



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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### Travel restrictions of Covid-19 must not bypass human rights

Detailed News On Page-07

### Taliban seek ties with US, other ex-foes

Detailed News On Page-08



### Pak-Indonesia negotiate on trade deal

Detailed News On Page-08



## Briefs

### Elon Musk named person of the year

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Time magazine on Monday named Tesla founder and space entrepreneur Elon Musk as its person of the year, capping a roller-coaster 2021 for the technology magnate. The brash South African-born 50-year-old with grand ambition overtook space race rival and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos to become the world's richest person this year. In October his electric car company's valuation soared above a trillion dollars.

### PDM asked to change protest date

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Monday has said that PDM has been asked to change the date of protest from March 23 due to parade in copnne Pakistan Day. Talking to media, the minister said that opposition parties have been clarified that they will be responsible if any untoward incident will occur on March 23. No action will be taken against you if you won't take law in your hands, Sheikh Rashid said to PDM leaders. Meanwhile, the interior minister said that the cyber-crime wing will be further strengthened to meet the emerging challenges as more resources will be provided to them.

### Faisal new PCB Chief Executive

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board today announced that, following a robust recruitment process, it has appointed Faisal Hasnain as its new Chief Executive. He will formally assume charge in January 2022. Faisal is a UK qualified Chartered Accountant and has had a professional career of over 35 years in high-profile finance and sports administration roles with some of the world's leading blue chip organisations.

## War on Terrorism Pakistan not given due credit: PM

### - Says Pakistan faced biggest collateral damage in Afghan war

ABID RAZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has regretted that Pakistan has not been credited by the western world for the sacrifices rendered by it in the war on terrorism. Imran Khan said Pakistan and western countries were allies but they were also dropping bombs in our country. "They (allies' countries) were committing mistakes and put blame on Pakistan but there was nobody to answer on behalf of Pakistan." Prime Minister Imran Khan was addressing the opening session of Margala Dialogue 21 "Breaking Past, Entering Future" in Islamabad on Monday. The dialogue was arranged by Islamabad Policy Research Institute, which is affiliated with the National Security Division. Prime Minister also lamented that Western countries not criticizing fascist policies of India against minorities including in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The premier said Pakistan faced the biggest collateral damage in the Afghan war as it is the only country in the US's alliance which suffered more than eighty thousand casualties, displacement of millions of people and over one hundred billion rupees loss to the economy.

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### PM gets briefing on Sialkot lynching case

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab and chief secretary briefed Prime Minister Imran Khan on the progress made into the Sialkot tragedy, in which a Sri Lankan citizen Priyantha Kumara was brutally tortured to death. According to details, Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar called on Prime Minister Imran Khan at the Governor House in which he was briefed on the administrative and political affairs of the province. After getting a briefing on the progress of the investigation into the Sialkot tragedy, the premier directed that incidents like the Sialkot lynching should be strictly prevented and a joint strategy should be chalked out to prevent any untoward incidents in the future. Chief Minister Usman Buzdar apprised the Prime Minister about the new local government system of the province.

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## Israeli PM, UAE crown prince discuss mutual ties, Iran

### The Palestinians have deplored the Israeli-Emirati rapprochement



NEWS DESK

DUBAI: Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Monday in the first ever public meeting between the United Arab Emirates' de facto ruler and an Israeli leader. Israel's ambassador to Abu Dhabi said the issue of Iran was on the agenda for their talks, which follow the formalisation of Israel-UAE relations last year under a US-led regional initiative. While shared concern about Iranian

activity was among reasons for the diplomatic moves, the UAE has also been trying to improve relations with Tehran. Releasing photographs of Bennett and Sheikh Mohammed smiling and shaking hands, the Israeli leader's office described the meeting as "historic". A statement on state news agency WAM said Sheikh Mohammed voiced hope for "stability in the Middle East" and that Bennett's visit would "advance

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LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab, Usman Buzdar calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. IG Punjab and Chief Secretary Kamran Ali Afzal are also present on the occasion. - DNA

### COAS visits Karachi Corps - Hails role of Sindh police

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa while appreciating the formation and sacrifices of Sindh Rangers for the establishment of peace said that the measures taken by Rangers have reduced terrorism and crime. According to ISPR, when Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa arrived on a visit to Corps Headquarters Karachi, he was received by Corps Commander Lieutenant General Muhammad Saeed. The Chief of Army Staff was briefed on the operational matters of formation and other projects including security and transformation of the province especially Karachi while steps were also taken to improve civic facilities in Karachi. The Chief of Army Staff expressed satisfaction over the operational readiness and security measures of the Karachi Corps and appreciated the co-ordination of the stakeholders in the implementation of the Transformation Plan. The Army Chief visited the Sindh Police Headquarters and laid flowers at the Martyrs' Memorial. He appreciated the role of police in improving security in the province and also talked to the families of martyrs of Sindh Police. The Army Chief paid homage to the martyrs of Sindh Police and assured full cooperation.

### Pakistan's first omicron case confirmed

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Health (NIH) confirmed on Monday Pakistan's first case of Covid-19 Omicron variant in a Karachi resident. The NIH received samples of three suspected cases of Omicron variant from Karachi for genome sequencing, a study that confirms the exact variant of the virus.

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## Country facing unprecedented inflation: Shehbaz

### "The entire nation is in so much pain that one shudders at its mere thought," he regretted

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif said on Monday that the inflation being witnessed today was unprecedented. Speaking to the media outside an accountability court (AC) in Lahore, he said that record price hike had broken the back of a poor man and devastated each and every household in the country. "So much so that people are yearning for a single loaf of bread now," he said, and added, "They are praying to Allah (The Almighty) to rid them of this 'incompetent' government." Shehbaz said it was really unfortunate that even the prices of milk for infants and medicines were now out of the reach of common man. "To cut a long story short, the entire nation is in so much pain that one shudders at its mere thought," he regretted. Earlier, hearing of three cases, involving the Shehbaz Sharif family, was held at the accountability court.

### Bilawal defends Sindh LG amendment bill

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Monday defended the Sindh Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2021, saying that critics of the legislation would eat humble pie. The Sindh Local Government Act was passed with amendments in the Sindh Assembly last week in a chaotic session that saw loud chants by a fervently protesting Opposition. The PPP chairman, addressing a press conference in Karachi, said the law introduced by the Sindh government does not exist in any other province, as he slammed the critics. He mentioned that the party is also making progress in Lahore, adding the people of Karachi and Lahore have pinned hopes on PPP.

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Pak-Indonesia negotiate on trade, goods agreement: Envoy - Page 08

## Japan announces US\$ 4.35mn grant for anti-Polio campaign

### This latest grant will be utilized for the procurement of 24 million oral doses of vaccines

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan announced a US\$ 4.35 million



grant to procure essential oral polio vaccines as part of its continued support to Pakistan for its polio eradication efforts. This latest grant will be utilized for the procurement of 24

million oral doses of vaccines. It will allow the programme to reach around 21 million children under five years old with focus on the high-risk districts with persistent poliovirus transmission. The vaccines will be used during vaccination drives planned in 2022. According to the National Action Plan (NEAP) 2021-2023, the Polio Programme's strategic goal is to permanently interrupt all poliovirus transmission in Pakistan by the end of 2023. The notes of the grant were signed and exchanged between the Government of Japan and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the grant agreement was exchanged between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNICEF.

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# President urges students to play role for development

The president remarked that the completion of the CPEC and the development of Gwadar port would help to create employment opportunities as well as bring prosperity to the province of Balochistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the students to focus on their studies and play their role for the development of the country. He expressed these views during an interactive session with the students and faculty members of Baluchistan Residential College, Khuzdar, at Awan-e-Sadr, on Monday. Talking to the students, the President said that the government was focusing on the socio-economic development of the province which had, unfortunately, been neglected in the past. He underscored that priority was being given to the development of the education sector as it played an instrumental role in the socio-economic uplift of the country. The president remarked that the

completion of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the development of Gwadar port would help to create employment opportunities as well as bring prosperity to the province of Balochistan. The president also appreciated the government of Balochistan over its initiative of establishing residential colleges in areas such as Khuzdar and Loralai, and expressed the hope that these institutions would play a major role in the educational development of the province.

Later, while chairing a meeting of the senate of National Skills University (NSU), Islamabad, President Dr Arif Alvi underlined the need to focus on the skill-development of youth and produce manpower in line with the requirements of the market. He urged the universities to increase the number of skilled graduates in order to fulfill the rising de-

mand of the market.

Vice-Chancellor National Skills University, Professor Dr Muhammad Mukhtar, updated the meeting about the role of the university in providing skills in various fields. He also apprised the meeting about the implementation status of the decisions taken in the 2nd Senate meeting of NSU.

The meeting was informed that the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan had granted No Objection Certificate (NOC) to NSU to start classes in Electrical Engineering Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Civil Engineering Technology, Information Engineering Technology, Medical Lab Technology, and Mathematics. The meeting also approved the minutes of the 2nd meeting of Senate of National Skills University held on October 20, 2021.

## SCCI demands increase in booster shot points

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has urged the provincial health authorities to increase the number of booster shot points in the city. In a statement issued here on Monday, SCCI president Hasnain Khurshid Ahmad said that after reporting case of Covid-19 new variant, Omicron in Pakistan, the provincial health department has established two points for booster shot in Hayatabad Medical Complex and Khyber Medical University Peshawar, which he termed insufficient to timely inoculate large number population of Peshawar. People are highly scared after the report of new Covid-19 variant Omicron in Pakistan and want to immediately inoculate themselves to save themselves from this virus, he noted. Therefore, he requested the provincial health authorities to ensure a maximum number of booster shot points in major teaching hospitals, basic health units and periphery units in Peshawar and the rest parts of the province in order to prevent proliferation of Omicron and protect everyone from this deadly virus. — APP

## MOL marks Int'l Day of PWDs

PESHAWAR: MOL Pakistan Oil and Gas Company B.V. in partnership with the Joint Venture Consortium of TAL Block commemorated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) with the students of Nishtar Special Education Centre at a colorful event. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kohat, Roshan Mehsud was the chief guest of the event. District, Social Welfare Officer Amjad Afridi was also present on the occasion, said a press release issued here on Monday. Differently abled children of the centre performed the national anthem, hamad, naat and various intriguing tablos and received round of applause from the audiences. Wheelchairs along with school supplies such as uniforms and shoes were later distributed among the students. On the occasion, DC Kohat Roshan Mehsud expressed gratitude to MOL Pakistan for their support to people with disabilities residing in the company's areas of operation. He said that with the support of MOL Pakistan, the district administration is committed to improve the services of this important community centre. In his message, Ali Murtaza Abbas, MOL Group Regional Vice President for Middle East, Africa and Pakistan said that MOL Group is a responsible corporate entity that has always supported diversity and inclusivity efforts in Pakistan through our social welfare funding and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. — APP

# Off-season management stressed to save cotton crop from Gulabi Sundi

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: The agriculture experts have advised the cotton growers to adopt off-season management strategy as it is imperative to save cotton crops from the attack of Gulabi Sundi (pink bollworm). A spokesman for the agriculture department said on Monday, "60 countries are producing cotton in the world while Pakistan is at 4th position among them and Punjab province shares 70 percent of total cotton production in the country". Cotton is a precious cash crop which not only plays pivotal role in strengthening national economy but also helps in mitigating financial constraints

of the growers, he said, adding that some time the cotton growers had to face colossal loss due to attack of insects including Gulabi Sundi which was the worst enemy of cotton crop as there was no host plant for it other than cotton. He advised the cotton growers to adopt off-season management strategy to save their cotton crops from attack of Gulabi Sundi (pink bollworm). Elaborating, he said, "Pink bollworm goes in winter nap during November and December and its eggs remain present on cotton seeds, branches and dried leaves in farms and ginning factories. When they get sufficient temperature after winter, they again become active". Giving further de-

tails, he said that the farmers should cut the branches of cotton crops nearer to earth up to January 31 and keep them in the sunshine so that Gulabi Sundi, its larva and eggs could die. The remains of cotton crops at growers' farm and in ginning factories should be burnt besides using rotavator plough in the cotton field after completely harvesting the crop so that next crop could be saved from the attack of this pest, he said. The farmers can also use Chlorpyrifos pesticide in water and flood the field where eggs or larvae of Gulabi Sundi was found after harvesting cotton crop for complete eradication of (pink bollworm), he added.



ISLAMABAD: A religious delegation headed by Mr Ali Jaswal of Badshahi Mosque, Religious Scholars of Inter Faith Harmony accompanied by clerics from various schools of thoughts from Lahore called on the High Commissioner to express their condolences on the killing of Sri Lanka national in Sialkot. — DNA

## FCCI stresses promoting Punjab culture

FAISALABAD: The traditional and rural culture of Punjab must be preserved and promoted for the new generation to educate them about its centuries old historic and social background in addition to highlighting its beauty and economic benefits. This was stated by Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry while addressing a meeting of the FCCI Standing Committee on Agri-tourism and its Development. He welcomed the new cultural policy of Punjab government and said that we must explore avenues of progress and prosperity by sticking to our own cultural heritage. He also appreciated the role of FCCI standing committee and said that it had done an excellent job by organising different events of public interest.

Syed Khalid Mahmood, chairman FCCI standing committee, thanked President FCCI and said: "Lyalpur Jaggery Festival" will be held in Lyalpur Farmer Mall Gutwala on Dec 19. He said that jaggery production is a century old tradition of the area and "we must present it in a new and attractive manner to keep it alive". He said that students from different schools and colleges would be specially invited to attend it in addition to the families. — APP

# 'Enforced disappearances form of corruption'

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Athar Minallah on Monday expressed severe displeasure at the practice of enforced disappearances, saying "chief executives" of the country were ultimately answerable for such acts and at one point wondered if they should be charged under Article 6 of the Constitution (high treason). Justice Minallah gave these remarks during an exchange with Attorney General of Pakistan Khalid Jawed Khan while hearing a petition filed by the family of missing journalist Mudassar Naaru. In August 2018, Naaru went on vacation to the Kaghan valley, but has since been missing. He was last spotted near the Kaghan river. Initially, his family and friends thought that he may have accidentally fallen into the river and drowned, but his body was never found. Others began speculating that Naaru may have killed himself — a claim instantly rejected by the family, saying he had no signs of despair. His family subsequently tried to register a first information report against "unidentified persons". When the police refused to cooperate, they were forced to approach civil rights organisations but to no avail. A few months following his disappearance, one of his friends said he had spotted Naaru

at a detention centre for 'missing persons'. In a previous hearing of the case, it had been asserted that Naaru, who was also a social activist and human rights defender, had been receiving threats allegedly from officials of state institutions before he went missing. In the hearing today, the IHC chief justice called enforced disappearances a "stain on Pakistan" and the "worst form of corruption" as he noted that former chief executives nowadays take pride in the practice by writing about it in their books. "Had the state existed somewhere, why would the affected family need to approach the court, and why would we need to bring this to the prime minister's notice?" the chief justice questioned. The attorney general said that enforced disappearances would stop if a million people took to the streets, saying such a mass protest got the practice discontinued in Iran. The judge remarked that Naaru's family should have found justice before they approached the court. "We expected that the federal cabinet would do something after meeting children of the missing journalist." The attorney general said "our geography, unfortunately, warrants us to take into consideration national security as well." To this, Justice Minallah said the primary purpose of national security was the protection of citizens.

## Govt abolishes local bodies

DISTRICT REPORTER

GUJRAT: The Governor Punjab has issued a notification to remove the chairmen and members of all local government (local bodies) of Punjab from January 1, 2022.

### Govt enemy of the people

The Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf regime proved to be an enemy of the people. PML-N Gujranwala Division MNA Chaudhry Abid Raza Kotla while addressing a dinner function organized by former candidate Chairman UC Grand Chaudhry Fayyaz Mehr Kakrali said that the way the present rulers have solved the problems leaving it to the mercy of circumstances, there is no precedent for this. They have not been fulfilled nor has an effective plan been put in place for the sake of economic prosperity.

## Women role imperative in development

FAISALABAD: President Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FWCCI) Nighat Shahid has said that GDP growth rate can be increased up to seven per cent by providing opportunities to women in national development. She was addressing a workshop titled 'Digital & Social Media Marketing' held in collaboration with Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry and USAID here Monday. Sobia Aqeel, Ferhat Nisar, Dr Najma Afzal, Shama Ahmed from Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a large number of women participated in the workshop. She said that 52 percent of the population had a minor share in national development which we ignore

while talking about low exports, economic growth and weak economy. She said that promotion of entrepreneurship was among her top priorities. She said that thousands of women were passing graduation from universities every year and they should facilitate in business. She said that our women had a great potential and GDP growth rate could be increased by providing them training on most modern lines. She lauded the efforts of USAID and urged for arranging such types of workshops. The Resource Person USAID Usman Latif briefed the participants about digital and social media marketing. He also highlighted branding, global E-commerce, E-commerce business, marketing etc. — APP



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi and Rector NUST in a group photo with faculty members on the occasion of 33rd Convocation of Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC). — APP

# Transit trade with Afghanistan, CARs at stake, says PAJCCI

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A recent notification by the State Bank of Pakistan to withdraw cash on counter facility from Monday must be revoked with immediate effect, Zubair Motiwala, Chairman of the Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chambers and Commerce and Industry. Zubair Motiwala has sought immediate intervention of Honorable Prime Minister Imran Khan to instruct State Bank of Pakistan, Federal Board of Revenue and Ministry of Commerce to annul the said notification and continue to extend the facility till Afghan banking system becomes operational and Afghanistan gets access to its foreign reserves that is halted. He commented that these types of unplanned and inconsiderate policy changes have shaken the confidence of the business community on both sides who are striving to revive the economy in such turbulent times. This change has nullified all efforts made by PAJCCI in the last few months to stabilize the border trade not only with Afghanistan but with CARs. PAJCCI has tabled all concerns with government entities, has used its Afghan Chapter's good offices to pave the way for the Pakistani busi-

ness community in Afghanistan and CARs; evident from the recent visit of the Afghan ministerial delegation. It is a well-known fact that Afghanistan's banking system is currently halted, has no access to Dollars, is going through a socio-economic crisis and Pakistan enjoys a unique position in the region to be the most trustworthy neighbor who can create a sustainable dependency for economic uplift of Afghanistan and the region. At present traders on both sides are using barter, Pakistani traders using cash on counter facility on behalf of their Afghan counterparts by purchasing dollars and depositing in banks with complete documentation on behalf of Afghan traders for transit and bilateral trade. Despite investing the time and effort, Pakistani traders are subjected to harassment by FIA and other government entities, facing 5-6 hours of undue investigation. This is critical to note that same practice is being utilized for transacting with CIS countries due to lack of strong banking infrastructure and connectivity. Motiwala questioned the logic of carrying such a huge sum of cash by Afghan traders at the border inviting security issues, especially at this moment where presently Afghan banks are only allowing mini-

num cash withdrawals. Additionally access of foreign exchange within Afghanistan itself is a big question. Banks operating in Pakistan are also reluctant to support trade and facilitate payments to Afghanistan due to fear of sanctions and unclear policy of the government. PAJCCI is a joint chamber voicing concerns of businesses across the border in line with the vision of H.E. Prime Minister of Pakistan who is not only keen to support Afghanistan's economy from collapsing in these difficult circumstances but also intend to strengthen bilateral trade, transit and investment landscape with Afghanistan and further with CIS countries. However, this step goes in the opposite direction and will further reduce the economic ties with Afghanistan and Pakistan will lose major business with the only country with which it enjoys more than 80% trade surplus. Motiwala acknowledges pressures on Pakistan's economy and requirement of foreign exchange through economic measures, nevertheless, Afghanistan will not be able to survive this blow and sufferings will be mutually felt by border based businesses leading to halt of exports to Afghanistan. This may also lead to severe reciprocal backlash and will dilute the effect of confidence build-

ing measures employed by the Prime Minister. It is noteworthy that trade, diplomatic, security, peace and long-term relations of Pakistan with not only Afghanistan but with CARs will be negatively affected with such rampant measures. Instead of building regional capability and capacity; this type of policy changes areas leading already low trade to total halt thereby hurting people on both sides of the border and adding to the prevalent humanitarian crisis. On behalf of the business community, Zubair Motiwala vociferously requests the Prime Minister for his intervention and urges him to formulate stable, viable, innovative and profitable policy with long-term measures in the national interest by engaging a joint chamber like PAJCCI that is representing business sentiments across the border. PAJCCI has already shared several alternatives to tackle the situation at hand and urged SBP to deliberate the matters before making such announcements which can further aggravate the financial stability and Pakistan will lose exclusive trade and economic corridor of Afghanistan and CARs. He further requested the honorable Prime Minister for a meeting to discuss issues of urgent importance for their mutually beneficial resolution.





## Protecting water reserves

THE PM Imran Khan was presented with a report during a briefing in Islamabad which stated that the Indian dam project may cause droughts in Lahore and deplete the local groundwater reserves. India is clearly living up to its reputation of causing harm to Pakistan in any way possible and this time, it is through limiting water inflow into the country. Accordingly, our focus must now be directed towards completing the Ravi Riverfront Development Project to mitigate the damage that is being done. The briefing also mentioned how the Ravi Riverfront project will bring in perennial fresh water to the region to counter the effects of the Indian policy towards the distribution of water. The project will transform the river and channel it to have enough capacity to facilitate the entire developmental project as well as the people who will occupy the area in the future. Only if the government finishes this project quickly will it be able to save itself from India's consistent attempts to suppress Pakistan. The Indian PM himself was quoted to have said that the country was making immense progress in depriving Pakistan of fresh water. This cannot be tolerated by the federal government and all focus must be placed on mitigating the potential damage that could be done to Pakistan and Lahore. If this matter is not dealt with immediately, then it is not just the lack of water that will be a problem but also frequent floods as India will be able to increase water inflow whenever it feels like the time is right. We must have a mechanism to protect ourselves from any potential tampering.

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## Exploiting laws

THE government has issued new warnings that anyone who makes false allegations of blasphemy will be punished severely, especially in light of the new incidents resulting in an innocent Sri Lankan being burnt alive. More often than not, the sensitive law is now being used by the public to settle personal disputes relating to property and family and comfortably so unfortunately. This initiative was needed from the government to instill a sense of order when it comes to this situation as the offense, and the law, should not be taken lightly. In recent history, Serwar Shahkar was also robbed of property worth Rs.10 million in Faisalabad after being accused of blasphemy. Similarly, Saima—a pseudonym given to the victim to protect her identity—was sentenced to solitary confinement after being accused of blasphemy following a petty family dispute. There have been countless instances like this where individuals have been wrongly accused and subsequently, their lives have been altered forever for the worst. The Sialkot incident has also shown that the mob mentality will no longer be tolerated as public outcry reached new heights this time. This momentum must be maintained so that the government follows through on its promise of restoring law and order particularly when it comes to the blasphemy law. The creation of a task force is now being promised that will carry out investigations into each allegation and determine what series of events led to the allegation being made. If justified, then the course of justice will be followed; however, if the allegation is proven to be false then the accuser will be held responsible for misusing and exploiting the law for their personal vendetta. Wrongful accusations are a serious offense that cannot be taken lightly and the matter must be dealt with delicately moving forward.

## Balochistan: Fix the disconnect

Dr M Ali Hamza



The practice of requiring excessive paperwork and tedious procedures before official action can be considered or completed; red-tapsim, and bureaucratic...

DISCONNECTION is an element that incentivizes irrational opinions. It is a fertile land to breed prejudice. More the two parties stay away, more the polarization and bias rises. In case of Balochistan such disconnect is a fundamental reason of many misconceptions. Before commenting on the reasons of misconceptions and way forward, let us have a brief introduction of Balochistan. Balochistan earned its provincial status in 1970. Statistically speaking Balochistan is a huge land: 44% of total Pakistan, with a population of not more than 10.2 million that does not even equalize with the capital city of Punjab: Lahore, thus a sheer low population density is evident. Eight religions, ten ethnicities with 14 languages co-exist in Balochistan. The province is having 8 divisions, 34 districts, and 7 functional business chambers that contribute 3.5% to the total economy of the country. Manufacturing and agriculture & livestock shares 27%, whereas 46% economy of Balochistan depends on service sector. There are six major business sectors with high business potential; minerals, energy, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, urban development. It is unpretentious to ask the reasons why Balochistan besides having natural resources is not yet developed. The same voices that believe in democratic process say that Baloch are the

political minority in the country. There are 16 Member National Assemblies (MNAs) from entire Balochistan but there are 21 MNAs only from single city; Karachi. Thus raising voice in parliament goes unattended. Beside political reasons there are three more causes of snail pace development. First and the foremost is the rigid, unbending tribal egoism. It is not in favor of Sardars; head of tribe, to curb the dependence of his subjects, because power is the function of dependence, and who would like to let go the power. There is a sheer disconnect among influential. The sense of collective provincial development lacks evidently, and such tribal-centered mindset influences political upheaval and obstructs the exponential growth. It is genuine to ask that whether detribalization is a possibility? The simple answer is yes, and there are precedents already. After agricultural revolution when societies emerged, tribalism was the first form of social contract. In post-industrial world the social contract evolved and we started living as a part of the state. The mutation of social contract did not stop and today in knowledge-era we agree to live under the corporates. The incapability to evolve a social contract leads to nothing but backwardness. This does not mean that tribalism is a bad thing in total, but development of masses is critical. If you hold on to your tribe because you are in a privileged position and you just want to enjoy the fruits of this privilege, then it is bad. But if you use your power or privilege to benefit the masses, and at the same time enjoy the fruits of being privileged, it is more than good. So, is destabilization a possibility? In fact it is not a matter of choice now. How?, is indeed more adventures question. The practice of requiring excessive paperwork and tedious procedures before official action can be considered or completed; red-tapsim, and bureaucratic character of imperialism is a second most strong barrier to the progress. An obvious disconnect exists among the public institutions and civil bureaucracy in Balochistan. Attitude of blame shifting is very much alive. Though such temperament is not an exception considering the rest of the country, but Balochistan needs robust and upgraded systems and people running those systems. When you have to fill out tons of annoying forms just to get a business license, and require to feed many mouths unofficially, how do expect investors to happily join in. It is well established fact that red-tapsim hinders good governance and the economic progress. It leads to a culture of corruption and inefficiency. Balochistan does not afford the stifling of development and narrowness of application. There is

an urgent need to make rules and regulations simple with emphasis on reducing delays by the regulators. Who is going to do it, it is a stimulating question of another level. Ten years back the anti-state and separatist movements in Balochistan were on climax. It is no more a deniable information that BLF, BRA, UBA, LeB, BLUF, BSO etc. were hugely funded and provoked by India through pre-Taliban govt. The non-fenced borders with Afghanistan and Iran were used to export terrorism in Balochistan to sabotage CPEC related projects, and to instable Pakistan. Example of Kalbhoshan Yedev makes it a close and shut case. The climax of insurgency has been intelligently tackled down by the security forces. Beside kinetic efforts, plenty of non-kinetic efforts are underway for social development. One mile project by Pak army is of high value in this regard. The project is designed to provide all basic necessities; health, education, cleans water, food, economic opportunities etc. to all the residents living in a mile radius of commanding area. Ten recently developed army public schools, thirty one new colleges including 8 cadet and 3 residential colleges, six newly established universities or sub-campuses, are working to build the future. These non-kinetic efforts have brought the insurgency to a minimum level. Thus majority of the people are now pro to economic progress and stand against the militant rebels. Most of the land is safe for traveling and investment. Still it will take time for the benefits to reach to masses. All the stakeholders have to club together to expedite. Who will and who should take the lead?, this needs strong deliberations. Let past be the past but it is a high time to reevaluate our strategic plans in light of experiential learning. One does not necessarily have to demolish the existing structures to gain benefits. One can make use of the existing structures to enhance the future. Life is all about tomorrow. It is not about yesterday or today. Today you set goals for tomorrow and it is only tomorrow that you can enjoy the fruits of today's efforts. Most importantly "Rome was not built up in a day" so development takes time. We have to lay a brick today if we want to see a skyscraper thriving tomorrow. If we resolve minor issues the major issues will come to a resolution with time. Unfortunately, we, as a nations, society and individuals, try to resolve only major issues and try to resolve them immediately. This does not work. So we have to revisit our approach towards issues. — The writer is a columnist and broadcast journalist. He can be reached at [mali.hamza@yahoo.com](mailto:mali.hamza@yahoo.com)

## UAE company to build power plants in Iran

James Dorsey

Mr. Gargash expressed hope in his remarks to the security forum that Iran would respond to the "new environment" that the UAE and Saudi Arabia were trying to create. He suggested that Iran could signal its interest by helping achieve a ceasefire in the debilitating almost seven-year-long war in Yemen

INCREASINGLY, compliance with US sanctions against Iran could emerge as a litmus test of the United Arab Emirates' close ties to the United States. At the sharp edge of a potential rift between the allies is a reportedly recently concluded agreement by a private UAE company to build gas-fired thermal, solar, and wind power plants with a total capacity of 300 megawatts in Iran's hydrocarbon-rich province of Khuzestan. Established in 2020, AJ Holding, the Dubai and Fujairah-based company, could not be reached for comment. The company website claims, without further detail, that its portfolio includes some 600MW of wind and solar power projects in Eastern Europe, the Baltics, and the Far East. A picture attributed to Iranian energy news agency Bargh News appeared to show the company's Danish CEO, Allan Jespersen, exchanging documents with an Iranian official. The deal was signed as the United States warned that it would toughen enforcement of sanctions if multilateral talks in Vienna aimed at reviving the 2015 international agreement that curbed Iran's nuclear programme failed. A US delegation expects to visit the UAE, a major Iranian trading partner, this week to warn banks, petrochemical firms, and other companies that US authorities have evidence of their non-compliance with sanctions and that they could be penalized. As the Vienna talks took place, Anwar Gargash, UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed's diplomatic advisor, asserted that he did not "see further sanctions as a solution... There are already enough sanctions on Iran," he said. At the same time, Mr. Gargash described the United States as the UAE's "number one strategic ally." The United States has expressed support for the UAE's diplomatic outreach to Iran that began in July 2019 after the US failed to respond to attacks on oil vessels off the coast of the Emirates, for which the Islamic Republic was believed to be responsible. "We welcome any direct talks that lead to greater peace and stability in the region," said US deputy assistant secretary of state for Iran and Iraq Jennifer Gavito. In the highest-level contact in a decade, Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed, the UAE national security advisor and brother of strongman Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, met in Tehran last week with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. "I expect that Iran will make demands which would be very difficult for the UAE to accommodate. They would be asking... to use UAE financial institutions to trade with the world. The UAE needs to find out for itself if it wants to help the IRGC (the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps) evade and bypass US sanctions to protect itself against potential future attacks," said Iran scholar Ali Alfoneh in a recent webinar that was part of this year's UAE Security Forum hosted by the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington (AGSIW). Mr. Alfoneh was referring to fears that Iran could target the UAE and Saudi Arabia in a possible military confrontation with Israel and/or the United States should the Vienna nuclear talks collapse. The UAE's concerns were magnified following last year's estab-

lishment of diplomatic relations with Israel that Iran condemned. The United States and the UAE are negotiating final details for the US\$23 billion sale of F-35 fighter jets that would make the Gulf state the only Middle Eastern nation except for Israel to operate America's most advanced stealth warplane. Earlier this month, the UAE agreed during a visit by President Emmanuel Macron to a \$20 billion deal to purchase 80 French Rafale fighter planes. "Officials in Abu Dhabi and (especially) Dubai are fully aware of the damage that would be caused by their brand as (relatively) stable hubs in an otherwise insecure region should the pattern of attacks seen in 2019 continue and/or escalate," said Gulf scholar Kristian Coates Ulrichsen. Mr. Ulrichsen was referring to attacks on shipping in the UAE and Saudi oil facilities for which Iran was believed to have been responsible. The UAE's outreach to Iran amounts to a questionable bet that detente, against the backdrop of sustained social unrest driven by economic hardship, will induce the government in Tehran to modify its policies. "What we're hoping for is regime moderation... where we're dealing with Iran as another state that we can deal with viably, and they can benefit from. So, if they need leverage, they can get leverage, but it doesn't have to be through military aspects... That's the type of change that has not been explored a lot," Mohammed Baharoun, the head of the Dubai Public Policy Research Center, said in the AGSIW webinar that also included Mr. Alfoneh. Mr. Gargash expressed hope in his remarks to the security forum that Iran would respond to the "new environment" that the UAE and Saudi Arabia were trying to create. He suggested that Iran could signal its interest by helping achieve a ceasefire in the debilitating almost seven-year-long war in Yemen. The UAE bet is that Iran, like the Gulf, will accept that to survive in the 21st century, autocratic regimes need to deliver public goods and can no longer depend primarily on a repressive security state. For Iran to do so, it needs a lifting of the sanctions. Similarly, the bet further presumes that Iranian minority voices that argue that improved relations with Gulf states require a resolution of the nuclear issue and a lifting of US sanctions will resonate with policymakers in Tehran. Majidreza Hariri, head of the Iran-China Chamber of Commerce, recently cautioned that Iran was at a trade disadvantage as long as the sanctions were in place. "Our status is weakening daily ... because when we're absent from the international trade energy arena, our competitors in the Persian Gulf's southern region take our place, and when they sell more oil to China, they're obliged to buy more merchandise from it," Mr. Hariri said. Efsandiyar Batmanghelidji, who heads the London-based Bourse and Bazaar think tank and is a visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, noted that Iranian imports from the UAE projected at \$12 billion in 2021/2022 were set to exceed pre-2018 levels by March of next year, the end of the Iranian calendar year. The UAE is a major hub for re-export to Iran. Mr. Batmanghelidji suggested that Iran's increased spending power in the UAE was enhanced by oil sales to China in violation of the US sanctions that are mediated by the Emirates as well as Malaysia. The AJ Holding energy deal, if confirmed, would, at the very least, grant Iran a symbolic victory, a contract with a company from a country closely allied with the United States that would snub US sanctions. The UAE is unlikely to snub the sanctions that blatantly. More likely is that the contract is a further indication to Iran of what would be possible if it did its part to get US sanctions lifted. It's a message Tehran has long been aware of but has so far refused to heed. So, the question is whether anything has changed from Iran's perspective. There is no indication that something has. A podcast version of this story is available on Soundcloud, iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, TuneIn, Spreakey, Pocket Casts, Tumblir, Podbean, Audible, Patreon, and Castbox. — Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar and a Senior Fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute.

## No one knows Putin's endgame in Ukraine

Yasar Yakis



The White House and the Kremlin emphasized different issues from those talks. Washington fears Russian military activities may be...

ATUG-OF-WAR is in full swing between Russia and Ukraine on the one hand and the US and Russia on the other. Russia has massed up to 100,000 troops along the Ukrainian border, a large concentration that cannot easily be explained as a routine military movement. Russia may be doing this to dissuade NATO from putting pressure on it, or it may be planning a surprise attack changing several paradigms in Ukraine, or both. The conflict has several dimensions, but two are particularly important. One is NATO's unwavering commitment to make Ukraine a member of the alliance. After having raised this issue on countless occasions, it may not be easy for NATO to step back now. If Ukraine

joined NATO, it would considerably change the power balance in the Black Sea, which is the only sea in the world whose international status had been meticulously tied to strict rules by the Montreux Convention of 1936. The convention was negotiated on the assumption that the Soviet navy would remain indefinitely the largest in the Black Sea, and refers to "the strongest fleet in that sea at the date of the signature" of the convention. It is clear that the country referred to is the now defunct Soviet Union. Without opening a debate on whether Russia should be considered the successor of the entire Soviet Union, it is valid to ask how the criterion of the "strongest fleet" should be interpreted, and whether military installations in Crimea should be considered Russian or Ukrainian. If Ukraine joined NATO, the balance of naval force in the Black Sea would tilt toward the alliance. The second dimension of the current tension is the situation in the self-declared "people's republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk, which are inhabited predominantly by Russian-speaking Ukrainians. But the Ukrainian crisis has far reaching implications that go beyond Donetsk and Luhansk. This question was raised in the phone conversation last week between Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin. The White House and the Kremlin emphasized different issues from those talks. Washington fears Russian military activities may be a prelude to an invasion, so Biden restated his support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and said that if Russia invaded Ukraine, the US would respond with devastating economic measures. Russia, meanwhile, tried to secure a firm guarantee that Ukraine would be excluded from membership of NATO. NATO and Russia each accuse each other of being provocative, but the truth may be somewhere

in the middle and tough negotiations may be needed to meet in the middle ground. One of the NATO's success in its seven decades of existence is that its resolve has never been tested on the battlefield, so we do not know if its prestige would be bruised if it engaged in a full-blown military confrontation with Russia. It is worth remembering that the Soviet Union was dismembered partly as a result of NATO's efforts in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions meetings without firing a shot. Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014 was opposed by many countries, although none took military action to halt it. But if the same scenario were repeated in Donetsk and Luhansk, the reaction of the international community might be different. It might again not go as far as military action, but more countries could join economic sanctions against Russia. On the other hand, the UN Security Council cannot impose sanctions on Russia because of Moscow's veto, so they would not be binding for the international community, and many countries would be reluctant to resort to sanctions because they would not wish to provoke Russia unnecessarily. Russia's ultimate aim is not clear, but Ukraine has every reason to suspect the worst. NATO, in turn, complains of the unpredictability of what Russia may do in Ukraine. What the Soviet Union did in 1956 in Hungary, in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and more recently what the Russian Federation did in 2008 in two autonomous regions of Georgia—South Ossetia and Abkhazia and lastly in Crimea are not forgotten. So there is no shortage of examples of Russia's resorting to faits accomplis, and it has the means to do so again. The question, therefore, is whether a full conflagration can be avoided before the worst comes to the worst. — Courtesy: Arab News



## Briefs

## Xi, Putin to hold virtual summit Wednesday



## AGENCIES

BEIJING: Chinese leader Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin will hold a virtual summit this week to discuss bilateral relations and international issues, amid tensions between Moscow and the West over the massing of tens of thousands of Russian troops near its border with Ukraine. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin mentioned no specific topics and said details would be released after Wednesday's video meeting. "The two heads of state will give full review of China-Russia relations and cooperation in various fields this year," Wang said at a daily briefing on Monday. Wang added the leaders will also "make top-level designs for the development of bilateral relations next year." U.S. President Joe Biden warned Putin during a call last week that Russia would face painful sanctions that will do resounding economic harm if it again invaded Ukraine. Putin responded that "Russian troops are on their own territory, and they don't threaten anyone," according to his foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov.

## First person dies from Omicron in UK

## AGENCIES

LONDON: One patient has died in the United Kingdom after contracting the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday. "Sadly at least one patient has now been confirmed to have died with Omicron," Johnson told reporters. "So I think the idea that this is somehow a milder version of the virus - I think that's something we need to set on one side - and just recognise the sheer pace at which it accelerates through the population." Since the first Omicron cases were detected on Nov. 27 in the United Kingdom, Johnson has imposed tougher restrictions, and on Sunday he urged people to get booster shots to prevent the health service from being overwhelmed. Health Secretary Sajid Javid said the Omicron coronavirus variant was spreading at a "phenomenal rate" and now accounted for about 40% of infections in London.

## Israeli forces kill Palestinian in West Bank

## AGENCIES

RAMALLAH: Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian man during clashes that erupted in the West Bank city of Nablus early Monday, the official Palestinian news agency reported. Citing medics, Wafa news agency identified the slain man as Jamil Kayyal, 31, adding that he was hit by a gunshot in the head. Israeli media reported that paramilitary Border Police, aided by army soldiers, entered Nablus to arrest a wanted Palestinian and the clashes erupted when a group of Palestinians threw explosives toward the forces. There were no casualties among the Israeli troops, which arrested the wanted man. The Israeli military referred a request for comment to the Border Police, which did not respond immediately. Online videos appeared to show Kayyal lying on the ground, bleeding, after the forces left the neighborhood. The Israeli military often conducts arrest raids in the West Bank, even in territories that are under control of the Palestinian Authority, the internationally recognized entity that has limited autonomy in parts of the area.

## EU ministers debate ways to shield Ukraine from Russia

"We are convinced that Russia is actually preparing for the all-out war against Ukraine," Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said

## AGENCIES

BRUSSELS: European Union foreign ministers met Monday to discuss how to thwart the threat of a possible new Russian invasion of Ukraine and what measures to take should Moscow decide to send its troops across the border. U.S. intelligence officials say Russia has moved 70,000 troops toward Ukraine's border and is preparing for a possible invasion early next year. Moscow denies it has any plans to attack Ukraine and rejects Western concerns as part of a smear campaign. "We are on deter mode," to dissuade Russia, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. Borrell, who is chairing Monday's meeting, said that no decisions about sanctions against Russia would be taken but that the ministers would discuss what steps to take and when, in coordination with the United States and Britain. "In any case, we will send a clear signal that any aggression against Ukraine will have a high cost for Russia" and underline the 27-country bloc's support for Ukraine's

## Belarus could cut off gas to West: Lukashenko

MINSK: With relations between Belarus and the EU worsening amid the ongoing migration crisis, Minsk's long-time leader, Alexander Lukashenko, has warned he could cut off supplies of Russian gas to the West if new sanctions are imposed. "If the measures they're imposing or will impose in the future put us in an extreme position, and we have no other measures with which to respond, we will make use of even this very harsh measure," Lukashenko told Turkish television channel in an interview.

sovereignty and territorial integrity, Borrell told reporters in Brussels. Lithuania warned that Russia's troop movements of late were no mere menace. "We are convinced that Russia is actually preparing for the all-out war against Ukraine," Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said.

Earlier this month, officials from the EU, US, UK, and Canada announced a new package of sanctions against Belarus. It was the fifth round of measures since last year's presidential election, when Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1991, officially won a sixth term with 80% of the vote. Opposition activists in Belarus, along with Western nations, condemned the election as rigged in his favor, and tens of thousands took to the street in protest. — Agencies

If carried out, it would be "an unprecedented attack on a country that shows a Western direction. That means that the answer has to be unprecedented from the Western countries as well," Landsbergis said. But the EU's big powers, France and Germany, and other members of the 27-nation further from Russia's borders, do not share

the same assessment as the U.S., Poland and the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. They acknowledge Russia's troop movements but do not consider an attack imminent.

In 2015, France and Germany brokered a peace agreement that helped end large-scale hostilities in Ukraine's east, where Ukrainian forces have been fighting Russia-backed separatists since 2014, when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

Efforts to reach a political settlement to the separatist conflict, which has killed more than 14,000 people in seven years, have failed. Sporadic skirmishes continue along the tense line of contact. Russia so far refuses to meet France and Germany for more "Normandy format" peace talks.

The EU foreign ministers' meeting is a prelude to a busy week of diplomacy in Brussels focused on Ukraine. The leaders of EU nations meet Wednesday with their counterparts from Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. An EU summit on Thursday is expected to also focus on what actions might be necessary.



BAKU: Pakistan ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee visits Pakistan Cultural Center and met with students. He also discussed Pakistan's culture and relations between both countries. — DNA

## Covid curbs must commensurate human rights

The event was attended by about 400 representatives of more than 100 countries and international organizations



BEIJING: SCO Secretary General Vladimir Norov addressed the opening ceremony of the 3rd South-South 2021 Human Rights Forum organized by the press service of the State Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in Beijing, Dunyo reports.

The event was attended by about 400 representatives of more than 100 countries and international organizations. Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulated the forum. As the SCO Secretary General noted in his speech, the South-South Forum is an influential platform for discussing the current state of human rights and the new threats that affect it. One of them is undoubtedly the COVID-19 pandemic, which is testing the robustness of the mechanisms for the realization of fundamental human rights and freedoms, where quarantine restrictions must be balanced. "In accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and national law, member states reaffirm their commitment to the universality, indivisibility, interdependence of all human rights, as well as respect for fundamental human freedoms," he said. "Human rights issues are enshrined in the SCO Charter, the Declarations of the SCO Heads of State in Dushanbe (September 2021) and Moscow (November 2020)." — Agencies

## Blinken competes with top Russian official in Indonesia

## NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: Fresh from delivering a stern new warning to Russia over Ukraine, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Indonesia on Monday to find a top aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin already in Jakarta for security talks.

Just a day after joining his Group of Seven foreign minister colleagues in issuing the blunt demand for Russia to step back from a military escalation near the Ukrainian border, Blinken began a 48-hour visit to Indonesia with his plane parking in the shadow of that of Putin's national security adviser Nikolay Patrushev. Patrushev is considered the third most senior official in Russia's government. Shortly before Blinken landed, the Russian embassy in Jakarta announced Patrushev's visit, saying he would be in the Indonesian capital for the same two days as the top American diplomat. The timing means that Patrushev's meetings will coincide with a major speech Blinken plans to give Tuesday on the Biden administration's Indo-Pacific strategy.

There was no indication that the two men might meet in Jakarta. Nor was there any indication that either would acknowledge the other's presence in Indonesia, which is the headquarters of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and a key regional security player. Indonesia's foreign ministry downplayed the dueling visits. "It just so happened that their arrival time to Indonesia coincided," said ministry spokesperson Teuku Faizasyah.

Blinken met Monday afternoon with Indonesian President Joko Widodo before a full slate of events on Tuesday, including the speech. The Russian embassy said Patrushev's main interlocutor in Indonesia would be Law and Security Affairs Minister Mohammad Mahfud. Blinken traveled to Jakarta from a Group of Seven foreign ministers meeting in Liverpool, England, at which he and his counterparts told Russia on Sunday to "de-escalate" its military buildup near the Ukrainian border. The G-7 called on Russia to "de-escalate, pursue diplomatic channels, and abide by its international commitments on transparency of military activities," and praised Ukraine's "restraint." The ministers warned on a joint statement that any "use of force to change borders is strictly prohibited under international law. Russia should be in no doubt that further military aggression against Ukraine would have massive consequences and severe cost in response."



CAIRO: Pakistan embassy in Cairo arranged a briefing for Egyptian media, to apprise them about the 17th Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) being held in Islamabad on 19 December 2021. — DNA

## Armenia provocations undermine peace efforts

"We call on the Armenian side to refrain from attempts to obstruct the peacebuilding process, purposefully creating deliberate tensions in the region, and to fully implement the trilateral statements in accordance with the obligations assumed," the ministry stressed

## FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry has stated that Armenia's military provocation on the state border undermines regional peacebuilding efforts.

"At a time when Azerbaijan is taking steps towards the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia in a post-conflict period..., Armenia's continued provocative activities demonstrate the country's aggressive stance and undermine regional peacebuilding efforts," the Foreign Ministry said.

It added that on December 8, 2021, Azerbaijani serviceman Asif Aliyev was killed as a result of Armenia's continued provocations on the state border near Kalbajar region.

Moreover, on December 9-10, the Azerbaijani army thwarted another provocation committed by the Armenian military units intensively firing the Azerbaijani positions in Kalbajar from their combat positions located in Basarkechar region.

## Positive steps on trilateral cooperation: President Raisi

TEHRAN: Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi and Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov had a telephone conversation, according to the Iranian Presidential Administration. During the phone conversation, the sides touched on the positive steps which have been taken by Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan on gas cooperation and gas swaps. President Berdimuhamedov also highlighted the significance of the trilateral gas swap deal signed by Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran and called for the establishment of a joint cooperation commission between the three countries in this field. Berdimuhamedov reiterated Ashgabat's supports on the development of bilateral relations between Iran and Turkmenistan, as well as trade and health. On November 28, Iran, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan have signed a gas swap deal for up to 2 billion cubic metres (bcm) per year, Iranian state news agency IRNA reported on Sunday. Under the swap deal, Iran will receive gas from Turkmenistan and deliver an equivalent amount to Azerbaijan at the Astara border, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji told state TV. — News Desk

on the state border lies directly with Armenia's military and political leadership. "The accusation of Azerbaijan by the Arme-

nian Foreign Ministry of violating the sovereign territories of this country is completely unfounded. In order to prevent such false accusations, Azerbaijan supports the start of negotiations on the delimitation of the border between the two countries as soon as possible," the ministry said.

It was emphasized that Armenia must take real steps to normalize relations and end imitations to achieve peace and stability in the region. "We call on the Armenian side to refrain from attempts to obstruct the peacebuilding process, purposefully creating deliberate tensions in the region, and to fully implement the trilateral statements in accordance with the obligations assumed," the ministry stressed.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov said that Armenia usually makes provocations before the announced talks and that this is not accidental.

"This shows that the Armenian political leadership did not completely abandon its provocative policy," the minister added.

## Germany approves climate fund

## AGENCIES

BERLIN: The German government on Monday approved 60 billion euros (\$68 billion) in funding to be used for combating climate change and modernizing the country, a move that the new finance minister described as a "booster" for Europe's biggest economy.

The supplementary budget approved by Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Cabinet entails putting the money into a government fund that is being redesigned as a "climate and transformation fund." It will be used to finance projects aimed at fighting climate change and improving Germany's infrastructure. Finance Minister Christian Lindner said in a statement that "60 billion euros for investments in the future are a booster for the economy," which is still recovering from the coronavirus pandemic. Lindner said new borrowing this year will remain at the 240.2 billion euros the previous government already planned. "No new debt is being taken on ... we are only using so-far unused credit authorization" to run up the extra funding, he told reporters. Lindner and his pro-business Free Democrats, the smallest of three parties in the center-left Scholz's coalition, have ruled out tax hikes and insist on continuing to observe rules that limit new debt in the future. Those have been suspended during the pandemic.

## Military leader killed in Yemen's Marib

## NEWS DESK

SANAA: A senior military commander was killed in clashes between Yemeni government forces and Houthi rebels attacking the central city of Marib.

Major General Nasser al-Zubiani, who headed military operations of the government's armed forces, was killed on the front line in the Balqaq mountain range, south of the city of Marib, said two officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media. Al-Zubiani was inspecting government troops and allied tribal fighters trying to stave off the Houthi attack at the time.

Government forces had earlier advanced a few kilometres following fierce battles south of the city, one of the officials said.

The rebels stepped up attacks on Marib in recent weeks, sending waves of fighters to try and breach government defences. Hundreds died in the clashes, mostly rebels, the official added. A Saudi-led coalition, which is fighting on the side of the government forces, said it launched at least 35 air strikes on rebel positions around Marib over the weekend, killing at least 200 Houthis.

## Referendum on Donbass Ukraine's internal affair

## FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: A possible referendum on Donbass, which was not ruled out by Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, is Ukraine's domestic affair but it is interesting to know how the question put for voting could be worded, Russian presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov said on Monday. "A referendum on Donbass is Ukraine's domestic affair. Naturally, it is interesting to know how the question for this referendum could be worded," he said.

Commenting on the possibility of Russia and Ukraine discussing the problem of Donbass, Peskov recalled that Russia is not a party to the conflict in southeastern Ukraine. "It is Ukraine's internal conflict and it can be settled only by peaceful means, through direct contacts between official Kiev and representatives of the self-proclaimed republics," he stressed.

In an interview with the 1+1 television channel on Friday, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky said he did not rule out a referendum "on Donbass in general."

**Briefs**

**FO condemns Indian minister's remarks**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday strongly condemns the "unwarranted, gratuitous and provocative" comments by Indian defence minister, questioning established historical facts, leveling unfounded allegations in the context of terrorism, and hurling threats against Pakistan.

"It is the BJP's special forte to misrepresent history, resort to revisionism and delusional thinking, and indulge in false bravado. Such discourse is particularly evident whenever elections in key states in India are approaching," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in response to Indian minister's statement at an event he made in New Delhi on Sunday.

He said the timing of the Indian defence minister's provocative rhetoric was, therefore, not surprising, as the BJP-RSS combine was desperate to win elections in Uttar Pradesh and other states, typically inciting hyper nationalism and seeking to advance the extremist 'Hindutva' agenda.

The spokesperson said the Indian defence minister's chest-thumping and war-mongering is nothing but further evidence of India's irresponsible behavior and its relentless belligerence towards Pakistan.

He said as regards the issue of terrorism, the international community was well aware of how the Hinduva-inspired regime in India was carrying out state-terrorism against the Kashmiris in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. — **APP**

**Denmark pushes booster dose**

**NEWS DESK**

COPENHAGEN: Danish health authorities said Monday a third dose of the Covid-19 vaccine would be offered sooner to everyone over 40 to curb the spread of the Omicron variant.

"Due to the new and more contagious Omicron variant the Danish Health Authority has decided to push the third jab for everyone aged 40 and above, so they get the vaccine four and half months after the second jab," the health authority said in a statement.

By reducing the interval of the doses, "we will be able to enter the winter with better protection for those at increased risk of severe disease and increased immunity in the population," director Soren Brostrom said.

A third dose is "safe and effective" as soon as three months after the initial vaccine course, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) said last week.

The UK announced on Sunday evening that it would accelerate the rollout of booster doses, opening them up to all over-18s before next year.



ISLAMABAD: Zahid Latif Khan Chairman Asian Institute of Eco Civilisation hosted dinner for Pakistan's new Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ameer Khurram Rathore. Seen in the picture are Editor Islamabad POST Ansar Bhatti, Khurshid Barlas, Usman Shaukat, Nadeem Rauf, Sohail Altaf, Ambassador Khurram, M. Attiq, Zahid Latif Khan, Aftab Chaudhry, Nasir Mirza and others. The dinner was hosted at the residence of Aftab Chaudhry. — **DNA**

**Pak-Indonesia negotiate on trade, goods agreement: Envoy**  
Pakistan-Indonesia economic cooperation could open new avenues for cooperation between South Asian and Association of East Asian Nations (ASEANs) countries, Ambassador Tugio said

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan, Adam Mulawarman Tugio on Monday said that Pakistan and Indonesia trade and goods agreement is being negotiated and was likely to be implemented soon for increased trade activities. Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) already exists between the two countries and the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is also being reviewed, the Ambassador Adam said this while addressing the consultative seminar for the promotion of bilateral tourism with local tourist agents and journalists here. The Indonesian envoy said that this is the century of Asian region in which the next South-east Asia, Pacific Asia, Central Asia and China will play an im-

portant role in the global economy and trade. Pakistan-Indonesia economic cooperation could open new avenues for cooperation between South Asian and Association of East Asian Nations (ASEANs) countries, he said.

The Ambassador said that emerging economies like Pakistan could, on the one hand, link global trade with Central Asian countries, and on the other hand, its geographical link with western China could be beneficial to Indonesia and ASEAN countries.

He said that Pakistan and Indonesia have historical religious, political, diplomatic and economic ties, which can be used to further strengthen economic and trade ties between the two countries.

Indonesia emerged as the only economy of US\$ 1 trillion in ASEAN and Islamic world and both of the countries have great potential for cooperation in all fields includ-



ing tourism, trade, e-commerce and defense.

He said that cooperation in the tourism sector on both sides could introduce new dimensions in the promotion of mutual tourism. Ambassador said the two countries could lay a new foundation for relations by promoting cooperation in the tourism and services sector.

Tugio said that Pakistan and Indonesia are among the most beautiful countries in the world and with

the promotion of tourism, mutual economic activities would reach its peak. He said that the huge market of ASEAN countries with a population of 650 million has huge economic opportunities for Pakistan, which are being discussed in both the countries.

He said that Indonesia is a diverse society, where all religions and cultures are respected. There are many Buddhist places of worship in Pakistan too.

In addition, Pakistan, an emerging country in the field of information, local youth have a lot of expertise in this field.

With online connections and boost in Information Technology (IT), young people from both the countries benefit from each other's experiences and skills to promote economic and cultural integration.

Adam Mulawarman Tugio said that global retail e-commerce sales in 2020 stood at US\$ 4.28

trillion, which is expected to reach US\$ 5.4 trillion by 2022.

The Ambassador said that Pakistan and Indonesia are countries with large youth populations that can make their mark in the global e-commerce trade and create vast employment opportunities in both the countries.

He said Indonesia has set a US\$50 billion e-commerce trade target by 2025 to connect with the biggest sector of global trade.

Ambassador said that Pakistan and Indonesia can be linked with e-commerce trade to increase bilateral trade as well as connect both sides' youth in connection of business and trade. Responding to a question about Indonesia's rapid economic growth and economic reforms, he said Indonesia was the first to work on Ease of Doing Business (EODB) and business facilitation, which encouraged foreign investors.

**Taliban seek ties with US, other ex-foes**

**AGENCIES**

KABUL: Afghanistan's new Taliban rulers are committed in principle to education and jobs for girls and women, a marked departure from their previous time in power, and seek the world's "mercy and compassion" to help millions of Afghans in desperate need, a top Taliban leader said in a rare interview.

Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi also told The Associated Press that the Taliban government wants good relations with all countries and has no issue with the United States. He urged Washington and other nations to release upward of \$10 billion in funds that were frozen when the Taliban took power Aug. 15, following a rapid military sweep across Afghanistan and the sudden, secret flight of U.S.-backed President Ashraf Ghani.

"Sanctions against Afghanistan would not have any benefit," Muttaqi said Sunday, speaking in his native Pashto during the interview in the sprawling pale brick Foreign Ministry building



in the heart of the Afghan capital of Kabul. "Making Afghanistan unstable or having a weak Afghan government is not in the interest of anyone," said Muttaqi, whose aides include employees of the previous government as well as those recruited from the ranks of the Taliban.

Muttaqi acknowledged the world's outrage at the Taliban-imposed limitations on girls' education and on women in the work force. In many parts of Afghanistan, female school students between the grades of seven and 12 have not been permitted to go to school since the Taliban took over, and many female civil servants have been told to stay home. Taliban officials

have said they need time to create gender-segregated arrangements in schools and work places that meet their severe interpretation of Islam.

When they first ruled from 1996-2001, the Taliban shunned the world by barring girls and women from schools and jobs, banning most entertainment and sports and occasionally carrying out executions in front of large crowds in sports stadiums.

But Muttaqi said the Taliban have changed since they last ruled.

"We have made progress in administration and in politics ... in interaction with the nation and the world. With each passing day we will gain more experience and make more progress," he said.

Muttaqi said that under the new Taliban government, girls are going to school through to Grade 12 in 10 of the country's 34 provinces, private schools and universities are operating unhindered and 100% of women who had previously worked in the health sector are back on the job. "This shows that we are committed in principle to women participation," he said.

**British MP seeks revision of UK Govt's misleading tweet**

ISLAMABAD: Co-chair of All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Pakistan Yasmin Qureshi MP has asked the British government to amend its misleading tweet which had wrongly likened the sanctions on Myanmar military and Pakistani individual for their human rights violations.

On International Human Rights Day (December 10, 2021), the UK announced new sanctions against the Myanmar military for their "continued suppression of the civilian population and for serious human rights violations."

The UK had also sanctioned a former commander in the terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, who helped orchestrate a 2017 bombing in Pakistan.

However, the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) tweeted the subject with a headline "New UK sanctions to target human rights violations and abuses in Myanmar and Pakistan."

In a letter to UK's Minister of State for Asia at FCDO Amanda Milling, Yasmin Qureshi MP, though welcomed the sanctions imposed on Furqan Bangalzai who helped orchestrate a bombing in Pakistan.

"I am however disappointed to see that the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office tweeted: "New UK Sanctions to target Human Rights violations and abuses in Myanmar and Pakistan."

She explained that the extent of sanctions imposed on Myanmar could not in any way be likened to those imposed on an individual member of a terrorist organisation that happened to be based in Pakistan. — **DNA**

In this period, the company completed several key test flight missions, and indexes related to aircraft delivery have broken record highs, the statement said.

Out of nine photos attached to the statement, seven depict test flights of the J-20, one shows a test flight of the J-10, and one shows the work of staff members.

This could be an indication that the production of the J-20 is being ramped up. Fu Qianshao, a Chinese military aviation expert, told the Global Times. — **APP**

**Korea pledges US\$ 2.5m for UNICEF, WFP and WHO**

Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo and the Representatives of UNICEF, WHO, and WFP, Ms. Aida Girma-Melaku, Dr Palitha Mahipala, and Mr. Chris Kaye, respectively

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The Government of the Republic of Korea in its commitment to alleviate the suffering of the Afghan Refugees has cumulatively donated 2.5 million USD to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

A signing ceremony was held here Monday at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Islamabad. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo and



the Representatives of UNICEF, WHO, and WFP. Ms. Aida Girma-Melaku, Dr Palitha Mahipala, and Mr. Chris Kaye, respectively.

The Country Representatives thanked the Ambassador and the Government of Korea for their continued support to the United Nations and to plight of the Afghan Refugees.

They further added that this donation will be utilized to support the frontline healthcare centers and hospitals, provide lifesaving food assistance and ensure continued access to COVID-19 vaccines for the Afghan refugees located in Refugee villages, and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

**Shamim affidavit: IHC defers indictment**

**KHAYAM ABBASI**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has deferred forming charges against former Gilgit-Baltistan judge Rana Shamim till Dec 20.

Justice (ret'd) Shamim had claimed in the affidavit, recorded allegedly on November 10, that three years ago the then Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Nisar ordered the lower judiciary to delay the release of Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz until after the 2018 general elections. The contents of the alleged affidavit were published by The News. IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah took notice of the report by The News and initiated contempt of court proceedings on November 16.

On Monday, the court resumed hearing of the contempt case related to the publication of an affidavit in which Rana Shamim accused ex-chief justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar of denying bail to PML-N leaders. Justice Athar Minallah has, once again, instructed the former GB judge to present the original copy of the affidavit in court. At the previous hearing, Rana Shamim was told to submit the original document or face charges.

During the proceeding on Monday, senior journalist Ansar Abbasi, Jang Group editor Amer Ghouri, and Attorney General Khalid Jawed were present.

**China ramps up J-20 production: Global Times**

BEIJING: The maker of the J-20, China's most advanced stealth fighter jet, revealed that it recently broke records in terms of aircraft delivery due to high demand, with experts saying that the J-20 has entered a mass production phase after it solved the last missing piece of the puzzle, the domestically developed WS-10 engine.

Since the start of the fourth quarter, Chengdu Aircraft Industrial Group Co Ltd under the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China has been facing challenging research and development, production and delivery missions, as multiple users were waiting to receive delivery of many aircraft, the company said in a statement released over the weekend on its social media account, Global Times reported.

In this period, the company completed several key test flight missions, and indexes related to aircraft delivery have broken record highs, the statement said.

Out of nine photos attached to the statement, seven depict test flights of the J-20, one shows a test flight of the J-10, and one shows the work of staff members.

This could be an indication that the production of the J-20 is being ramped up. Fu Qianshao, a Chinese military aviation expert, told the Global Times. — **APP**

**Two arrested after fatal ship collision in Sweden**

STOCKHOLM: Sweden on Monday arrested two people after a fatal early morning collision between a Danish and British ship off the southern Swedish coast, prosecutors said.

Sweden's Prosecution Service said in a statement that an investigation into "aggravated drunkenness at sea," "gross negligence in sea traffic," and "gross causing of death by negligence" had been opened.

One of those arrested was a British citizen born in 1991 and the other a Croatian citizen born in 1965, the Prosecution Service said.

Nine boats and a rescue helicopter scoured for two missing crewmembers for hours following the early morning collision in the waters between the Swedish city of Ystad and the Danish island of Bornholm, the media spokesman at the Swedish Maritime Administration told AFP. "One of the ships has capsized and is upside down," Carl-Johan Linde said. — **Agencies**