



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Julian Assange suffers 'mini stroke' in London prison, fiancée claims

Detailed News On Page-08

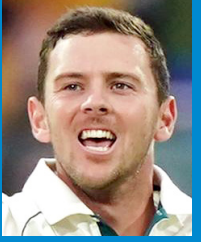
NAB Chairman vows punishing the corrupt

Detailed News On Page-08



Josh Hazlewood out of Second Ashes test

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Modi's twitter hacked

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal Twitter handle was "very briefly compromised," the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a tweet early on Sunday. The matter was escalated to Twitter and the Prime Minister's personal Twitter handle @narendramodi was immediately secured, PMO India's tweet said, adding any tweet shared during the brief period when the account was compromised must be ignored. It was not immediately known how long the personal Twitter handle of Modi, which has over 73 million followers, was compromised.

Nation must stand united: FM

APP

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Mahmood Qureshi on Sunday urged the nation to stand united to thwart the designs of enemy forces that were bent upon creating unrest and instability in the country. Addressing the 708th Urs of Hazrat Shah Rukhan-e-Alam, he said the anti-Pakistan elements were trying to create economic stagnation in the country through their Geo-strategic agenda. Qureshi said, "Many forces don't want to see prosperity in Pakistan" and urged masses to defeat the nefarious designs of the enemy by forging unity among our ranks.

PTI govt corrupt, incompetent

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Sunday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government formed in 2018 was not only 'incompetent' but 'corrupt' as well. During a press conference in Islamabad, she claimed that the cases made against Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif were all false and fabricated.

Monitor other parties also: PTI to ECP

Ch Fawad says accounts of all parties must be presented before public; Relief package for Balouchistan this week



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE: Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry, on Sunday said the incumbent government is set to announce a huge package for Balochistan. While addressing a press conference along with the Minister of Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib, he said that the previous government did not solve Gwadar's problems. The work on the foreign funding case is still not being done the way it should have been carried out. The accounts of all political parties must be presented before public. He mentioned this while referring to the foreign funding case. He went on to add that PM will bring a big package to solve the problems of people in Balochistan. The government has an idea of problems being faced by people of Gwadar.

Continued on Page 06

PM takes notice of Gwadar fishermen demands

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan announced he had taken notice of the "very legitimate" demands of the Gwadar fishermen, adding that he would take strong action against illegal fishing by trawlers in the area. The prime minister's tweet was followed by a series of protests by locals in Gwadar, who had taken to the streets to raise their voices for their rights. "I have taken notice of the very legitimate demands of the hardworking fishermen of Gwadar. Will be taking strong action against illegal fishing by trawlers and will also speak to CM Balochistan," tweeted the premier. Gwadar has seen protests for the past few weeks, sometimes featuring thousands of women with young children, speaking out against the large trawlers. Locals say the trawlers, which are illegally plundering the Arabian seabed, are making it harder for fishermen to fish in the waters. Fishing is one of the main sources of income for

Continued on Page 06

Dean lauds services of outgoing Greek Ambassador Andreas

Ambassador Andreas particularly focused on strengthening of people to people contacts



ISLAMABAD: Acting Dean of Diplomatic Corps Mohammed Alashabi Ambassador of Yemen presenting souvenir to the outgoing Ambassador of Greece. - DNA

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Mohammed Alashabi, Acting Dean of Diplomatic Corps, hosted a farewell reception for the outgoing Ambassador of Andreas Papastavrou who is leaving Pakistan

after completing his tenure. On behalf of Head of Diplomatic Missions in Islamabad and their spouses Ambassador Alashabi presented the traditional gift for outgoing colleague to Mr. Andreas. The acting dean expressed to

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Senator Shibli Faraz, High Commissioner of Kenya Prof. Julius Bitok and others cutting cake to mark 58th anniversary of Independence Day of Kenya. - DNA

China lauds Pakistan's stance

Nong Rong's comment came in response to a statement issued by MOFA

DNA



ISLAMABAD: China's Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong on Sunday said that his country appreciates Pakistan for being against the politicisation of sports. Taking to Twitter, the envoy wrote: "Pakistan's position to oppose any form of politicization of sports is highly appreciated. The Beijing Winter Olympic Games is not a stage for the posturing and grandstanding of politicians," he wrote. The ambassador also said that China is ready to deliver a streamlined, safe, and splendid Olympics to the world.

Nong Rong's comment came in response to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday, in which Pakistan had said that it stands against the politicisation of sports in all its forms. According to Xinhua News Agency, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, while addressing a weekly media briefing, had expressed Pakistan's confidence in the neighbouring country's plan to host the Beijing Winter Olympics.

NA session postponed

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The Parliament House will remain closed from Dec 13 to Dec 20 in connection with a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) being held on Dec 18 and 19. The meeting of foreign ministers from the OIC is being held in Pakistan after 41 years and in this regard, all activities at the Parliament House have been suspended. The session of parliament that was supposed to take up the mini-budget has been postponed as well.

Punjab makes EVMs mandatory for LG elections

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab government has decided to make electronic voting machines (EVMs) mandatory for the upcoming local government elections across the province. Chief Minister Usman Buzdar approved amendments to the Local Bodies Act to make the EVMs compulsory for voting in the local bodies polls. As per the new ordinance, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is bound to include EVMs in the elections. Buzdar said the parliament had passed a law regarding the EVMs and now the Punjab government will ensure voting through the machines as well. After the new amendments by the Punjab government, sources speculate there could be a delay in the local government elections as it wouldn't be possible for the ECP to conduct elections in March next year.

Continued on Page 06

'Opposition opposes EVM to avert transparency'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Science and Technology Shibli Faraz says the opposition parties are opposing the usage of Electronic Voting Machines in elections because they do not want transparency in the election process. Talking to a private news channel, he said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had invited the opposition parties to sit together for bringing electoral reforms but they refused.

Continued on Page 06

Israeli PM in UAE on first official visit

The leader will discuss "deepening the ties between Israel and the UAE," the statement said

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett is travelling to the United Arab Emirates to meet the Gulf state's de facto ruler, in the first-ever visit to the UAE by an Israeli prime minister. Bennett will meet Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan on Monday, Bennett's office said in a statement. The leader will discuss "deepening the ties between Israel and the UAE, especially economic and regional issues," the statement said. "This is the first official visit by an Israeli prime minister to the UAE," it added.



There was no immediate confirmation from the UAE. The two countries formalised relations last year as part of a US-brokered agreement known as the Abraham Accords. The agreement has led to a raft of deals ranging from

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Inside...

Over 1.35mln children vaccinated in Faisalabad - Page 02

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PIDE VC for following RASTA to develop local think tanks - Page 04

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Embassy holds exhibition of Pak miniature art in Brussels - Page 06

Afghanistan's participation in region must remain a priority - Page 07

PTI, allies slam Sindh govt over LG amendment Bill - Page 08

G7 warns Russia of 'massive consequences'

At a meeting in the northern English city of Liverpool, the G7 delegates said they were united in their condemnation of Russia's military build-up near Ukraine and they called on Moscow to de-escalate

AGENCIES

LIVERPOOL: Russia faces massive consequences and severe costs if President Vladimir Putin attacks Ukraine, the Group of Seven warned in a statement on Sunday. U.S. intelligence assesses that Russia could be planning a multi-front offensive on Ukraine as early as next year, involving up to 175,000 troops. The Kremlin denies it plans to invade and says the West is gripped by Russophobia. Moscow says the expansion of NATO threatens Russia and has contravened assurances given to it as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. At a meeting in the northern English city of Liverpool, the G7 delegates said they were united in their condemnation of Russia's military build-up near Ukraine and they called on Moscow to de-escalate. "Russia should be in no doubt that further military aggression against Ukraine

would have massive consequences and severe cost in response," said the statement, which confirmed a draft version previously reported by Reuters. "We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the right of any sovereign state to determine its own future." A statement released by the Russian Embassy in London on Saturday evening, before the joint G7 document was reported, said that Britain's frequent use of the phrase "Russian aggression" during the Liverpool meeting was misleading and designed to create a cause for the G7 to rally round. "Russia has made numerous offers to NATO on ways to decrease tensions. The G7 forum could be an opportunity to discuss them, but so far we hear nothing but aggressive slogans," the embassy statement said. For Moscow, the growing NATO embrace of a neighbouring former Soviet republic - and what it sees

China's Xi and Russia's Putin dominate G7

WEB DESK

LIVERPOOL: While Russian President Vladimir Putin keeps the West guessing over Ukraine, it was the might of Chinese President Xi Jinping that garnered the long-term strategic focus when the diplomats from the Group of Seven richest democracies met this weekend. The United States and its other G7 allies are searching for a coherent response to Xi's growing assertiveness after China's spectacular economic and military rise over the past 40 years. Putin was the immediate tactical focus at talks in the English city of Liverpool between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his counterparts. There was support for President Joe Biden's attempt to support Ukraine and deter Putin with a clear warning of severe economic sanctions. "There's a huge amount of convergence about what will unfortunately be necessary if Russia makes that very bad choice," a senior U.S. State Department official said. The West is concerned that Russia might be preparing to attack Ukraine. The Kremlin denies it plans to invade Ukraine but has demanded legally binding security guarantees that NATO will not expand further east.

as the nightmare possibility of alliance missiles in Ukraine targeted against Russia - is a "red line" it will not allow to be crossed. Putin has demanded legally binding security guarantees that NATO will not expand further east or place its weapons close to Russian territory; Washington has repeatedly said no country can veto Ukraine's NATO hopes. In 2014 Russia seized the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea from Ukraine, prompting the West to impose sanctions on Russia. The Kremlin on Sunday said that Putin told U.S. President Joe Biden that Russian troops posed no threat and that Moscow was being demoralised for moving troops around its own territory. Putin and Biden have agreed to hold more talks, Moscow said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said there were very serious conceptual differences between

Continued on Page 06



FAISALABAD: Minister of State for Information Farrukh Habib in a group photo with FCCI members during their visit to Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). – APP

Benefits of reforms to start reaching people soon

He said that despite corona pandemic, Pak exports remained 35pc more than the exports of other countries of South Asia

FAISALABAD: State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib has said that people will soon start enjoying the benefits of comprehensive and prudent reforms for sustained economic growth with a focus on enhancing exports and tax collection, facilitating masses and weeding out corruption. Addressing a function at the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he particularly mentioned the national policies adopted by Prime Minister Imran Khan and said that as a result of it, Pakistan managed maximum exports in a single month, Nov 2021, up to \$2.9 billion, while it was 34 per cent in excess to the exports of same month of last year, and 47pc more than Nov 2018. He said during the first five months of the current fiscal year, Pakistani sports stood at \$12.37 billion, which were 37pc higher than the exports of the corresponding period in 2018. About health sector, he said that the government was offering the best pos-

sible health facilities to masses and people in Punjab would start getting health cards from Monday, and the process would be completed by March 2022. Under the arrangement, each card holder family would be entitled to free medical facilities up to Rs 1 million, he added. He said that despite corona pandemic, Pak exports remained 35pc more than the exports of other countries of South Asia. He said that the last year, the federal government also released Rs 250 billion as refund. About the agriculture sector, he said the government provided subsidy to the farming community and as a result of it, all corps recorded phenomenal yield and Pakistan would have no need to import cotton and sugar this year. Due to this additional yield, Pakistan could be able to make \$4 billion additional exports, he added. About gas, he said that work on pipeline project with the cooperation of Russia would be started soon. He said the government was also constructing

10 dams which would not only generate 10,000 megawatts of electricity but also store 13 million cusec feet water for irrigation purposes. About local issues of Faisalabad, the state minister said that Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar had constituted Provincial Finance Commission on the pattern of National Finance Commission. Under the commission, all districts would get their due share on the basis of their population and backwardness. "It will ensure balanced development of the province," he added. He promised that he would make his best efforts to ensure membership of FCCI in BoDs of all major public sector departments and autonomous bodies. About Faisalabad Master Plan, he said that various sectors had reservations about it and hence its approval was delayed and now the consultants had resubmitted new draft of the proposed master plan. He promised that once again stakeholders would be consulted to make it up to the mark. – APP

37 Covid patients under treatment in Peshawar

PESHAWAR: As many as 37 corona patients are under treatment in two major hospitals of Peshawar, Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) and Lady Reading Hospital (LRH), a health official told media men here on Sunday. Giving detail about the present situation of the corona, he disclosed that 21 corona patients are under treatment in KTH Peshawar and 16 corona patients are being treated in LRH. He said 122 beds are allotted for corona patients in Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar with Corona patients being admitted in 21 beds in Peshawar Khyber Teaching Hospital. He said Khyber Teaching Hospital has

28 ventilators reserved for corona patients and 4 patients of Corona are on intensive care and on ventilators. He said 7 patients infected with Corona are undergoing treatment at HDU and 10 others are being treated for Low amount of Oxygen wherein a total of 31 beds are allocated. He said one corona patient has been admitted in the morning. However, in LRH 101 beds are still vacant in the hospital for corona patients and the number of coronavirus patients in LRH has risen to 16 with 1 patient admitted in ICU and 3 new patients have been admitted in the last 24 hours. – APP



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad distributes household kits among deserved under the arrangements of Pakistan Red Crescent. – DNA

DC distributes packets of daily-use items

Deputy Commissioner appreciated the remarkable services of Pakistan Red Crescent and said that to serve the deprived humanity belongs with prays

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Under the arrangements of Pakistan Red Crescent, as many as 400 hygiene kits were distributed among deserved family during a ceremony at District Council. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad was chief guest on this occasion. Sardar Baber Dogar, District Coordinator Red Crescent Dr. Saedar Baber Dogar, Secretary Mian Kamalud din and others were also present. Deputy Commissioner appreciated the remarkable services of Pakistan Red Crescent and said that to serve the deprived humanity belongs with prays. He said that more and more philanthropists should come front to held the needy. He appreciated the organized arrangements of ceremony and said district administration would provided best environment to these facilitators. Coordinator thanked the Deputy Commissioner and other guests for joined the ceremony. He informed that under the

arrangements of Pakistan Red Crescent the distribution of kits would continue on regular basis. He further informed that towels,combs,washing soaps, tooth burshes, scissors, nail cutters and others daily necessity household items were included in the kits. **ADCG appreciates for religious harmony** District Interfaith Harmony Committee meeting was held at DC Office which was jointly chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner General Qaiser Abbas Rind and SSP Operations Abdullah Luk. District Manager Auqaf Shahbaz, Molana Muhammad Yousaf Anwar, Father Khalid Rasheed, Shahbaz Bashir, Zeeshan Anjum, Munir Niazi and other members of the minority community were also present. Welcoming the members of the District Interfaith Harmony Committee, the ADCG appreciated the full support of the members of the committee in maintaining the ideal atmosphere of peace and religious harmony in the district and said that mutual unity, consensus and brotherhood was the

guarantee of lasting peace for which the spirit of scholars of all schools of thought and their followers was commendable. He said that sectarian harmony, inter-religious unity is the most important requirement of the time for which the role of scholars was an indisputable fact. He said that peace of the district is dear to him which will not be allowed to flare up and with the help of religious scholars a pleasant atmosphere would be maintained. Molana Muhammad Yousaf Anwar said that all sects should work for the promotion of lasting peace, religious tolerance and love. He said that according to Islam and the constitution, minorities living in Pakistan have full religious freedom. Father Khalid Rasheed also assured full cooperation for maintaining peace in the district. He also pointed out some administrative and security matters relating to Christmas celebrations. During the meeting the Silakot incident was also condemned and prayer was offered for peace and prosperity of country.

Over 1.35mln children vaccinated in Faisalabad

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: As many as 1.35 million children upto age of five years would administered polio drops during the anti polio campaign which would continue from December 13 to 17 in the district and 3649 teams would performed duty during the campaign. The anti polio campaign in district has been inaugurated here on Saturday at Hilal e Ahmar Maternity Hospital. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad inaugurated the anti polio campaign by administered the polio vaccine drops to the children. CEO DHA

Dr.Kashif Mehmood, DHO Dr.Waseem Bhatti, MS Dr. Mukhtar Randhawa and other officers were present on the occasion. Expressing his views, Deputy Commissioner said that the anti polio campaign required deep attention and utmost responsibility to complete eradicate the polio virus from the country. He directed that each and every child under five years age should be vaccinated besides approaching the nomads. He said that he would himself check the performance of polio teams by visiting different areas of district. He emphasized upon on continuing wide awareness campaign for the information of the parents. Deputy Commissioner said that the anti polio campaign could only be made successful with the cooperation of the parents and all out source of publicity should be utilized for mobilizing the parents to get their child administered polio drops. He said that administrative machinery would remain active during the polio campaign for the supervision health department teams performance. Deputy Commissioner asked the DHA that the polio teams would reach to each and every child of under five year of age for giving the polio vaccine to rule out any chance of polio virus in future.

Reshaping Pakistan's Tech Future



About STZA

Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) has been set up by the Federal Government with a mandate to provide world-class digital and physical infrastructure through setting up Special Technology Zones (STZs) across the country and putting Pakistan on global technology radar.

Who are we looking for?

At STZA, we believe in our people, invest in them, and give them the autonomy to grow and thrive in a fast-paced, dynamic, and agile state authority. We are always on the lookout for visionaries, out-of-the-box thinkers, disruptors, dreamers, and doers.

We need positive people who will bring their talent and energy to challenge the status quo, push the boundaries for what's possible, conceive the extraordinary, and inspire others to join the journey to a tech-driven Pakistan.

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If you are passionate about the cause of national development and fulfil our requirements, please apply with your Cover Letter and Résumé at hr@stza.gov.pk with "Job Title" and "Job Code" in the "Subject" of the Email.

Apply within 7 days from publication of this advertisement.

For full job descriptions, please visit www.stza.gov.pk/careers/. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted by the STZA Office.

[1] A highly competitive salary and benefits package will be provided.

Job: Senior Manager – Legal
Job Ref Code: ISB/SML/1221/E-03
Maximum Age: 45 years
Nature of Job: Permanent
Reports to: Director Licensing, Legal & Compliance
Level/Grade: 03- Expert

Overview: Assisting in managing the legal operations of STZA, in accordance with STZA laws, rules and regulations and other applicable laws.

Key Responsibilities:

- Drafting of agreements, legal opinions, memorandums and other legal documentation in respect of all internal and external matters of STZA
- Advising on legal requirements in relation to the Federal Government, Ministries, Divisions and other regulatory authorities
- Advising STZA on legal risks and exposures and their mitigation strategy
- Drafting rules, regulations, manuals, and policies of STZA in line with its statute
- Liaising with the Federal Government, Ministries, Divisions and other regulatory authorities in relation to the legislative matters, and approvals of STZA
- Ensuring that documentation is developed and executed in a timely and efficient manner, and maintaining meticulous record and paperwork
- Liaising with internal departments and external stakeholders in relation to the legal and contractual obligations of STZA and representing STZA at meetings, negotiations and proceedings
- Preparing reports for senior management and regulators as required

Education and Experience Requirements:

- Minimum 7 years of relevant experience in a legal role
- Knowledge and practical experience of industry standards, and laws including corporate governance codes, public procurement procedures (PPRA), and legal framework applicable to public sector and government organizations
- Minimum Bachelor of Laws from an HEC recognized university

Essential Skills & Competencies:

- Advanced content writing and drafting skills
- Strong communication and inter-personal skills
- Excellent multi-tasking and time management skills
- Strong problem-solving skills
- Strong attention to detail, thoroughness and accuracy
- Strong relationship and team management skills
- Business acumen and understanding
- Digital and tech savvy

Job: Senior Manager – Compliance
Job Ref Code: ISB/SMC/1221/E-03
Maximum Age: 45 years
Nature of Job: Permanent
Reports to: Director Licensing, Legal & Compliance
Level/Grade: 03- Expert

Overview: Assisting in drafting, reviewing, management and audit of internal and external compliances of STZA, in accordance with STZA laws, rules and regulations and other applicable laws.

Key Responsibilities:

- Drafting of policies, procedures, and processes (PPPs) for all departments of STZA
- Designing an implementation, training, management, and audit plan for PPPs
- Identifying compliance requirements of internal departments in line with the strategic growth plan of STZA and revising PPPs periodically in conformity with new laws and regulations
- Developing a risk management plan for STZA and its core functions, and overseeing controls to prevent non-conformity and violations of PPPs
- Ensuring that documentation is developed and executed in a timely and efficient manner, and maintaining meticulous record and paperwork
- Liaising with internal departments and external stakeholders in relation to the compliance obligations of STZA
- Preparing compliance reports for senior management and regulators as required

Experience Requirements:

- Minimum 7 years of relevant experience in a compliance role
- Knowledge and practical experience of industry standards, and laws including corporate governance codes, public procurement procedures (PPRA), and legal framework applicable to public sector and government organizations
- Minimum Bachelor of Laws/Business Management/Finance Degree from an HEC recognized university
- Certified compliance professional is preferred but not mandatory

Essential Skills & Competencies:

- Advanced content writing and drafting skills
- Strong communication and inter-personal skills
- Excellent multi-tasking and time management skills
- Strong problem-solving skills
- Strong attention to detail, thoroughness and accuracy
- Strong relationship management skills
- Business acumen and understanding
- Digital and tech savvy

Job: Manager – Legal
Job Ref Code: ISB/ML/1221/S-02
Maximum Age: 40 years
Nature of Job: Permanent
Reports to: Director Licensing, Legal & Compliance
Level/Grade: 02- Specialist

Overview: Assisting in managing the legal operations of STZA, in accordance with STZA laws, rules and regulations and other applicable laws.

Key Responsibilities:

- Assisting in drafting of agreements, legal opinions, memorandums and other legal documentation in respect of all internal and external matters of STZA

- Advising on legal requirements in relation to the Federal Government, Ministries, Divisions and other regulatory authorities
- Advising STZA on legal risks and exposures and their mitigation strategy
- Assisting in drafting rules, regulations, manuals, and policies of STZA in line with its statute
- Liaising with the Federal Government, Ministries, Divisions and other regulatory authorities in relation to the legislative matters, and approvals of STZA
- Ensuring that documentation is developed and executed in a timely and efficient manner, and maintaining meticulous record and paperwork
- Liaising with internal departments and external stakeholders in relation to the legal and contractual obligations of STZA and representing STZA at meetings, negotiations and proceedings
- Assisting in preparing reports for senior management and regulators as required

Education & Experience Requirements:

- Minimum 5 years of relevant experience in a legal role
- Knowledge and practical experience of industry standards, and laws including corporate governance codes, public procurement procedures (PPRA), and legal framework applicable to public sector and government organizations
- Minimum Bachelor of Laws from an HEC recognized university

Essential Skills & Competencies:

- Advanced content writing and drafting skills
- Strong communication and inter-personal skills
- Excellent multi-tasking and time management skills
- Strong problem-solving skills
- Strong attention to detail, thoroughness and accuracy
- Strong relationship management skills
- Business acumen and understanding
- Digital and tech savvy

Job: Manager/ Specialist – Coordination & Document Controlling
Job Ref Code: ISB/MDC/1221/S-02
Maximum Age: 40 years
Nature of Job: Permanent
Reports to: Director Licensing, Legal & Compliance
Level/Grade: 02- Specialist

Overview: Responsible for maintaining an organized and updated documents database and control system for all documentation, and coordination of departmental projects, of the Licensing, Legal & Compliance Department of STZA.

Key Responsibilities:

- Creating a document controlling system for the Licensing, Legal & Compliance Department of STZA for physical and electronic record creation, filing, record management and storage
- Following and improving document control procedures
- Ensuring all documentation meets formal legal requirements and required standards
- Sorting, storing and retrieving electronic and hard copy documents on behalf of the department and external stakeholders
- Producing document progress reports for the department head
- Conducting regular reviews and document audits
- Using document management programs and software to organise and distribute documents within a company
- Ensure documents are shared at key times to facilitate timely project completion
- Managing timelines, coordination and project schedules in accordance with the key documentation of the department
- Drafting office memos, templates, meeting minutes, and other administrative documentation for the department

Experience Requirements:

- Minimum 8 years of relevant experience in a document controlling and management
- Minimum academic qualification for this role is a graduate/bachelor's degree (16 years) in relevant fields from a national or foreign university recognized by HEC.
- PMP certification is highly preferred

Essential Skills & Competencies:

- Drafting skills
- Strong communication and inter-personal skills
- Excellent multi-tasking and time management skills
- Strong attention to detail, thoroughness and accuracy
- Ability to work effectively in a team
- Digital and tech savvy
- Proficiency in computer skills, Microsoft Word, Excel, Adobe Acrobat and Google Suite

Job: Associate Coordination
Job Ref Code: ISB/AC/1221/A-01
Maximum Age: 30 years
Nature of Job: Permanent
Reports to: Senior Manager Coordination
Level/Grade: 01- Associate

Overview: Assist the line manager in day-to-day operations and coordination tasks.

Key Responsibilities:

- Assist in liaising with internal and external stakeholders.
- Organize and maintain filing and records effectively.
- Provide support in tasks coordination with departments across the Authority.
- Assist in day-to-day operations, events planning, scheduling, and arrangements.

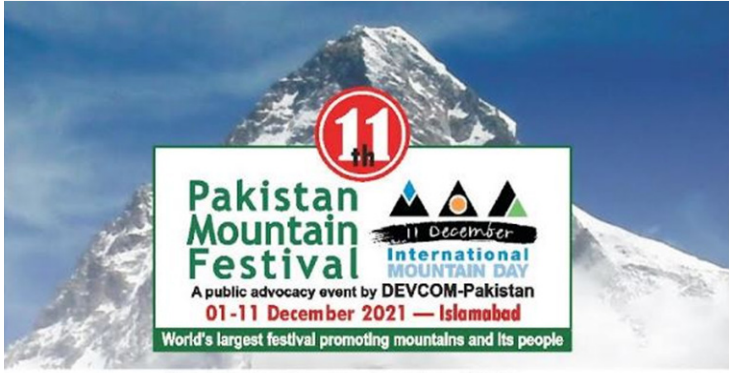
Education & Experience Requirements:

- Up to one (01) year of relevant experience
- Minimum academic qualification for this role is a graduate/bachelor's degree (16 years) in relevant fields from a national or foreign university recognized by HEC.

Essential Skills & Competencies:

- Strong verbal and written communication and inter-personal skills
- Excellent multi-tasking and time management skills
- Digital and tech savvy

Non traditional models urged for mountain tourism



Webinar - December 12, 2021 Sustainable Mountain Tourism in Changing Climate



The govts need to take immediate steps to revive the tourist destinations to ensure safe

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Speaking at a webinar on Sunday, the experts urged the authorities to take urgent measures for the economic sustainability of mountain tourism...

AIOU all set to establish regional office in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is all set to open up its full-fledged regional office in Afghanistan to promote education in the brotherly country...

PTI govt determined to provide relief to the people: Minister

FAISAL MUNIR / DNA
ATTOCK: Minister for Revenue Col (R) Malik Muhammad Anwar Khan said on Sunday that PTI government is determined to provide every possible relief to the people in accordance with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan...

Islamabad to have Pakistan's largest Ferris wheel soon

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) is all set to launch another entertainment initiative for the citizens of Islamabad. Pakistan's largest Ferris Wheel with a height of about 180 feet has been planned for installation at lake view park...

RWMC disposing of 850 tons of waste daily

RAWALPINDI: After the expiration of seven years contract with Turkish multinational conglomerate Albayrak company, the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) has accelerated resolving the complaints received on its social media accounts...

Advertisement for Pakistan Air Force recruitment. Includes logo, website (www.joinpaf.gov.pk), and a table with details for various job categories like Air Operations, Technical, and Support. The table lists age ranges, education requirements, and application procedures.

COVID-19 claims another life in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: One more patient had died while eight others were diagnosed with coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 39,420 in the district. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Sunday, the total infected cases included 36,391 from Rawalpindi and 3029 from other districts...

Briefs

PPP, PML-N
always
protect each
other: Shibli

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Science and Technology Senator Shibli Faraz Sunday criticized that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) always protect each other over corruption. "The state institutions are working independently and the accountability process against corrupt mafia would not be halted at any cost", he said while speaking to a private news channel. Minister said leaders of both the parties only know 'the art of corruption' instead of 'the art of serving the humanity', adding, PPP and PML-N had paralyzed the whole society through corruption.

He said PTI-led government will not play a role that brings political instability or derails the democratic process in the country, adding, government trying its best to stop corruption and strengthen state institutions with introducing reforms. Shibli said that the PML-N and PPP corrupt tola was only criticizing government and its politics but failed to give any alternative road map. — APP

1,634 POLs
of apartments
issued to govt
employees

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Housing and Works had issued 1,634 Provisional Offer Letters (POLs) of apartments to the government employees for the Kashmir Avenue apartment scheme, G-13, Islamabad.

Out of the total, 784 POLs were of the A-Category, while 850 of B-Category, an official of the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) told APP.

The official said the provisional allotment of 184 houses had been cancelled due to non-payment of dues. He said the transfer of Kashmir Avenue (G-13) apartments would be opened subject to clearance of outstanding dues not less than 23 percent of the total cost of apartment, allocation of apartment number through balloting and verification of service particulars from respective departments of the allottees.

The official said the groundbreaking of 56 kanals land for housing project was held in April, 2019 by Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said the project aimed at providing housing facilities to the Federal Government Employees. It consisted of three towers, each with three basements, ground plus twenty one stories. — APP

PPAF sign
MoUs with
14 FIs to
Uplift SMEs

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to partner with 14 Karachi based Financial Institutions (FIs) to extend financial support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The financial support will be provided for developing Livestock and horticulture value chains in targeted districts of Sindh and Balochistan under the Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP), a project funded by European Union (EU). The banks include ABL, Bank Alfalah, JS Bank, Meezan Bank, NBL, UBL, Advans MFB, Pak Oman MFB, Sindh MFB, ASA Pakistan; and NBFIs, Shah Sachal Sami Foundation, Thardeep Microfinance Foundation, SAFCO Support Foundation and a support organization Sindh Enterprise Development Fund which will provide subsidy on markup for SMEs.

The partnership is a landmark to formalize financial support to MSME in targeted districts of Sindh and Balochistan working in specific value chains in Livestock and horticulture. The ceremony was attended by the CEOs and Group Heads of all Financial Institutions. — APP

PIDE VC for following RASTA
to develop local think tanks

RASTA provides the opportunity to reduce the research-policy gap by providing answers and evidence that can contribute to improving the policy and policy-making process in Pakistan, he added

ISLAMABAD: The Vice Chancellor Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Dr. Nadeem ul Haque here on Sunday stressed the need for following 'Research for Social Transformation and Advancement' (RASTA) programme to promote local thinking and policy-making. The PIDE has launched RASTA, a multi-year competitive grants program for policy-oriented research in Pakistan last October with an aim to develop local thought communities and establish a research network of academia and think tanks across Pakistan producing high-quality, evidence-based policy research to inform Pakistan's public policy process. Talking to a group of journalists, the PIDE VC said that the RASTA program was to put the Pakistani researcher to serious

work on the economy and key public policy issues to accelerate economic growth and development, improve society, and achieve the promise of Pakistan. He said, it was high time to conduct some meaningful research and help formulate indigenous policies instead of relying on external advices. RASTA provides the opportunity to reduce the research-policy gap by providing answers and evidence that can contribute to improving the policy and policy-making process in Pakistan, he added. He said, in RASTA, the applicants are



desired to conduct policy-oriented research that should not only find solutions to policy problems but also help to improve better practices and interventions by informing organizations, policymakers, and decision-makers with pragmatic, action-oriented recommendations. In this context, the applicants are required to

focus on real policy issues and questions, build their research argument keeping in view pressing challenges facing Pakistan, and use analyses as well as data to inform the people and policymakers of Pakistan.

"We would encourage applicants to study complex socio-economic dynamics, examine development interventions, explore the interplay of actors involved in managing policy decisions, and review institutional development and governance issues" he added.

'Research for Social Transformation and Advancement' is becoming the largest economic and social research network in Pakistan. It invites proposals on economics and social research themes twice a year.

So far, 'Research for Social Transformation and Advancement' has awarded 30 research studies (worth Rs. 88.5 million) after a competitive review process in its first two rounds while the third-round applications are under review at the moment. — APP

Expert urges
public to receive
Covid booster shots

ISLAMABAD: Health expert on Sunday has urged the people for getting the booster vaccine against coronavirus as National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has approved a booster shot of Covid-19 vaccines for the priority group of healthcare workers and those aged over 50 years in the country.

Talking to a PTV news channel, a senior virologist Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar urged the people to acquire their vaccines if they are eligible as quickly as possible, adding, the Omicron variant was spreading fast globally and it is the only way to protect themselves.

Booster vaccine shots are more effective which can be measured in several different ways. One is their ability to protect people from mild infections in the winter season, he mentioned.

"Vaccination remains the most effective tool to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to boost the immunity system in the human body," he added.

Replying to a question, he said that the COVID-19 virus seems to be more severely affecting people with pre-existing conditions including hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular heart disease, chronic respiratory diseases, and cancer, however, a positive mindset is vital for reducing stress and inflammation. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Zaigham Abbas, Chairman of Majlis Wahdat e Muslimeen (MWM), representing the Shia school of thought in Pakistan accompanied by religious dignitaries called on the High Commissioner and expressed their condolence on the brutal murder that took place in Sialkot. The delegation assured that all religious organization, irrespective of any divide, will work together to stop recurrence of such incidents in future. — DNA

Govt taking practical
measures towards a
hunger-free nation: MD

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Government under 'Ehsaas program' was taking practical measures towards a hunger-free nation and providing quality shelter to the neglected segments of the society including labourers, and travellers without any discrimination, Managing Director, Pakistan Bait ul Mal, Malik Zaher Abbas Khokhar said on Sunday.

"The present government was utilizing its resources for bringing a positive change in the society and paying full attention on the public welfare related landmark projects", he said while talking to PTV.

He said government was expanding the scope of Panagah (shelter homes) and 'langar khanay' across the country, in line with his vision of developing Pakistan as an Islamic welfare state, he added.

The Langar scheme is an important component of present government's social protection program "Ehsaas", he mentioned.

The MD said Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal was expanding its scope of new Panagahs (Shelter Homes) all across the country under the umbrella of Ehsaas Programme, adding, helping the helpless and needy persons was one of top priority of the prime minister.

He assured that deserving people were being provided quality standard food, clean and secure environment through 'Langar Khanas', adding, strict directions were given to relevant authorities for ensuring proper monitoring of 'Panagahs' and 'Langar Khanas'.

He said for the first time in the history of Pakistan, Panagahs and langar khanay were set up for labourers who came from other cities and did not have a place to spend the night and food facilities.

He also lauded the efforts of Prime minister Imran Khan and Dr Sania Nishtar for successfully running the different components of the Ehsaas programme, for arranging finances and ensuring transparency in program. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Women pose for a picture during a Christmas Tree lighting ceremony at Islamabad Serena Hotel. — DNA

Christmas preparations start in capital

Main markets and shops of the capital city have displayed its stock of Christmas related accessories for attracting the community while the sweet shops are also ready to earn huge business through selling cakes and sweets on this occasion

ISLAMABAD: With less than two weeks in the grand festival of Christmas, the preparations for the grand occasion is gaining momentum in the federal capital like across the globe. Christian community at the advent of December every year starts their preparations through buying all the essential items to mark the occasion in befitting manner.

The main markets and shops of the capital city have displayed its stock of Christmas related accessories for attracting the community while the sweet shops are also ready to earn huge business through selling cakes and sweets on this occasion. "Christmas is the main festival during this winter season through which we can earn good profits through selling decorative ornaments, chocolates, flowers and gift items in a bulk", Sajid Ali, a shop owner at F-7 Markaz said. Talking to APP, he said, "Although we are expecting good sale on this years' Christmas but still the

threat of new variant of COVID-19 is looming on our heads as we can only earn good profits if the situation remains normal". The festival will be marked through different activities ranging from community gatherings to cake cutting ceremonies in small communities while the main attraction of the Christmas celebrations is decoration of Christmas tree to welcome the arrival of Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas. The youngsters decorate the Christmas tree with different ornaments including baubles, small bells, painted gold or silver, stars of different shapes and sizes, pine cones, apples, candies, tinsel and balloons made from glass, metal, wood and ceramic. An angel and star is often placed at the top of the tree representing the host of angels.

"I always get excited to decorate the Christmas tree with different unique ornaments at my office, arrange a cake cutting ceremony and exchange gifts besides other celebrations", Asiya Masih, a

government employee said. She said, "sharing happiness with others on such occasion gives a sense of joy and contentment and we should collectively pray for the safety of all the citizens from the new wave of pandemic during our visits to church". It has been observed that a number of stalls have been set up outside the Kachi Abadis where the majority of Christian community reside. The stalls owners have displayed variety of decorative ornaments as well as dress of Santa Claus which is the source of attraction for the youngsters and children. Christmas is the occasion when all young and old took keen interest in decorating Christmas tree and buying Christmas gifts to show their love to their family and friends and celebrate the occasion through distributing gifts among children, singing hymns, prayers and arranging family gatherings. — APP

IWMB unveils
SMD screen
to create
awareness

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) as part of its regular public awareness campaign installed a SMD screen to create public information about Margalla Hills National Park rules through animated visuals at Trail-5 here on Sunday.

The surface mounted device (SMD) screen was inaugurated by Senior IWMB board member Z.B. Mirza whereas chairperson IWMB Rina Saied Khan was also present on the occasion.

The event focused on sensitising masses to prevent monkey bites, close wildlife encounters and venturing into restricted areas. The IWMB along with experts also motivated the masses to discourage littering and tree cutting in the National Park.

The IWMB teams rigorously ensure mass awareness on wildlife protection laws and guiding principles for any individual entering into the National Park as a shared responsibility to protect the unique and precious ecosystem of the world. — APP

SLIC asked to pay
to policyholders'
families

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi rejected four separate representations, filed by the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLICP) against the decisions of the Federal Ombudsman, ordering it to pay a collective sum of over Rs 1.6 million to families of the deceased life insurance policyholders.

The corporation had refused to pay the amount assured in the life insurance policy on the flimsy ground stating that the insured persons did not deliberately disclose their pre-insurance ailments at the time of obtaining the policy. The president upheld the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib and ordered that SLICP must fulfill its contractual obligations and pay the policy, besides reporting compliance to the Ombudsman within 30 days.

As per details, Shakeel Zafar Khan, Muhammad Nawaz, Ghulam Yaseen, and Tanveer Hussain had obtained life insurance policies from SLICP for the sums assured of Rs 700,000, Rs 500,000, Rs 210,000, and Rs 200,000 respectively.

Subsequently, the insurance policyholders expired and their families filed separate insurance claims, which were repudiated by SLICP on the ground that the deceased policyholders had pre-insurance ailments which they had concealed at the time of obtaining the policies.

Feeling aggrieved, the family members of policyholders approached Wafaqi Mohtasib to seek justice. The complainants contended that the deceased persons had no pre-insurance diseases and the insurance claims had been rejected unjustifiably.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib, having investigated the cases, noted that the onus to prove that the policyholders suffered from some disease before obtaining the policy and willfully hid the facts from the insurance agency rested upon the SLICP. It further stated that the insurance agency must present evidence regarding the existence of alleged pre-insurance ailments and its knowledge on the part of policyholders. — APP

Stuntman
enthalls
audience
at IIUI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Audience was enthralled at the new campus of International Islamic University (IIU) as Rajab Ali, a talented stuntman yesterday showcased his talent where his unbelievable skills and agility were lauded by a huge crowd of students and university employees.

20 years old Rajab hails from the area of Shah Jamal District Muzaffar Garh. He has been performing stunning acrobatics for the last three years. He also has the honor of traveling on foot from Karachi via Lahore to Islamabad.

The event of his performance was organized by the Department of Protocol and Public Relations (P&PR) of the university.

Rajab Ali in his performance did not let 8 motorcycles defeat him as he resisted standing between both sides as bikers tried full accelerators. He also picked up an 80kg man in his hands while hanging on the branch of a tree with his legs. He also showcased his talent as bikers and a car rolled over him. He also did a stunt of passing the car over his hands. His performance also included wall climbing, head balancing on the bike and car and bricks breaking on his chest.

"I am privileged and honored at IIUI as the university gave me love and recognized my talent" said an overwhelmed Rajab. He thanked the Department of Protocol and Public Relations and university administration for the support, encouragement and opportunity to perform in front of a mammoth gathering.

Furniture
exports
witness
increase

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said Pakistan's furniture exports registered 202.49 percent increase during the first four months of the current fiscal year compared to corresponding period of last year.

It was stated by Mian Kashif while talking to a delegation of SMEs experts led by Nasir Husain Chief Financial Officer, Chen, Chen, said a press release issued here. He said during the period under review furniture worth US \$ 2.78 million was exported compared to corresponding period last year. He said furniture industry has a big potential to dominate global markets with innovative designs and can significantly contribute to exports; however, it direly needs a package of incentives and facilitation for further boosting exports.

Kashif said unfortunately, in past the furniture sector remained badly neglected that needs special attention of the federal and provincial governments for the training of woodworkers on modern lines to meet international standards. — APP

Turkish Cooking classes
on December 20

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Marriott Hotel would organise Turkish Cooking Classes from December 20.

Executive Turkish Chef Metin would teach the participants all of the techniques for perfecting their Turkish home cooking skills. According to a statement, the registration process is underway and limited seats are available. Gavurdagi salad, Turkish Doner Kebabs, Icle Kofte and dessert dishes will be demonstrated.

The participants can contact on call 03018559707 or 051 111 22 33 44 for further information. — DNA

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Humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan

DURING 20 years of war in Afghanistan, according to the US-based Watson Institute's Costs of War Project, about 176,000 people were killed, of whom 46,000 were civilians. Dreadful though they are, these figures are dwarfed by predictions by the World Health Organization that 1 million Afghan children under five will die of starvation this winter. Another 2.2 million will suffer acute malnutrition – unless urgent action is taken. Relief organisations have warned for months of an impending humanitarian catastrophe. Now the catastrophe has arrived. "Hunger in the country has reached truly unprecedented levels," the UN refugee agency said on 3 December. If the international community, and especially the US and Britain, which abandoned the country in August, is to prevent, or even mitigate, this coming disaster, it must act now.

Many crises are converging. The war and its aftermath have left 3.5 million people displaced. They are particularly vulnerable. Foreign assistance, amounting to 75% of all public spending, has halted. Teachers, health professionals and civil servants have not been paid for months. As Covid rages, a drought has caused harvests to fail. According to the Costs of War Project, the US has spent \$2.3tn in Afghanistan since 2001. Yet direct and indirect gains, such as health-care provision, schooling for girls and integration of women into the workforce, are being squandered, mainly due to the Taliban's feudal attitudes but also for lack of continued western support.

The main reasons for western governments' reluctance to step back in – fear of validating Taliban rule and misuse of donor funds – remain valid. Yet given the urgency of the crisis, ways around this political roadblock must be found. Proposed measures to ease UN sanctions, waivers for relief agencies, cash transfers via private banks and the unfreezing of individuals' assets should be pursued. A longer-term international assistance strategy must be formulated. By invading Afghanistan, Britain and the US began a fight they could not finish. By leaving in a panic, they precipitated another disaster. If they are to prevent a third catastrophe, as they should, they must hurry to the aid of the starving Afghan people – immediately, generously and without further prevarication.



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Encouraging business

THE Ministry of Industries and Production produced two five-year policies for encouraging local production through small and medium enterprises (SMEs). However, due to the opposing views of the cabinet members as well as the reservations of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) could not give their approval on the proposal. Given the rate at which our import bill keeps rising, empowering local businesses is the one option through which we can gain some momentum when it comes to economic growth and production.

There are about 500,000 SMEs with innovative business ideas, products and services that are actively looking to establish themselves in Pakistan. Their success in the market could dictate the way the economy recovers from a seemingly permanent trade deficit, depleted foreign reserves and low economic growth, so long as they are supported by the government through initiatives like tax exemptions, interest-free loans, higher credit lines and subsidies.

Without such help, they are unlikely to survive in a competitive environment dominated by entrepreneurial giants. The policies proposed by the Ministry of Industrial and Production detailed exactly these provisions to kickstart these businesses and to boost local products and services.

The FBR and SBP are primarily concerned over the matter of granting tax exemptions, subsidised interest rates and the dispensing of the Rs.30 billion SME development fund. Without the support of these two integral government bodies, the policy is rather redundant. It is imperative that they are brought on board and that adjustments are made to the policy to respect their concerns all the while ensuring that the SMEs are given some incentives to contribute positively to the economy. It is this kind of production that we currently need as our industries are falling short of the output expected from them.

Pakistan's engage Africa policy

Fatchima Elise Paraiso



"The promotion of relations with countries in Africa will be the new focus of Pakistan's foreign policy operations... Pakistan need to have a robust engagement with Africa"
Imran Khan

IN November 2019, Pakistan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Qureshi, launched a bold policy known as "Engage Africa", aimed at catching up on the efforts of emerging powers to be part of the accelerated development of Africa. The continent, often now called the "continent of the future", is indeed experiencing rapid growth (certain countries such as Ivory Coast and Rwanda reaching world records) and its immense resources, including those of rare minerals, are at last connected thanks to the rapid development of infrastructures. Popula-

tions of the 54 African countries are young and vigorous, are rapidly urbanizing and cities like Abidjan, Abuja, Lagos, Nairobi, Kigali, are shaping up to be among 21st century leading metropolises.

As proof of its determination to apply this commitment, Pakistan convened an economic forum in January 2020 which brought together two hundred participants in Nairobi from various countries of the continent. And despite the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan has opened six new embassies in Africa, and scored points in several strategic countries: among these i) Nigeria, now Africa's first economic power, surpassing South Africa – ii) Kenya, where there has been an active South Asian diaspora since the British colonization – iii) Niger, an influential country in West Africa and the OIC. Pakistan has strengths and weaknesses in its African policy.

Among the strengths, at least two should be noted:

1) The long-standing presence of the Pakistani army as a major contributor to United Nations peace operations in Africa, in Congo DRC in particular. The good reputation of the Pakistani army was also illustrated in the naval calls of the most modern Pakistani ships in Lagos (Nigeria) in December 2019 (PNS "Aslat" and PNS "Moawin").

2) The CPEC: The large Sino-Pakistani project and its port outlet of Gwadar has an obvious correspondence with the major ports of East Africa and the rapidly growing African exports to China.

Symmetrically among the weaknesses, two should be noted:

1) A certain timidity of Pakistani

investors in Africa, who fear not having an immediate return on their investment, and do not know the characteristics and difficulties of the African market,

2) Insufficient numbers of diplomats and business people trained in languages spoken in Africa, except of course English. But while English is spoken well in one half of Africa, in the other half, French dominates. There are also other widely spoken languages to be reckoned with, in particular Portuguese, Swahili and Hausa.

It is worth recalling on this subject the words of Imran Khan during the aforementioned conference "Engage Africa": "I regret that ties with African countries did not get priority in Pakistan's external relations in the past because of lack of innovation and creativity" (...) "Pakistan now needed to concentrate on Africa, just see what are doing Turkey and China..."

Pakistan can overcome these weaknesses by:

1) Creating an "Africa" chain among its diplomats, universities, chambers of commerce, which will produce the future specialists Islamabad needs to outperform its competitors on "the continent of the future", including India,

2) Multiplying scholarships in Pakistan for young Africans, then relying on these students trained in Pakistani universities to develop trade and cultural relations.

It is with this in mind that I am starting today a bi-monthly column in "Islamabad Post", which I hope will feed into Imran Khan's vision laid out in November 2019.

– Fatchima Elise Paraiso is the CEO "Engage Africa Organization" Engageafrica@gmail.com

Why does Iran look towards East?

Dr. M Akram Zaheer



The entry of Iran in the SCO may enhance its cooperative relationship with member states China, Russia Pakistan, India, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. This move can neutralize Western countries to isolate Iran and also can strengthen Iran's position in West Asia

THE president of Islamic Republic Iran Ibrahim Raeesi preferred east instead of west to make his first foreign visit. He participated in the summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), also known as Eurasian political, economic and security alliance and skipped the United Nations meeting. The visit also was substantive for Iran because it was to be a permanent member of SCO. Tehran believes that Asian powers are rising and they may disservice to the United States influence in the region and may on globe. China and Russia have no common interests with the United States to control Iran and to suppress its economy. On the contrary, they may be willing to accept Iran in order to develop their interests in the Middle East and in Persian Gulf.

The President Raeesi's visit to Tajikistan to participate in SCO summit was not symbolic but it was very substantive. He expressed his future aim in the conference to expand political, economic and cultural ties with countries across the region to protect Iran from unilateral punishments from the West. The speech predominantly emphasized his main stated foreign policy goal. He stated "The world has entered in a new era, hegemony and unilateralism is failing. The international balance is moving toward multilateralism and redistribution of power to the benefit of independent countries." He talked, "Sanctions or economic terrorism as major hurdles for regional progress, and called on the SCO member states to develop structures and mechanisms to fight against the sanctions as a group. Mr. Raeesi viewed that diplomacy is an only tool to secure national interest and this will be effect when all the major powers abide it. "Unilateral sanctions are not against only one country but it has become evident in recent years, sanctions have targeted more independent countries, especially members of the organisation". He further said, "Iran's geopolitical position, population, energy supplies, transport potential, workforce and culture can provide "meaningful momentum" to major regional masterplans, including China's Belt and Road Initiative and Eurasian economic Union".

President Raeesi is trying to recover all the broken strips of the JCPOA deal and nuclear program by President Donald Trump. At the time, when indications of negotiation are growing from both

the sides Iran and United States, China may play important role to facilitate and support negotiation between Tehran and Washington. China has several options like diplomatic engagement, BRI and foreign direct investment in Iran to bring Iran on the table negotiation with United States. China already has the experience to engage Iran for the nuclear deal. Iran's acceptance as a SCO permanent member is a great achievement and China has supported to Iran in this regard.

The entry of Iran in the SCO may enhance its cooperative relationship with member states China, Russia Pakistan, India, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. This move can neutralize Western countries to isolate Iran and also can strengthen Iran's position in West Asia. Iran thinks that JCPOA was not about Iranian nuclear program's legitimacy it was only for the containment of Iran and also was a try to limit Iran's power and influence in the Middle East particular in Persian Gulf. Once former president Hassan Ruhani said, "The West never helped Iran, it will hit Iran whenever it can." Therefore, they have to learn that West never be trustful. Even that, Ruhani's effort to revive JCPOA was as kind of look towards West approach which has dead. President Ibrahim Raeesi also has criticized the policy of Ruhani who depended on the West to prevent Iran from sanctions. Iranian think sanctions are a Washington's tool to thwart their nuclear and missile programs and their growing influence in the Middle East. Therefore, they believe that the only way for Iran is to find new strategic and powerful partners like China and Russia. Iran optimises that China and Russia might support during the nuclear talks. The membership of SCO follows the way to the East.

On the other hand, China-Iran also has signed 25 year agreement of \$400 billion investment including security ties. Iran would like to join Belt and Road Initiative and want to attract Chinese investment in other megaprojects. Tehran believes that Chinese investment may turn Iran's geopolitical potential in to reality. The geography of Iran makes it a bridge between Asia and Europe. The joining with world's largest regional organization can protect Iran from the isolation and American sanctions. Then Iran may be able to play a significant role in economic activities and security of the region and beyond the region. The withdrawal of USA from the Afghanistan also has enlarged its role in the peace and stability of Afghanistan. As well as it may promote its trade and defence cooperation with all SCO member states.

Russia also has agreed to expand its bilateral cooperation with Iran. Russia can sale more sophisticated arms to Iran. As the member of SCO, Iran may extend its defensive perimeters, military manoeuvre and security cooperation with Russia. Iran and Pakistan do not have ideal relations since the Islamic revolution 1979. Both the countries have complaints about uncertainty and instability in border areas. Recently Iran follows the assumption that about Pakistan's backing of the Taliban in squashing the northern alliance's resistance in Panjshair region of Afghanistan. Although both the countries have complaints for each other but there is a great potential of bilateral cooperation. Iran has expressed its desire to join CPEC a mega project of China and Pakistan for the regional connectivity. To be permanent member of SCO Iran has a large potential to become beneficiary of the CPEC.

However Iran may avail opportunities to generate more leverage for the SCO member states and overreliance on the east. But if Tehran thinks that only by becoming the part of different regional organizations in neighbouring regions, including Eurasia, could spontaneously break the wall of sanctions and lead to diversify fruitful foreign relations, it would not be bad but illusory.

Accident or murder?

Muhammad Akhter



Bipin Rawat was considered close to the Modi government and Rawat's appointment as the Chief of Defence Staff was not welcomed by the top-brass of the Indian armed forces from the very beginning, since the move was primarily taken by PM Narendra Modi for political reasons only

THE horrific demise of General Bipin Rawat, the first Chief of Defence Staff of India, has sent shockwaves to the Indian government, led by Narendra Modi. General Rawat was recently killed in the Russian-made Mi-17V5 Indian Air Force helicopter crash near Tamil Nadu along with his wife and

other top-brass military officers. The incident is a major setback to the ruling fascist regime, which is second to none when it comes to propagating and executing their nefarious designed agenda against Pakistan. Most importantly, the track record of Bipin Rawat suggests that in his tenure as the chief of Indian army, he had been a key figure in helping the Modi's regime pursue the Hindutva ideology by using oppressive means, particularly in the Indian illegally-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOKJ).

General Bipin Rawat, referred to as the 'Master of Surgical Strike', has been of great importance in the recent history of the Indian Army, chequered with falsehood, fake surgical strikes (e.g. Balakot airstrike in Pakistan in February 2019), shameful propaganda and half-truths aimed at defaming Pakistan in the international media.

Bipin Rawat was considered close to the Modi government and Rawat's appointment as the Chief of Defence Staff was not welcomed by the top-brass of the Indian armed forces from the very beginning, since the move was primarily taken by PM Narendra Modi for political reasons only. It is pertinent to note that Narendra Modi has been determined to use the Indian army to advance the Hindutva philosophy. To achieve the objective, he has been appointing like-minded people to key positions, leading to growing divisions within the army ranks. General Bipin Rawat is the latest example of this.

Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that General Bipin Rawat, garbed

in a military uniform, was a political activist working under the leadership of Narendra Modi.

Rawat's mysterious death raises a thought-provoking question about the real cause of the incident that took place despite all safety measures and strict checks in the name of adhering to VIP protocols and when the chances of a technical glitch in such a modern helicopter are thin. The Russian-made Mi-17V5 helicopter is equipped with the latest features, night vision capability together with a weather radar and the element of a well-hatched conspiracy cannot be ruled out. The exact reason for the crash is yet to be ascertained though many speculations are being made as some experts find the hand of Maoist rebels of Nagaland behind the incident.

Interestingly, the information has also come to light now as a few months ago, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Ladakh and other areas in the Indian-occupied Kashmir, the same helicopter was used.

Briefly put, it is worth mentioning that the weather was clear when General Bipin Rawat's helicopter flew to its destination and there are strong chances that General Bipin Rawat's helicopter did not crash but was shot down. However, the Indian government has ordered a high-level inquiry into the crash and now it remains to be seen how India will blame Pakistan for the incident.

– The writer is a freelance contributor and The Divisional President Kashmir youth Alliance, His Twitter handle is @MAkhter_

Briefs

Monitor other parties also: PTI to ECP

FROM PAGE 01
The issues including those of electricity, gas and water will be catered by the Balochistan government soon. Moreover, he said that the government wants to make the Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) a strong establishment. Many extremist organizations are not registered in ECP. He said that the record of not a single donor of PML-N is registered in ECP. Similarly, the funding record of PPP between 2009 to 2012 is empty. The sources of the funding are still unknown while in KPK division, no accountability of PML-N was ever carried out. Meanwhile, Farrukh Habib added that the government has submitted 22 volume to ECP. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) has submitted whole record to ECP while no such record has been submitted by PPP and PML-N. He further said that the process is being delayed by both parties.

PM takes notice of Gwadar...

FROM PAGE 01
residents of the area. "It has become tough to run the kitchen now," Rehana Gul, one of the protestors, had told Geo.tv. "In the last three or four years, there have been days when my husband, who is a fisherman, has come back empty-handed with no money to feed our children."

G7 warns Russia of 'massive...'

FROM PAGE 01
Russia and the United States on Moscow's "red lines". The G7 comprises Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and the United States, as well as a representative from the European Union. "We call on Russia to de-escalate, pursue diplomatic channels and abide by its international commitments on transparency of military activities," the G7 said. "We reaffirm our support for the efforts of France and Germany in the Normandy Format to achieve full implementation of the Minsk Agreements in order to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine."

'Opposition opposes EVM...'

FROM PAGE 01
The Minister said the PTI government is fully committed to eradicate the menace of corruption from society and no compromise would be made over the matter. He said corruption is the real cause of all economic problems of the country. Shibli Faraz said the government is focusing to enhance working capacity of institutions and paying proper attention to different sectors.

Israeli PM in UAE on...

FROM PAGE 01
tourism and business to cutting-edge technology. The meeting comes against the backdrop of struggling nuclear talks between world power and Iran. Underpinning UAE-Israeli ties is a shared concern over Iran's nuclear reach in the region. Israel says it is determined to prevent Tehran from obtaining nuclear weapons, while Tehran insists its nuclear programme is solely for peaceful purposes.

Punjab makes EVMs...

FROM PAGE 01
On Saturday, Punjab Governor Chaudhry Sarwar approved the Punjab Local Government Act 2021, paving way for local government elections on a party basis.

Embassy holds exhibition of Pak miniature art in Brussels

The event was attended by a large number of art enthusiasts, civil society members, members of the diplomatic corps and media representatives

DNA

BRUSSELS: The Embassy of Pakistan organized an exhibition of Pakistani miniature art, titled "Infinite thoughts on Globalizations" at Noo Consulting Art Gallery, Brussels. The event showcased the miniature art collection of eminent Pakistani visual artist Mr. Shahzad Hassan Ghazi. Mr. Zaheer A. Janjua, Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union inaugurated the exhibition. Addressing the occasion, Ambassador Janjua said that Pakistan was a land of rich culture and diverse traditions. From Gandhara civilization in the north to Mohenjo-Daro in the South, Pakistan inherited one of the most culturally advanced civilizations. He emphasized that the Sufi culture, which originated in the lands of Pakistan, remained a powerful force for tolerance, pluralism and co-existence in the region. The Ambassador underscored that Pakistan had produced a number of iconic and world famous artists, namely Sadiquain, Abdur



Rehman Chughtai, Ismail Gul Jee and Ghulam Rasool. While appreciating the art work of Mr. Ghazi, the Ambassador stated that the Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels had always promoted the creative endeavours of Pakistani artists and showcased them to the Belgian people. He emphasized that more such events would be arranged in future. Participating in the event through video-conference, Mr. Ghazi expressed gratitude to the Ambassador for patronizing the event. He highlighted the importance of art, which acted as a bridge between different cultures in this globalized world. He hoped that his artwork would remind visitors that Pakistan is a land of creative and enlightened people, who loved art and culture. The event was attended by a large number of art enthusiasts, civil society members, members of the diplomatic corps and media representatives. The event was followed by traditional Pakistani cuisine which was highly appreciated by the participants. The exhibition would continue for one month, till January 10, 2022.

Pakistan to host WBC Arabian Sea Title fight in January 2022



DNA

ISLAMABAD: WBC Arabian Sea Title Fight is all set take place between Pakistan vs Afghanistan. The first Arabian Sea Title Belt fight between Afghanistan's Ahmad Samir Dawrani and Pakistan's Muzaffar Khan has been officially sanctioned by the World Boxing Council (WBC). The two boxers will face each other off in the super welter

division on January 22nd 2022 at Liaquat Gymnasium, Islamabad, Pakistan. The President of Pakistan Professional Boxing League (PPBL) Syed Nauman Shah said, "We've received the letter of approval from WBC President Mauricio Sulaiman and the fight is now scheduled in January 2022. "The WBC is proud to be part of the development of our sport in Pakistan and this region of the world. The WBC will follow the adminis-

trative and medical specific requirements," he added. Mr. Umer Toor (PPBL) spokesperson mentioned that 3 other international boxers are going to be part of the event for exhibition fights. Shahid Khan, director PPBL said that 3 fighters from Pakistan are going to fight the 3 international boxers. Two of the Boxers are from UK and one of the boxer is from Spain. Aaron Alhambra, Ryan Walker & Jordan

Dujon are going to be visiting Pakistan to be part of the event. The exhibition fights are also expected to witness one female bout. The Arabian Sea region consists of 16 countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Afghanistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Maldives, and India. It is quite heartening now that finally, Pakistan have got the nod to hold the event.

Josh Hazlewood out of second Ashes Test

WEB DESK

MELBOURNE: Australia's right-arm pacer Josh Hazlewood has been ruled out of the second Ashes Test in Adelaide due to a side strain. The 25-year-old pacer Jhye Richardson has been named as his replacement as per the reports by Foxsports.com.au.

Hazlewood suffered the strain while playing the first game which Aussies won by 9 wickets in Brisbane. Meanwhile, there were speculations around Josh Hazlewood's fitness as on day of the he marked a check pavilion after delivering just eight overs. Pat Cummins said end of "Yeah he was a little bit sore yesterday, so we just tried to get him through. Obviously, it's a five-Test match series, so (we) didn't want to try and break him yesterday. He pulled up OK today, so we'll keep managing him."

Cummins added: "I think we'll wait until he wakes up in the morning. I think a key is we don't want to put him in jeopardy for the whole series so we'll take our time. He had a scan last night so we will kind of work through that. He bowled today but no plan yet, sleep on it, see how he pulls up tomorrow."



Talha not satisfied despite making history

KARACHI: "It was just not my day, but snatch was my good area," Pakistan's Olympian and top weightlifter Talha Talib simply states what the truth is, his performance at the World Championships in Tashkent is not how he wanted it to be, even though he won a bronze medal albeit a historical one too, as it is the first medal for Pakistan at the senior world championships. "How does it feel like creating another history for Pakistan, even on your bad day?" The answer proceeded with as much of an awkward silence as the question was asked with. Talha has won numerous international medals for Pakistan and this was his first outing after his historic performance at the Olympics this year as he became the first Pakistani to end up at the top-five place, and the first one to actually compete at the Olympics for the country since 1976. Talha had been in the gym and on the go with the events for the last two months, as he first won the Inter-unit Wapda Weightlifting Championship, then went on to compete for the Commonwealth Games trials. Next came the World Championships trials and then the National Championships in November where the PWF had been carrying the selection process too, according to Talha. "Yes, this is the first time in the history that Pakistan won a medal at the senior World Championships, I'm grateful to Allah," Talha told The Express Tribune. His total in Tashkent this time was just 143kg, which was enough to get him a bronze medal in snatch but he was at the bottom of the overall rankings of his 67kg event. "It is a part of the competition. Yes, it happens, I had no facilities and I am still training in that small school ground in Gujranwala," said Talha after the competition. "But I am grateful to the nation for their support, to the federation, Pakistan Olympic Association, and everyone who helped me." Talha added that he failed in his attempts in clean and jerk for no other reason than the way his body reacted. "I had good training, good diet, and I did not feel a lot of challenge in the competition either, I just think that my body did not respond the way I wanted it to, but the performance in snatch was fine," explained Talha. "It was not much of a difficulty." No setback big enough Looking forward to Commonwealth Games, Talha is optimistic. The World Championships in Tashkent were also touted as the qualifiers for the Commonwealth Games 2022, the top athletes from the event have qualified for Birmingham. For Talha the chance will be at the Singapore Cup now. "Now there is a qualifying round at Singapore Cup, then I will be able to compete in Birmingham, I will be training and working hard for that," said Talha. He is itching to repeat his Olympic total of 320kg which back in Tokyo was just two kilograms shy of the bronze medal. He had 150kg snatch and 170kg clean & jerk. "I want to get on with the 150kg snatch and 170kg clean & jerk again, but I also want to improve on it. Hopefully, InshaAllah I will be totalling more soon," concluded Talha. In Talha's event in Tashkent, host country's Doston Yokubov took the gold medal overall with 324kg, Columbia's Francisco Mosquera bagged silver with 316kg and Russia's Zulfat Garaev won bronze. Talha is a part of the Pakistan squad that has four other weightlifters, including Sharjeel Butt, Abu Bakar, Hanzala Dastageer and Nooh Dastageer. - Agencies



Dean lauds services of outgoing...

FROM PAGE 01

Ambassador Andreas from his behalf and on behalf of the Heads of Missions' thanks and appreciation for his cooperation, friendship, and wished him and his spouse good health, happiness and success in the years to come. The Greek ambassador during his tenure in Pakistan contributed greatly towards promotion and further strengthening of bilateral relations between the two friendly countries. Ambassador Andreas particularly focused on strengthening of people to people contacts with a special emphasis on facilitating the Greeks of Pakistani origin and Pakistani families wishing to reunite with their family in Greece.

Nielsen goal hands Fuerth home win

BERLIN: Bundesliga bottom side Greuther Fuerth celebrated their first ever home top-flight win on Sunday as a second-half goal from Norwegian striker Havard Nielsen gave them victory over Union Berlin 1-0. Fuerth, who were promoted to the Bundesliga for only the second time in their history earlier this year, were playing their 23rd top-flight home game. Yet Nielsen's poacher's finish and a spirited defensive performance saw them finally break their duck against a wasteful Union side. With games in Bavaria being played behind closed doors due to Covid-19, Fuerth were denied the chance to celebrate with their fans. They remain 12 points adrift of safety at the bottom of the table, while high-flying Union missed the chance to leapfrog Freiburg into fifth. Dickson Abiama had an early chance to give the hosts the lead but fired the ball straight at Union keeper Andreas Luthe from close range. At the other end, Luthe's opposite number Sascha Burchert frustrated Union several times in the first half before Fuerth took the lead after the break. Nielsen prodded in a deflected finish after a poorly-cleared corner. The visitors threw everything forward in the last half-hour, but were wasteful in front of goal as they stumbled to only a fourth defeat of the season. - APP

Leicester thrash sorry Newcastle

LONDON: Leicester left Newcastle still rooted in the Premier League relegation zone with a 4-0 thrashing of the Magpies on Sunday, while West Ham's Champions League ambitions were dented by a 0-0 draw at Burnley. Despite being hit by a coronavirus outbreak that left Brendan Rodgers without seven players, the Foxes gave Eddie Howe another reminder of the task he faces to keep Newcastle in the top flight as Yuri Tielemans struck twice at the King Power. Howe will be able to call on the resources of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund in the January transfer window and results elsewhere this weekend mean they remain just three points adrift of safety. But Newcastle face Liverpool, Manchester City and Manchester United in their next three games and, on this form, will be lucky to escape that run without another severe hit to their goal difference. Leicester had won just two of their previous nine games in all competitions and were dumped out of the Europa League by Napoli on Thursday. However, they got the break they needed to edge in front before half-time when James Maddison engineered contact with Javier Manquillo to win a penalty. With Jamie Vardy watching on from the bench, Tielemans took responsibility from the spot to open the scoring seven minutes before half-time. Patson Daka's form has seen him earn his spot ahead of Vardy in recent weeks in the Premier League and Zambian had the easiest of tasks to roll in his seventh goal of the season from Harvey Barnes' unselfish pass to double Leicester's lead. Tielemans rounded off a fine team move for his second of the afternoon before Maddison's fine finish compounded Newcastle's pain five minutes from time. - APP

PSL Draft 2022: Teams make their picks for PSL 7

Each franchise can comprise up to 18 players, including three each in the Platinum, Diamond, and Gold categories, five in the Silver, two Emerging and up to two in the Supplementary categories

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Franchise owners are looking to finalize the best possible combinations for the seventh edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) during the player draft currently underway at the National High-Performance Center (NHPC) in Lahore. The event kick-off around 4pm and is expected to continue for the better part of the evening.

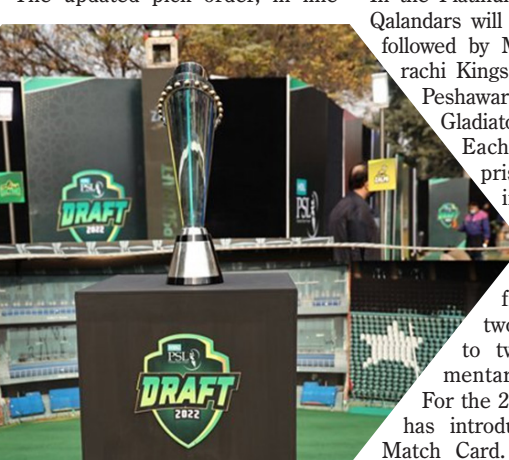
Platinum category
The first pick of the day, in the Platinum Category, was Fakhar Zaman, who has been chosen once more by Lahore Qalandars for its squad this year. Other players chosen by franchis-

es thus far include Tim David by Multan Sultans, Chris Jordan by Karachi Kings, Colin Munro by Islamabad United, Hazratullah Zazai by Peshawar Zalmi and Jason Roy by Quetta Gladiators.

Diamond category
The Diamond category round saw Islamabad United pick Marchant De Lange, Multan Sultans pick Odean Smith, Karachi Kings pick Lewis Gregory, and Quetta Gladiators bag James Faulkner.

Draft rules
More than 425 players from 32 countries have registered themselves for the draft.

Draft rules were shared earlier today by PSL on Twitter. The updated pick order, in line



with trades and retentions, was also shared a day earlier. In the Platinum Category, Lahore Qalandars will have the first pick, followed by Multan Sultans, Karachi Kings, Islamabad United, Peshawar Zalmi, and Quetta Gladiators.

Each franchise can comprise up to 18 players, including three each in the Platinum, Diamond, and Gold categories, five in the Silver, two Emerging and up to two in the Supplementary categories.

For the 2022 event, the PCB has introduced the Right to Match Card. This means each

side will have one card that they can utilise during the draft to pick a player originally released from their roster.

The retention, trade, and release window of the PSL 2022 closed on Friday afternoon with Islamabad United, Karachi Kings, Lahore Qalandars, and Peshawar Zalmi consuming their full allocation of eight retentions, while Multan Sultans and Quetta Gladiators retaining seven players each. The tournament will start on January 27, with 34 matches scheduled to be played in Karachi and Lahore. The first match will be staged under the lights of the National Stadium, where Karachi Kings and Multan Sultans will go head-to-head.

Briefs

South Africa
pays tribute
to De Klerk

CAPE TOWN: South Africa on Sunday paid an official tribute to FW de Klerk, the final president of white rule, who freed Nelson Mandela from prison and steered the country from apartheid to democracy.

De Klerk died on November 11 aged 85 following a battle with cancer. Four days of national mourning were declared in his honour.

He served as president from 1989 to 1994 and is remembered most for leading South Africa's transition from white-minority rule to the first multi-racial elections in 1994.

De Klerk also shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Mandela in 1993 after freeing him from prison in 1990. Mandela then became South Africa's first black president after his African National Congress party won the 1994 election.

President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered a eulogy at Cape Town's Protestant Groote Kerk - one of South Africa's oldest churches - and called De Klerk "brave" for starting the democratic transition in 1990.

"De Klerk went against elements in his own state security apparatus, and against die-hards who were prepared to take up arms to preserve the status quo," Ramaphosa said.

"He was often misunderstood due to his over-correctness," De Klerk's widow Elita Georgiadis told around 200 attendees. - APP

Blinken
heads to S.
East Asia to
deepen co-op

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration will seek to bolster economic and security cooperation with Southeast Asia through a visit to the region next week by its top diplomat, as it works to forge a united front against China in the Indo-Pacific. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is due in the Indonesian capital Jakarta on Monday and will also visit Malaysia and Thailand on his first Southeast Asia trip since President Joe Biden took office in January.

Southeast Asia has become a strategic battleground between the United States and China, the world's two largest economies. China claims most of the South China Sea, the vital trade route that links the region, and has turned up military and political pressure on self-ruled Taiwan, which Beijing considers its own.

Blinken will pursue Biden's aim of elevating engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to "unprecedented" levels, focusing on strengthening regional security infrastructure in the face of China's "bullying" and discussing the president's vision for an Indo-Pacific economic framework, the top U.S. diplomat for Asia, Daniel Kritenbrink, told reporters ahead of the trip. read more. - Agencies

Three dead,
six missing in
Sicily blast

ROME: Three people were killed and six were missing after an explosion caused multiple residential buildings to collapse on the Italian island of Sicily, authorities said Sunday.

Two women were recovered alive from the rubble in the southern town of Ravanusa after the collapse on Saturday night, and rescuers and sniffer dogs were searching to locate the missing.

The death count from the disaster shifted throughout the morning, and Sicily's regional civil protection unit confirmed at 10:07 GMT Sunday on its Facebook page that three people were confirmed dead and not four, as they had reported earlier. Television images showed a mass of rubble, wooden beams and mangled steel in a large empty space in Ravanusa's centre, with neighbouring buildings charred and damaged. It was not immediately clear how many buildings collapsed in the explosion. Initial reports cited one apartment building but Sicily's regional civil protection unit said on its website that "four buildings were involved" in the incident. - APP

Afghanistan's participation in region must remain a priority

The implementation of these trans-regional initiatives, which are a source of enormous economic benefits, will increase the interest of the parties in establishing security in Afghanistan and can stabilize the region better than any political deal

NEWS DESK

TASHKENT: First Deputy Director of the Institute for Strategic and Interregional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISMI) Akramjon Nematov, speaking at the 7th meeting of research centers of member states and observers of the Organization of Turkic States, which took place on 10 December in Istanbul, elaborated on the importance of Afghanistan's wider participation in regional economic integration.

During the session "Sustainable Development in Central Asia: Possible Areas of Cooperation for the Stability of Afghanistan," the representative of the ISMI noted that "in the past 40 years, in the context of the ongoing war in Afghanistan, the Afghan people have lived in an atmosphere of an ongoing humanitarian crisis. This country has become a source of constant threats and challenges to the region. At the same time, the lack of security and stability seriously hampered the development of the Central Asian countries, hindered their entry into international markets and active participation in world economic processes."

In this context, the expert cited data from



a World Bank study, according to which "Central Asia is one of the least 'connected' regions in the world. 'The transport costs of the Central Asian countries in many cases reach 60% of the value of imported goods," he said. In this regard, he believes, achieving a lasting peace in Afghanistan, restoring its role as a connecting bridge between Central and South Asia, will bring tangible benefits to all countries of our region, which has great potential to act as a center

of international trade.

With this in mind, Uzbekistan advocates the creation of an effective platform for mobilizing resources not only to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of Afghanistan, but also to develop proposals for the development and implementation of a long-term post-conflict strategy, which includes the socio-economic reconstruction of the country.

It was noted that the wider participation of Afghanistan in regional economic integration, as well as the implementation of so-

cio-economic projects in the country should remain a priority. This will allow it to restore the lost historical role of a key link in the interconnection between Central and South Asia. In this regard, according to Akramjon Nematov, new trans-regional projects, including railways, gas pipelines and power lines, will create additional jobs and alternative sources of income for the population. Moreover, the implementation of these trans-regional initiatives, which are a source of enormous economic benefits, will increase the interest of the parties in establishing security in Afghanistan and can stabilize the region better than any political deal. In short, the construction of these infrastructure projects will open up strategic opportunities for the countries of Central and South Asia.

Speaking about the measures taken by Uzbekistan, Akramjon Nematov noted that "despite the difficult situation, Uzbekistan did not close the Uzbek-Afghan transport hub - the most important artery for the delivery of food and oil products to Afghanistan". Tashkent was one of the first to send humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, consisting of 1,300 tons of food, medicine and clothing. In addition, the main UN logistics center to assist Afghanistan was opened in Termez.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Turkey, Palestine, Jordan, Morocco, UAW and Bahrain posing for a picture on the occasion of 100th year celebration of establishment of Iraqi State. - DNA

Tornadoes kill 83
across six US states

More than 70 people are believed to have been killed in Kentucky alone, while at least six died in an Amazon warehouse in Illinois

MAYFIELD: Rescuers were desperately searching for survivors early Sunday after dozens of devastating tornadoes tore through six US states, leaving at least 83 people dead, dozens missing and towns in ruin. President Joe Biden called the wave of tornadoes, including one that travelled more than 200 miles, "one of the largest" storm outbreaks in American history.

"It's a tragedy," a shaken Biden, who pledged support for the affected states, said in televised comments. "And we still don't know how many lives are lost and the full extent of the damage."

Scores of search and rescue officials were helping stunned citizens across the US heartland sift through the rubble of their homes and businesses overnight.

More than 70 people are believed to have been killed in Kentucky alone, many of them workers at a candle factory, while at least six died in an Amazon warehouse in Illinois where they were on the night shift processing orders ahead of Christmas.

"This event is the worst, most devastating, most deadly tornado event in Kentucky's history," said state governor Andy Beshear, adding he fears "we will have lost more than 100 people." "The devastation is unlike anything I have seen in my life, and I have trouble putting it into words," he told reporters. Beshear has declared a state of emergency. The tornado that smashed through Kentucky had rumbled along the ground for over 200 miles (320 kilometers), Beshear said, one of the longest on record. The longest a US tornado has ever tracked along the ground was a 219-mile storm in

Missouri in 1925. It claimed 695 lives. The western Kentucky town of Mayfield was reduced to "matchsticks," its mayor Kathy O'Nan told CNN.

The small town of 10,000 people was described as "ground zero" by officials, and appeared post-apocalyptic: city blocks leveled; historic homes and buildings beaten down to their slabs; trees trunks stripped of their branches; cars overturned in fields. Some Christmas decorations could still be seen by the side of the road.

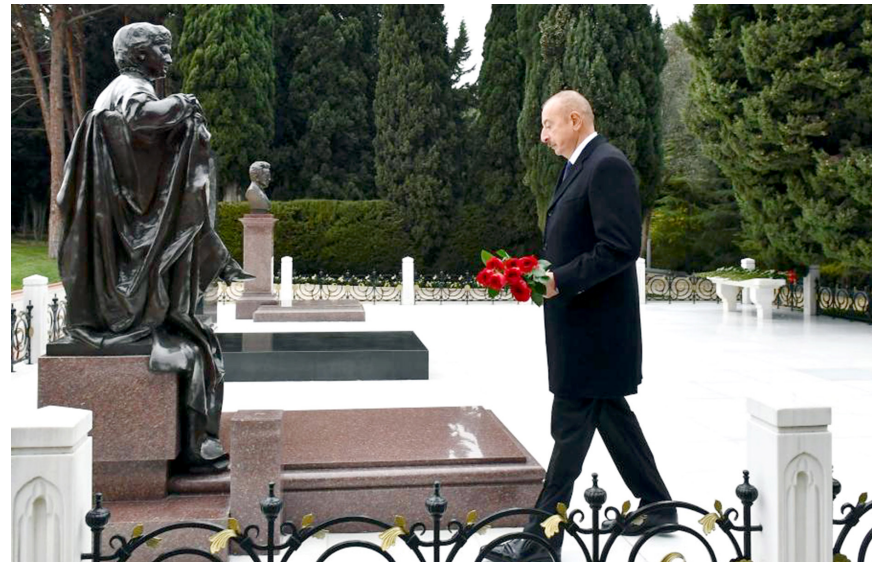
Beshear said there were 110 people working at the candle factory when the storm hit, causing the roof to collapse. Forty people have been rescued, but it would be "a miracle if anybody else is found alive," he said. CNN played a heart-rending plea posted on Facebook by a factory employee.

"We are trapped, please, y'all, get us some help," a woman says, her voice quavering as a co-worker can be heard moaning in the background. "We are at the candle factory in Mayfield... Please, y'all. Pray for us."

The woman, Kyanna Parsons-Perez, was rescued after being pinned under a water fountain. "It looks like a bomb has exploded," 31-year-old Mayfield resident Alex Goodman told AFP. David Norseworthy, a 69-year-old builder in Mayfield, said the storm blew off his roof and front porch while the family hid in a shelter. "We never had anything like that here," he told AFP. In one demonstration of the storm's power on Saturday, when winds derailed a 27-car train near Earlington, Kentucky, one car was blown 75 yards up a hill and another landed on a house. No one was hurt. - APP

SBP to launch
Asaan Mobile
Account

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will be launching a new initiative, Asaan Mobile Account (AMA) on Monday, (Dec 13). The initiative has been developed under the National Financial Inclusion Strategy with objective to bring further ease in remote account opening under branchless banking. Through AMA the customers would be able to open and operate their accounts in the comfort of their homes, without visiting the branch, with any of the participating branchless banking providers. - APP



BAKU: President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev visits the Alley of Honors to commemorate Azerbaijan's national leader Heydar Aliyev on his 18th anniversary of the death. - DNA

Azerbaijan marks
Heydar Aliyev's
death anniversary

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan marked national leader Heydar Aliyev's 18th death anniversary. The memory of the national leader is honored both in Azerbaijan and abroad.

Heydar Aliyev was born on May 10, 1923, in Nakhchivan. Having worked in the state structures since 1944, Heydar Aliyev since 1964 held the position of deputy chairman of the State Security Committee under the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR, and since 1967 - chairman, achieved the rank of major general. He received special higher education in Leningrad, and in 1957 he graduated from the history faculty of Azerbaijan State University.

Heydar Aliyev was elected first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Azerbaijan SSR at the July 1969 plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Azerbaijan SSR. Elected a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in July 1991 in protest against the hypocritical policy of the USSR leadership regarding the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Returning to Azerbaijan in July 1990, Heydar Aliyev lived first in Baku and then in Nakhchivan, and in the same year was elected a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan SSR.



October 1987 in protest against the political line pursued by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. In connection with the bloody tragedy committed by Soviet troops in Baku on January 20, 1990, the next day, Heydar Aliyev made a statement at the Azerbaijani mission in Moscow and demanded that the organizers and perpetrators of the crime against the Azerbaijani people be punished. He left the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in July 1991 in protest against the hypocritical policy of the USSR leadership regarding the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Returning to Azerbaijan in July 1990, Heydar Aliyev lived first in Baku and then in Nakhchivan, and in the same year was elected a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan SSR.

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Pak-China
issue joint
declaration
on win-win
Cooperation

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan joint declaration on Win-win Cooperation has been issued, according to Gwadar Pro.

The Joint Declaration was officially determined at the 2021 Forum on Cooperation between China and Pakistan Friendship Provinces and Cities held online.

The joint declaration includes 7 key issues of concern to the international community. The Chinese and Pakistani ambassadors, representatives of the foreign ministries and the central and local governments have formally reached agreement on these issues.

The consensus reached in the joint declaration stated that both sides recognize the historical achievements made by CPC in the past 100 years; CPEC has achieved fruitful and all-weather development, the strategic partnership of cooperation has been deepened, and China-Pakistan relations have become equal and mutually beneficial; the 21st century is an Asian century, win-win and common development is the right path for mankind and the only right choice for all. - APP

UAE taxis
drive towards
autonomous
future

ABU DHABI: Mustafa sits motionless behind the wheel, upturned hands in his lap, as his taxi drives itself, bringing the United Arab Emirates closer to an autonomous future.

The "safety officer" is part of a trial for driverless cabs in the capital Abu Dhabi, where customers can be picked up and dropped off at nine pre-determined spots on Yas Island. It's been a "smooth ride" so far, said Mustafa, with no incidents that required any major intervention.

"In the past few days, we've had most customers order taxis from the mall or hotel," he told AFP. Bayanat, a branch of the Abu Dhabi-based Group 42 tech company, last month launched the trial of four driverless vehicles, two electric and two hybrid, under the name TXAI. A second phase will include at least 10 vehicles and multiple locations across Abu Dhabi, the company said. Customers can order the vehicles using the TXAI app. - APP

Returning to Azerbaijan in July 1990, Heydar Aliyev lived first in Baku and then in Nakhchivan, and in the same year was elected a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan SSR.

Turkey
determined
to support
Bosnia

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkey is determined to strongly support Bosnia-Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Saturday. Releasing a statement on the recent decisions taken by the national assembly of the Republika Srpska, one of the two entities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the ministry said that Turkey has always been at the forefront of efforts to maintain peace and promote prosperity in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"We share the concerns regarding the decisions taken at the special session of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska on 10 December 2021 like all friends of Bosnia-Herzegovina. We consider that the decisions taken in the entity assembly are harmful to the constitutional and legal framework and therefore detrimental to the peaceful and prosperous future that the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina deserve very much. It is also a challenge to the peace and stability of the Balkans and the whole of Europe," it said.

Adding that Turkey will continue to strive, together with the international community, for Bosnia-Herzegovina to return to its path of economic development as soon as possible, the statement said: "With this understanding, we call on those who will bear the responsibility of harming peace and prosperity to abide by the constitutional and legal framework and resort to dialogue instead of unilateral actions."

Sino-Pak ties: Amb. highlights academia's role

Peng Gang said China and Pakistan share similar traditional cultural philosophy and have the same pursuit of a community of shared future for mankind

BEIJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque has highlighted the role of the academia in China-Pakistan relations, saying that 'diplomacy played a leading role in shaping the contours of international relations' but it could not perform this gigantic task alone. He made the remarks via video link at the opening ceremony of the "70th Anniversary Symposium of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and Pakistan," hosted by Tsinghua University's International Center for Communication Studies and organized by the Center for Pakistan Culture and Communication, CGTN reported.

The role of the think tanks and academic circles to make a faithful record of our bilateral ties, identify new areas of international cooperation, and explore the complex ma-

trix of economics, politics and culture can never be underestimated, said Haque, highlighting the role of the universities working in this area across China and Confucius Institutes in Pakistan.

Moreover, he thanked China for standing by Pakistan during testing times, including the fight against COVID-19. "The vaccine campaign which is going [on] in Pakistan, the 90 percent of it is being done through vaccines provided by China," he said.

The ambassador also explained the benefits brought by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "CPEC has contributed immensely to Pakistan's national development by upgrading its physical infrastructure, communication and transport infrastructure, addressing our acute energy needs, and developing of the Gwa-



dar Port," he said, adding that the focus was to follow a "people-centric approach for socioeconomic development". Also speaking on the occasion, Peng Gang, vice president of Tsinghua University, said China and Pakistan share similar traditional cultural philosophy and have the same pursuit of a community of shared future for mankind.

In this regard, he highlighted a similarity of thought between Pakistan's national poet Muhammad Iqbal and Chinese philosopher Confucius. "The true unity of the peoples in the world shall blossom," he quoted Iqbal, followed by Confucius' saying that "all men are brothers." Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, director of Pakistan-China Institute, spoke about the significance of cultural and media exchanges benefiting CPEC.

He also stressed the need of having a "Pakistan-China cultural corridor" to enhance connectivity between the two peoples, think tanks and academia, and among media. Speaking of the ties, he said, China-Pakistan relationship stand out as a "model for good neighborly cooperation" and it is so unique because it is "not transactional, not tactical, and it is not against anybody."

Explaining the strong and deep-rooted relationship between the two countries, Hussain noted that this year also marked 50 years of the historic secret flight by American statesman Dr Henry Kissinger to Beijing via Pakistani capital Islamabad in July 1971.

He explained how Pakistan acted as a bridge to realize normalization of China-U.S. ties, which became a turning point in global politics. Recounting some of the key CPEC indicators, Hussain said Chinese investment worth \$25m had come in since the launch of the project, which had also given jobs to 75,000 Pakistanis. Furthermore, Zhang Chunxiang, former Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, talked about the strategic value of China-Pakistan ties. He narrated a series of events where both the countries helped each other. - APP

Briefs

UK steps up efforts to combat Omicron spread

LONDON: Britain on Sunday announced additional measures to stop the spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant, including the extension of booster jabs to people over 30. From Tuesday, fully vaccinated contacts of people who test positive for Covid-19 will be required to take daily lateral flow tests for seven days. But those who have not had one or two shots of a Covid vaccine will have to self-isolate for 10 days, the Department of Health and Social Care said. "The Omicron variant is quickly gaining ground in the UK and is expected to become the dominant strain by mid-December," said Health Secretary Sajid Javid. "We are taking this proportionate and more practical measure to limit the impact on people's day-to-day lives while helping to reduce the spread of Omicron." Britain is banking on vaccination as the best way to stop the rapid spread of the virus - and keep the economy open - with concern that hospitals could be overwhelmed as they also deal with seasonal respiratory infections such as flu. Javid said anyone eligible for a booster should get it as soon as possible. The government has set itself a target of giving everyone aged 18 and over a booster jab by the end of January. The over-30s can get a third dose of a vaccine from next week. - APP

Germany announces billions for climate

BERLIN: Germany's new Finance Minister Christian Lindner announced a plan on Friday to invest an extra Euro 60 billion (roughly \$68 billion) in climate policies. The financing comes from left-over, unused debt borrowed by the government in 2021 and it is expected to be passed as part of a supplementary budget on Monday. "I have handed the draft supplementary budget to the Cabinet today," Lindner said in his first major appearance as finance minister. The lawmaker from the liberal pro-business Free Democrats Party (FDP) said the investment would be a "boost for the economy." A tweet from the finance ministry said they would "get a second supplementary budget 2021 on track to tackle the effects of the pandemic and also prepare Euro 60 billion for future investments." "There will be no further borrowing," it added. The German government had already taken out Euro 240 billion in debt to support businesses during the pandemic, but had only used Euro 180 billion.

Earthquake tremors felt in Sindh, K-P

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake tremors were felt in various districts of Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) on Sunday. According to media, tremors were felt in Hyderabad, Thatta, Jamshoro, Kotri, Nooriabad and Sehwan in Sindh at 5:30 am. The epicentre was reported 40-kilometre northwest of Keenjhar Lake, at a depth of 30km and a magnitude of 3.3 on the Richter scale. At the time of the earthquake in Sindh, worshippers were busy preparing for Fajr prayers, while a majority of the citizens did not feel the tremors. In K-P, tremors were felt in Swat, Syed Sharif, Shangla, Buner, Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Chitral, Malakand and Besham. According to the earthquake scale, the epicentre was reported at the Hindu Kush range at a depth of 130km and a magnitude of 3.8.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and Embassy staff honoring the memory of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of Azerbaijan on his 18th death anniversary. May Allah rest his soul in peace. - DNA

Qatar Airways increase Pakistan flights

KARACHI: Qatar Airways on Sunday has announced an increase in the number of flights from Pakistan. After the announcement, Qatar Airways will now operate 56 weekly flights from Pakistan with two daily flights from Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi separately and one daily flight from Peshawar and Sialkot. Qatar Airways will operate flights to Doha from five Pakistani cities including Karachi and Lahore. According to the schedule, Qatar Airways will operate two daily flights from Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi while a single flight will be operated from Peshawar and Sialkot on daily basis. Furthermore, 14 flights will be operated weekly from Lahore to Doha, the airline will provide access to passengers in 140 countries from Lahore via Doha. Qatar Airways has also released the schedule for Pakistan till May 31, 2022. Earlier this month, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) had announced expanding its flight operation to Saudi Arabia. According to details, the country manager of the national flag carrier met with a representative of Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) on directives of CEO PIA Arshad Malik.

Omicron spreads faster and weakens jabs: WHO

GENEVA: The Omicron coronavirus variant is more transmissible than the Delta strain and reduces vaccine efficacy but causes less severe symptoms according to early data, the World Health Organization said Sunday. The Delta variant, first identified in India earlier this year, is responsible for most of the world's coronavirus infections. But South Africa's discovery of Omicron - which has a large number of mutations - last month prompted countries around the world to impose travel bans on southern African countries and reintroduce domestic restrictions to slow its spread. The WHO said Omicron had spread to 63 countries as of December 9. Faster transmission was noted in South Africa, where Delta is less prevalent, and in Britain, where Delta is the dominant strain. But it stressed that a lack of data meant it could not say if Omicron's rate of transmission was because it was less prone to immune responses, higher transmissibility or a combination of both. Early evidence suggests Omicron causes "a reduction in vaccine efficacy against infection and transmission", the WHO said in a technical brief. - APP

Another polio cop martyred in Tank

TANK: Another policeman providing security to the polio staff in Tank on Sunday fell prey to the terrorists' bullet while his colleague injured in the incident. According to details, some unknown terrorists opened fire on polio security teams in Garah Shada village in Tank and martyred a cop and injured his colleague. After the incident, the security forces reached the venue and combed the area in search for the assailants. In a similar incident in Garah Chaddar in Tank yesterday, the terrorists martyred a policeman and injured another. They were providing security to a two-woman polio team. The polio cops were performing their duty when the gunmen on a motorbike ambushed them. One policeman was seriously wounded and later succumbed to injuries while another was rushed to a hospital.

PTI, allies slam Sindh govt over LG amendment Bill

The PTI organised an "All Stakeholders" press conference to speak out against the new Sindh local government law passed by the provincial assembly

DNA

KARACHI: The provincial capital of Sindh [Karachi] is not begging for its rights from the chief minister of Sindh, said Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiative Asad Umar Sunday in a hard-hitting press conference. The PTI organised an "All Stakeholders" press conference to speak out against the new Sindh local government law passed by the provincial assembly. Critics of the Sindh government say amendments to the law will allow greater control of local bodies institutions to the provincial government. The Sindh government has refused such criticism. "We will come up with a strategy soon," said Umar. "This problem does not concern a political party. It concerns a system wherein politicians come to power and become richer [at the expense of the taxpayer]," he added.

The minister said that it was necessary to "change the system rather than faces", adding that a new system should be brought in place, one where an elected official is forced to work for the welfare of the masses. "We will continue to raise our voices in Sindh Assembly, despite their [PPP] telling us that we are in the minority," he said, adding that the Sindh Local Government Act 2013 needed to be amended as its provisions were in contravention to the Constitution. "Our basic problems will not be solved till the masse are not empowered," noted Umar, adding that it was important for local governments to be strengthened.

"Politics has been taken over by a few families; they want to stay rich and maintain their sway [over everything]," he said. The minister cited the example of the local government system in Islamabad, saying that the mayor had powers to take decisions for the welfare of the city. "Work is being carried out in Islamabad according to a master plan," he added. Despite his criticism of the Sindh government, the minister said the PTI was ready to talk to the Sindh chief minister to solve people's problems. He said the federal government had held talks with the provincial government for its Karachi Transformation Plan. Umar lashed out at the chief minister, saying that he had not fulfilled his promise of devolving powers at the lower level. "Time has come for Sindh to take important decisions," he said.

Former Karachi mayor and MQM-P leader Waseem Akhtar also spoke at the press conference, lashing out at CM Sindh Murad Ali Shah. "The chief minister used to give me a lollipop every time I asked to meet him," he alleged. "He did not let me develop Nehre-Khayyam. If he wanted to do anything good, he would have already done that Larkana or Nawabshah," he added. Akhtar said the PPP government receives Rs1,200bn per annum to develop the province. "Will anyone ask them where these Rs1,200bn have been spent?" he asked. The former Karachi mayor lamented that the city paid over Rs309bn in taxes to Sindh, adding that despite that it has always been ignored. Akhtar said that in countries around the world, mayors have all the rights and authorities to carry out development work in cities.

NAB chairman vows punishing the corrupt

Gillani and Gallup Survey about 59 percent people have shown their confidence in NAB

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman Justice (Retd) Justice Javed Iqbal on Sunday said that NAB gave high priority to mega corruption white collar crime cases and those who have devoured billions of rupees of innocent Pakistanis through corruption. NAB chairman Justice (Retd) Justice Javed Iqbal NAB in a statement said "NAB has no affiliation with any individual, party or organization but with the country and is performing its duties." He said "Eradication of corruption has become the voice of the whole nation as it not only halted the progress of the country but also usurped the rights of the deserving people. Pakistan is facing the challenge of corruption which is the root cause of all problems being endured by the country. NAB has chalked out a comprehensive Anti corruption strategy comprising awareness, prevention and enforcement under "Accountability for All" policy." Besides overhauling and perfecting working procedures in order to make NAB a more



credible and reputed organization to eradicate corruption in all its forms and manifestations. The Chairman said that NAB has rejuvenated by implementing its Accountability for All Policy across the board under the slogan of "NAB's Faith-Corruption free Pakistan." The results have yielded excellent dividends. Well reputed national and International Organisations like Transparency International Pakistan, World Economic Forum, PILDAT and Mishal Pakistan have not only lauded NAB's efforts for eradication of corruption. According to Gillani and Gallup Survey about 59 percent people have shown their confidence in NAB. He said that NAB during the present management has brought big fish to justice for the first time and recovered Rs. 539 billion from corrupt elements directly and indirectly from Oct 2017 to Nov 2021 that no one previously had ever been able to accomplish since the establishment of the anti-corruption watchdog in 1999, besides overall recovery of Rs. 821 billion, NAB has filed 1,278 corruption references in the various learned Accountability Courts which are under adjudication and their approximate worth is 1,335 billion. - APP

Assange suffers 'mini-stroke' in prison

LONDON: WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange had a mini-stroke during his battle to avoid extradition from Britain to the United States, his fiancée Stella Morris said. Morris, the mother of Assange's two young children, said it happened in late October on the first day of a US government appeal against a ruling blocking his removal. "He needs to be freed. Now," she tweeted late on Saturday. The Mail on Sunday newspaper said it was a transient ischaemic attack, in which the blood supply to part of the brain is temporarily interrupted. It left Assange, 50, with a drooping right eyelid, memory loss and signs of neurological damage, and he was now taking medication, the weekly said. Morris was quoted as saying she was concerned it could lead to a more major stroke and raised fears about his ability to withstand the extradition process. "I believe this constant chess game, battle after battle, the extreme stress, is what caused Julian's stroke on October 27," she added. - Agencies

Afghan families go back to making carpets

KABUL: Four Afghan brothers have hauled their family's carpet loom out of storage in the desperate hope of earning a living as the nation's economy teeters on the edge of ruin. The Haidari brothers now spend their days sitting abreast on a squat bench - as generations of the family did before them - weaving the complex rugs for which Afghanistan is famed. They work long hours each day, keeping a brave face even though there is no guarantee they will have anyone to sell their carpets to. "We have no other option" to keep the family alive, said Ghulam Sakhi, the 70-year-old family patriarch. Until August 15, when the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan, the Haidari brothers had managed to escape the backbreaking labour of carpet making and were running a successful business supplying flowers for weddings. The hardline movement's austere interpretation of Islam, however, largely put paid to the lavish betrothals so loved by Afghans, and the family enterprise collapsed. In an act of creativity in the face of adversity, they fell back on their family's rug-making trade. "Naturally when the Taliban took over... wedding halls didn't have much business. That is why we started carpets again," said Rauf, at 28 the eldest of the brothers who all live and work in Kabul. "It's a very old practice that our forefathers have passed down to us," he told AFP. Now they pick strands from dangling spindles of silk before looping them into the warp and weft of the rug with precise, rhythmic energy. And when the 12-metre (39-foot) carpet is complete, they hope it will fetch up to \$6,000 dollars (5,300 euros). - APP

Tough talks ahead for Iran nuclear deal

The latest round of talks ended last week without any significant breakthrough

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: Long-awaited talks on the Iran nuclear deal which resumed last week in Vienna after a five-month hiatus may end up in reconciliation, according to one political analyst. "Neither Iran nor the P4+1 countries - Russia, China, France, Britain, and Germany - wants the deal to collapse. Even if the two sides don't reach an ideal agreement, they may find a middle ground," Hakkii Uygur, head of the Center for Iranian Studies (IRAM) in the Turkish capital of Ankara, told Turkish Anadolu Agency. "The cessation of negotiations and an escalation in the military tension would not be a scenario preferred by either side," he said. It would not be a good option for

Iran, as its economy has tumbled in recent years into a recession under US sanctions, he pointed out. On Nov. 29, in Vienna, Iran and world powers kicked off talks in a last-ditch attempt to restore the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - the deal's formal name - after talks stalled following a government change in Iran this June. The latest round of talks ended last week without any significant breakthrough. During the negotiations, Iran submitted two draft proposals to the Europeans, one on lifting sanctions and another on nuclear commitments. "We saw harsh reactions by the EU and US against the proposals, accusing Iran of expecting too much," said Uygur. The new Iranian delegation, under a new government, took a tougher

stance than its predecessor, provoking a backlash from the US, which accused Tehran of not being serious. On Dec. 3, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that Iran does not seem serious about returning to the parameters of the nuclear deal that set limits on Iran's nuclear ambitions. Uygur stressed that we do not know details about the proposals as they were not made public, adding that this secrecy shows that the negotiations can continue. Iran and the P4+1 countries reconvened in the Austrian capital on Thursday after holding consultations in their respective capitals. Following a joint commission meeting, Iran's lead nuclear negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, said the parties have a "serious will" to continue talks, which shows that they want to "narrow the gaps."

On whether other parties have responded to the two draft proposals, Bagheri said the issue will be discussed in working group meetings. After the meeting, Enrique Mora, the top EU representative and coordinator of the talks, said the parties will continue talks "until an agreement is reached." Uygur said the negotiation process will not be easy as internal balances in America and new balances in Iran make it difficult to reach a consensus. "On the other hand, the Biden administration is losing power. Even though it's been just a year since he came to power, Biden faces serious problems in domestic politics. The Republicans, who have a strong presence in the US Congress, are against the Iran nuclear deal, and some Democrats also oppose the pact," said Uygur.

On the other hand, the Iranian administration led by new hardline President Ebrahim Raisi - who took office this August - has strongly criticized the deal, calling it a "betrayal," noted Uygur. Recently, both sides have been trying to gain leverage - Iran by scaling up its nuclear enrichment, and the US by imposing a slew of new sanctions on Iranian officials and entities. Uygur warned that the dangerous trend may continue if the talks in Vienna falter. "If the parties fail to reach an agreement, the US may impose new sanctions to put more economic pressure on Iran, paving the way for rising military tensions in the Gulf region, Yemen, and Syria," warned Uygur. The White House said Thursday that Biden asked for "other options" from his team if the talks fail.