold peaceful protest. However, the opposition needs to review its decision about the date of the protest," the minister said while addressing a news conference here.

He asked the National Assembly Opposition Leader, Shehbaz Sharif and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman to change the date for the march.

Announcing a march on such a date was not in interest of the country as the entire nation along with foreign delegates and overseas Pakistanis came to Islamabad for witnessing the national parade arranged by Pakistan's armed forces on every March 23.

The minister said if the opposition did not change the date then it should not blame the government for not allowing them to hold protest as Islamabad would be on high alert for the parade with closure of some roads for two to three days in advance for parade rehearsal. He said the Prime Minister had received recommendation on 14 programs under National Action Plan upon which the government would ensure implementation in its true letter and spirit.

He said Fazl-ur-Rehman should not drag seminary students in the politics and use them as a tool to achieve agenda of those who have already lost popularity among the masses.

Rupee breaks  
all records  
against  
US dollar

KARACHI: The Pakistan rupee on Tuesday continued its downward slide against the US dollar as it dropped to an all-time low of Rs176.79 in the interbank market at the close of the trading session.

The plunge came on the back of a mammoth import bill for November and widening current account deficit.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the rupee had closed at Rs176.48 on Monday.

It is pertinent to mention here that despite receipt of Saudi funds worth \$3 billion the currency is depreciating because of \$7.7 billion imports in November.

Pakistan  
condemns  
Houthi's  
missile launch

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday strongly condemned the launch of ballistic missile by Houthis towards Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh aimed against the civilian population and infrastructure.

However, the successful interception of the ballistic missile by the Royal Saudi Air Defence prevented loss of innocent lives, the Foreign Office said in a statement.

"Such attacks not only violate international law, but also threaten peace and security of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the region. Pakistan calls for the immediate cessation of these attacks," it said.

The FO said Pakistan reaffirmed its full support and solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against any threats to its security and territorial integrity.

Leading Ulema condemn  
Sialkot lynching incident

Talking to the Sri Lankan HC, members of the delegation said that the lynching of Priyantha Kumara, a Sri Lankan citizen, at a factory in Sialkot over blasphemy charges was a despicable incident

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Led by Special Representative to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Tahir Muhammad Ashrafi, the country's leading religious scholars belonging to different schools of thought met with the Sri Lankan high commissioner (HC) at the high commission on Tuesday and condemned the Sialkot incident in the strongest possible terms.

Talking to the Sri Lankan HC, members of the delegation, including Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Chairman Qibla Ayyaz, other members of the CII besides Ruete Hilal Committee Chairman Abdul Khair Azad, Mufti Taqi Usmani, Allama Arif Wahidi, Qari Hanif Jalandri, Allama Ameen Shaheed, Abul Khair Zubair, Hamid Saeed Kazmi and Professor Sajid Mir, said that the lynching of Priyantha Kumara, a Sri Lankan citizen, at a factory in Sialkot over blasphemy charges was a despicable incident.

They also informed the high commissioner of the steps taken by the government so far to bring perpetrators of the crime to justice.



Speaking to the media, Tahir Ashrafi said today he had visited the Sri Lankan High Commission along with eminent Ulema to offer condolences to the country's high commissioner as well as the entire Sri Lankan nation.

Mufti Taqi Usmani said the incident had

sent shockwaves across the country. "Sri Lanka is a brotherly country. And we express our solidarity with it," he added. Hamid Saeed Kazmi, former minister for religious affairs, said heads of the entire nation hung in shame over the incident.

Professor Sajid Mir, Abul Khair Azad and

Hanif Jalandhri said all their sympathies and prayers were not only with the slain Sri Lankan's family, but with the entire Sri Lankan nation. They said that the Pakistanis would mark the next Friday as a day of condemnation.

Dr. Qibla Ayyaz said what happened in Sialkot last Friday was not only the open violation of the country's laws and the constitution but also of the Islamic teachings. "Those who are involved in the incident will be handed down exemplary punishments," he expressed the resolve.

At the same time, he was all praise for Malik Adnan, the colleague of Sri Lankan citizen Priyantha Kumara, who tried to protect the latter despite the fact that the hostile mob was in no mood to spare him either.

Reciprocating the Ulema's gesture, the Sri Lankan high commissioner said he was satisfied with the way the government of Pakistan had moved swiftly to arrest the culprits. He also praised the people of Pakistan for feeling concerned and condemning the horrific act. He also requested the government to compensate Kumara's family.

NAB Chairman  
to give in-camera  
briefing to PAC

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has summoned its next session on January 6 for an in-camera briefing of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman Justice Retired Javed Iqbal.

Rana Tanveer said that it will be an in-camera session in which the committee summoned details of recoveries from the NAB. The NAB chairman Justice Retired Javed Iqbal reached Parliament House Tuesday and appeared before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Upon arriving at the Parliament House, the NAB chairman Javed Iqbal told the reporters that the importance of the parliament is obvious. He added that he failed to appear before the parliament due to his busy schedule.

Iqbal said that the comments of those persons who are facing corruption cases did not bother him. He rejected the allegations of 'selective accountability'. During the Public Accounts Committee's session being chaired by Rana Tanveer, the PAC chairman welcomed the National Accountability Bureau chairman in the session.

Javed Iqbal said that the supremacy of the parliament is obvious and he realised the fact that he did not appear one or two times despite being summoned due to legitimate reasons. "I'm not a Mughal monarch who keeps right not to appear before the Parliament. — DNA

IHC asks Rana Shamim to  
submit affidavit by Monday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday ordered former chief judge of Gilgit-Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court Rana Shamim to submit his original affidavit by next Monday and if he failed to do so then the court would indict him.

The former GB judge despite court order has failed to submit his original affidavit and also failed to file his response on the court's show-cause notice.

However, during the court hearing, Mr Shamim termed the contents of his affidavit absolutely correct prompting the chief justice of Islamabad High Court to say that if he brings only one proof before the court, then he (the CJ) would take the responsibility.

IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah on Tuesday was hearing the contempt case against Rana Shamim and others in Islamabad. During the hearing, the former top judge of the GB acknowledged

the veracity of the contents of his affidavit saying that though its contents were correct but it wasn't meant for publishing. On this, the IHC CJ remarked that the narrative which was being made out of his affidavit, was very painful. "If there is any truth in this narrative and if you bring only just one proof, then I will take the responsibility.

I have full trust in each and every judge of this high court," Justice Minallah said to the former GB top judge. He further said that they wanted to change the culture of this high court. "Do not assume it is a court contempt proceeding. It's my accountability as well. Now this narrative must come to an end," he added.

While addressing Mr Shamim, Justice Minallah remarked that he belonged to a city where the brave Waqar Seth served as judge. Never ever Waqar Seth complained about any pressure, he added.

"As Waqar was an independent-minded judge, I have same kind of trust in the judges of this court. That's why I'm tell-

ing everyone that it's accountability of all of us," the IHC CJ said.

Chief Justice Minallah also inquired from amicus curiae Faisal Siddiqui what were the responsibilities of a newspaper for publishing a news item. Is it not compulsory to take point of view of all the concerned parties before publishing any material?

Faisal Siddiqui informed the court that the point of views of registrars of the Supreme Court and IHC were not taken in this regard.

He said that Rana Shamim told the court that it was a secret document, not mean for publishing.

He argued that if the document was private, then the court could not initiate a contempt case. Chief Justice Minallah said that judges could not hold press conferences nor could they give any explanation. The impression was given that a certain person (Nawaz Sharif) must not be released on bail before elections and pressure was exerted on judges, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Mahnur Abbasova from Office of Admissions & Student Record, ADA University, Baku, Azerbaijan along with diplomats from Embassy of Azerbaijan visited CGSS office. Mr. Khalid Taimur presented her famous Pakistani diplomatic CENTRELINE Magazine. — DNA

India signs  
trade and arms  
deals with Russia

NEW DELHI: Russia and India signed a flurry of trade and arms deals during President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi for talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, including one that will see India produce more than 600,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles.

Putin traveled to India with Russia's defense and foreign ministers in a visit that saw the two countries reinforce their ties with a military and technical cooperation pact until 2031 and a pledge to boost annual trade to \$30 billion by 2025. The Russian President is visiting India amid increasingly strained relations between Russia and the United States, also a key Indian ally, which has expressed reservations about the growing military cooperation between Moscow and New Delhi.

A joint statement published after the talks said Russia and India had "reiterated their intention to strengthen defense cooperation, including in the joint development of production of military equipment."

In addition to the deal for India to produce AK-203 assault rifles, Russia said it was interested in continuing to provide S-400 air defense missile systems. — Agencies

## The complicated relationship of EU and China

The European Commission unveiled a plan called the "Global Gateway," to invest Euro 300 bln (\$340 billion) globally by 2027 on infrastructure projects, digital connectivity and curbing climate change

LONDON: The European Union has long been criticized for trying to have its cake and eat it when it comes to China. On one hand, it badly wants a strong economic relationship with its biggest partner for goods trade. On the other, it recognizes the Chinese government is a serial human rights offender and systemic rival.

This attempt to balance contradictory realities has often led to policy incoherence from Brussels. It was only this time last year that the EU and China finalized a major investment agreement to strengthen their trade ties.

It included a number of commitments derided by critics as superficial on issues such as climate change, despite China being the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter; and labor rights, despite European lawmakers passing a resolution just weeks before the agreement was finalized condemning Beijing's alleged system of forced labor for Uyghur Muslims in its western Xinjiang region.

Fast forward 12 months, and the European Parliament will not even consider voting on the agreement. In March, the EU alongside other allied nations levied sanctions on several Chinese Communist Party officials over "serious human rights abuses" against Uyghur Muslims, prompting China to sanction several European lawmakers in retaliation. China has denied claims of atrocities in Xinjiang, but with neither side willing to

budge, the pact is on ice.

Now, a more coherent European strategy is coming into focus, through a series of policies that have the clear ambition of countering China, regardless of what it could mean for investment in Europe.

Last week, the European Commission unveiled a plan called the "Global Gateway," to invest Euro 300 billion (\$340 billion) globally by 2027 on infrastructure projects, digital connectivity and curbing climate change.

While the plan does not mention China, it's hard to see this announcement as anything other than a direct alternative to Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),



a wide-ranging trade and infrastructure project that would link economies from Jakarta to Rotterdam via Nairobi. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the gateway offered a "true alternative" to China's BRI, which has been accused of saddling some countries with huge debts since its inception in 2013.

The EU's newfound assertiveness didn't come about suddenly, rather it was the culmination of several years of changing attitudes. In 2019, the European Commission published a document in which it labeled China a "systemic rival." In the two years that followed, Europe



has slowly worked out how it deals with a rival with whom it has so many ties and which it still wants to partner with in other areas.

Charles Parton, former first counsellor to the EU delegation in Beijing, thinks Brussels' previous inaction largely came down to the fact that for a time, Europe's leaders could get away with doing nothing.

"The reality was, citizens were not putting huge pressure on politicians to do anything. Persecution of the Uyghurs or crackdowns in Hong Kong. When Europeans met with Xi Jinping, they would say they brought up human rights, everyone would nod, then they would get down to business," he said.

But pressure has been steadily building on European leaders to hold China accountable. And while anti-China sentiment has been rising across the West for years, the ruling Communist Party's handling of the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic has also led to a record high in negative views toward the country, according to Pew.

Today, things are different. The G7 nations are all more hostile to China, something that Fallon believes "embarrassed" EU representatives at the last summit. "It was clear everyone else had moved onto seeing China as a serious threat and the EU suddenly looked very complacent on the issue," she says. — CNN

Indonesia  
volcano  
eruption  
death toll  
rises

FOREIGN DESK

JAKARTA: The death toll from the eruption of the Mount Semeru volcano on the island of Java has risen to 34, Indonesia's national disaster agency announced on Tuesday. Mount Semeru is the highest mountain on the island of Java, which is the world's most populous island and contains the Indonesian capital Jakarta. It last erupted in January, leaving no casualties.

Mount Semeru ejected a mushroom of hot ash into the sky on Saturday and rained hot mud as thousands of residents fled the area. The disaster left entire streets filled with mud and ash and destroyed countless homes and vehicles.

Lava and searing gas swept as far as 11 kilometers down Mount Semeru's slopes. National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said 56 people were hospitalized after the eruption, mostly with burns. He said rescuers were still searching for 27 villagers reported missing, and that 3,000 houses and 38 schools were damaged. Indonesian President Joko Widodo visited areas devastated by the eruption on Tuesday, vowing that communities would be quickly rebuilt. The areas in question are in the Lumajang district of the country's East Java province.

ECP ready  
to organise  
LG elections:  
CEC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja has said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is fully ready to organise local government (LG) polls.

He said that the federal government has not provided the regulations for LG polls, whereas, the relevant data for delimitation was not provided by the Balochistan government. He added that the institution is in contact with the KP government for LG polls. While addressing an event related to National Voters Day Tuesday, CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja said that ECP is fully ready to organise LG polls.

"Steps will be taken by the election commission for holding the fair elections in which all political parties will be given level playing field."

"Election commission had organised polls on 50 vacant seats in March, whereas, DROs have been appointed for the second phase of elections. The training process of the election staff has been completed."

In Daska elections, the ECP had taken timely action against the irregularities by issuing the directives of an inquiry and action, said Sikandar Sultan Raja, adding that the commission has also launched the process to review the electoral lists for the next elections.

13 dead in  
Ukraine  
minibus  
accident

KIEV: Thirteen people died and another seven were injured when a minibus collided with a lorry in northern Ukraine on Tuesday, officials said. The minibus was travelling from the city of Cherniv to the village of Borzna in the Cherniv region when it hit the lorry, Ukraine's state emergency service said. "As a result of the accident, 13 people were killed and seven hospitalised with injuries of varying degrees of severity," it said in a statement. It added that 30 rescuers were working at the scene of the accident.

Pictures released by the emergency service showed a lorry with its front crushed blocking the road diagonally, stopped next to an entirely crushed minibus on the hard shoulder. Officials did not say what caused the accident. But disregard for traffic rules and poor road conditions kill thousands of people in ex-Soviet Ukraine every year. — APP