

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 PDM that 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.

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 Margalla 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.

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 Bazdar apprised the Prime Minister about the new local government system of the province.

COAS visits Karachi Corps - Hails role of

Shujaat Hamza

Sindh police

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 Head-

quarters Karachi, he was received by Corps Commander Lieutenant General Muhammad Saeed.

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 Mus-League-Nawaz lim

(PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif said on Monday that the inflation being witnessed today was unprec- KARACHI: PPP Chairedented. Speaking to the media outside man Bilawal Bhutan accountability court (AC) in Lahore, he to-Zardari on Monday



NAZIR SIYAL



Faisal new PCB Chief Executive

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board today

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.

> Inside. President urges students to play role for development – Page 02

EU to provide 150m for clean energy, NBS: Amin - Page 03

18th Frontiers of Information Technology inaugurated - Page 04

> UAE company to build power plants in Iran - Page 05

Int'l moot on China-Pakistan cooperation held - Page 06

EU ministers debate ways to shield Ukraine from Russia – Page 07

Pak-Indonesia negotiate on trade, goods agreement: Envoy - Page 08 **Continued on Page 06**

Continued on Page 06

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

that Bennet's visit would "advance **Continued on Page 06**

for "stability in the Middle East" and

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.

Continued on Page 06

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 the National Action Plan (NEAP) 2021-2023, the Polio Porgramme'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 signed and exchanged between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNICEF.

Continued on Page 06

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.

Continued on Page 06

defended the Government Local (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.

Continued on Page 06



announced that, following a robust

02

NATIONAL

Islamabad **POST** Tuesday, December 14, 2021

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 Aiwan-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

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

completion of the China Pakistan

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 provid-

ing 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.



ISLAMABAD: A religious delegation headed by Mr Ali Jaswal of Badshahi Mosque, Religious Scholars of Inter Faith Harmony accompanied by clergies 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: "Lyallpur Jaggery Festival" will be held in Lyallpur 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 dif-

'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.

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**

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

di (pink bollworm).

nap during November and

remain present on cotton

factories. When they get

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 strength-

tails, he said that the farmof the growers, he said, adding that some time the ers should cut the branches cotton growers had to face of cotton crops nearer to colossal loss due to attack earth up to January 31 and of insects including Gulabi keep them in the sunshine Sundi which was the worst so that Gulabi Sundi, its larenemy of cotton crop as va and eggs could die. The remains of cotton there was no host plant for it other than cotton.

crops at growers' farm and in ginning factories should He advised the cotton growers to adopt off-seabe burnt besides using rota-vater plough in the cotson management strategy to save their cotton crops ton field after completely from attack of Gulabi Sunharvesting the crop so that next crop could be Elaborating, he said, "Pink saved from the attack of bollworm goes in winter this pest, he said.

The farmers can also use Chlorpyrifos pesticide in December and its eggs water and flood the field seeds, branches and dried where eggs or larvae of leafs in farms and ginning Gulabi Sundi was found after harvesting cotton

Govt abolishes local bodies

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

ening national economy sufficient temperature after but also helps in mitigating financial constraints

winter, they again become active". Giving further de-

crop for complete eradication of (pink bollworm), he added.

would be specially invited to attend it in addition to the families. - APP

ferent schools and colleges



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

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-eal development. She was addressing a Insaf regime proved to workshop titled 'Digital & be an enemy of the peo-Social Media Marketing' ple. PML-N Gujranwala held in collaboration with Division MNA Chaudhry Abid Raza Kotla while Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Inaddressing a dinner funcdustry and USAID here tion organized by former candidate Chairman UC Monday. Grand Chaudhry Fayyaz Sobia Aqeel, Ferhat Nisar, Mehr Kakrali said that Dr Najma Afzal, Shama the way the present rulers Ahmed from Faisalabad Women Chamber of Comhave solved the problems merce and Industry and leaving it to the mercy of circumstances, there is no a large number of women participated in the workprecedent for this.

They have not been fulshop. She said that 52 percent of filled nor has an effective the population had a minor plan been put in place for share in national develthe sake of economic prosopment which we ignore perity.

development

FAISALABAD: President

Faisalabad Women Cham-

ber of Commerce and In-

dustry (FWCCI) Nighat

Shahid has said that GDP

growth rate can be in-

creased up to seven per

cent by providing opportu-

nities to women in nation-

Women role

imperative in

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 US-AID Usman Latif briefed the participants about digital and social media marketing.

He also highlighted branding, global E-commerce, E-commerce business. marketing etc. – 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 minimum 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 building measures employed by the Prime Minister. It is noteworthy that trade, diplomatic, security, peace and longterm 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 PAJC-CI 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.

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SERVICES



EU to provide 150m for clean energy, NBS: Amin

Namaz Timings

Fajr 05:35 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 03:22 pm
Maghrib 05:00 pm
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Emergency

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The SAPM underlined that the global trust had increased on the country due to its commitment and practical implementation of nature through green solutions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam on Monday said the European Union had agreed to provide 150 million to Pakistan for assisting its clean energy transition and nature based solutions for ecosystem restoration. Addressing the panel discussion as chief guest on COP-26 at Ecosystem Restoration jointly organized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) as part of the events held

under the World Environ-

Pakistan, the SAPM said the mega grant was announced by the EU minister at the largest global moot on climate change held ear-

lier in Glasgow, UK. Amin said: "The world is merely talking on conserving the biodiversity and natural environ through nature based solutions (NBSs). Pakistan is the only country that has implemented NBSs ahead of the entire world." SAPM underlined The that the global trust had increased on the country due to its commitment and practical implementation of nature through green solutions. "The prevailing decade is critical for ecosystem restoration as all natural

ment Day 2021 hosted by habitats over the world are facing existential threats due to global warming and climate change," he added. "Pakistan has been declared Nature Champion

along with Congo and Costa Rica that are thickly forested countries due to the successful Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Plantation (TBTTP) implementation on ground," he added. Speaking on the occa-

sion, German Ambassador Bernhard Schlagheck said Pakistan was among the countries most impacted due to climate change and it also faced massive deforestation since 2005. He said: "Germany assist-

ed the third party evaluation of TBTTP in collaboration with the IUCN as per the request of the government of Pakistan.' Countries like Pakistan, he said needed to focus on nature based solutions whereas the ecosystem restoration initiatives of Pakistan like TBTTP were commendable. "Germany is collaborating with Pakistan in many other nature restoration green initia-

tives," he added. Canadian High Commissioner, Wendy Gilmour said the cataclysmic natural disasters in North America had incurred heavy economic losses to one of the most developed economies. However, countries like Pakistan need to focus on innovative technologies and improved

power supply systems to ed to be around a dozen as ensure successful shift towards green energy.

eight leopards were traced

through 20 camera traps,"

"The trails nature has fully

reclaimed itself due to no

human intervention during

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Deputy Head of Mission

Rashid AbdurRehman Al-Ali

said there was need to fix re-

sponsibility on the developed

countries to support develop-

ing countries to ensure cli-

mate change mitigation. He

suggested that the academia

and civil society needed to

focus on tangible solutions

based on innovation and

cutting edge technology to

reduce environmental deg-

radation and shift towards

renewable energy.

the lockdowns," she said.

she informed.

"Canada along with Germany has increased its green climate fund for developing countries like Pakistan to assist nature based solution for ecosystem restoration." she highlighted.

Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) Chairperson Rina Saeed Khan said the Margalla Hills National Park had undergone massive encroachments of commercial, residential and institutional nature.

"The nature has massively revived during the lockdowns due to Covid-19 pandemic. The Trail-6 became home to common leopards that are estimat-

Fertilizer industry's problems to be solved

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin held a meeting with a delegation of Fertilizer Industry at Finance Division Monday.

Federal Minister for Industries and Production Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar, Member FBR and senior officers attended the meeting. The delegation thanked the Adviser for providing a coordination platform to the Fertilizer Industry for resolution of industry's issues and highlighted the positive role of Government in keeping the prices of urea in Pakistan at low level as compared to the international market for the benefit of farmers. During the meeting, the delegation further apprised the Adviser about various issues the industry and sought help from the Government to address these issues. The Adviser assured the delegation that the Fertilizer industry's problems will be resolved at top priority as Government appreciates the critical role of industry in the economic progress of the country. The Adviser, however, emphasized that the industry should continue to play its due role in providing the Urea at the most reasonable prices to the framers.

Starlink officials visit PTA

ISLAMABAD: US-based global satellite broadband provider Starlink's Director of the Middle East and Asia, Ryan Goodnight, and Head of Global Site Acquisition Ben Macwilliam Monday visited Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Headquarters.

The visiting guests met with Chairman PTA, Maj General Amir Azeem Bajwa (R)



ISLAMABAD: An attractive view of flowers flourishing and blooming at roadside greenbelt in Federal Capital. - APP

FBR rebuts disinformation

33rd PNEC convocation ceremony held

ISLAMABAD: The 33rd Convocation Ceremony of Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) was held here on Monday where Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The Naval Chief conferred 317 graduates with PhD, Masters and Bachelor's degrees whereas 34 medals were also awarded to students in various academic disciplines for outstanding performances, said a Pakistan Navy news release. While addressing the audience, Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted Pakistan Navy's commitment to train its officers at par with regional and international navies.

The Naval Chief extended his heartiest felicitations to the graduating students for earning honours and distinctions for their outstanding performance in academics.

In his welcome address, Commandant PNEC Commodore Kamran Ahmed highlighted that PNEC was imparting quality education in the field of engineering and its graduates were spread across the globe in top organizations of the world. He also apprised the audience that team of PNEC participated in five international and four national competitions and won laurels for Pakistan. - APP

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Complaints

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation......9209224 Potohar Town......9209224 RawalTown.....5773343

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....0331-5022125

about POS integration drive

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has strongly rebutted disinformation being spread on the social media against the proposed Service Charge of Rs.1 to be collected on all invoices issued by Tier-1 Retailers integrated with FBR's electronic system of real-time reporting of sales. It is being insinuated as if the rate of the Service Charge is 1 percent instead of Rupee 1 per invoice only. This baseless propaganda by some vested interests is thoroughly malicious in intent and definitely suspicious in content. The nominal Service Charge @ Re.1 per invoice of whatever denomination, would be collected under Section 76 of the Sales Tax Act, 1990. This petty amount will be utilized to ensure integration of all Tier-1 Retailers, promote ongoing publicity campaign, and finance a prize scheme for all customers who duly verify their invoices to determine the validity and genuineness of the invoices issued by the integrated Tier-1 Retailers, FBR further clarified. It is pertinent to mention that FBR has already launched an aggressive awareness campaign on all the mainstream Social, Electronic & Print Media to educate general public on a prize scheme ballot worth Rs.53 Million to be held every month in FBR Headquarters, Islamabad. This first computer ballot on POS Prize Scheme will be held on January 15, 2022, announcing 1007 lucky winners. Hence, the above unfounded campaign appears to have been initiated by those vested interests who tend to oppose POS integration. They continue to collect Sales Tax from the general public but are always reluctant to deposit the same in the Government Treasury. FBR has reaffirmed its unflinching resolve to continue integrating Tier-1 Retailers across the country with full vigor and an indomitable spirit. - DNA

Anti-Polio drive kicks off

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Muhammad Ali on Monday inaugurated the five-day anti-polio drive by administering drops to children under five years of age here at Basic Health Unit, Kotha Kalan, Morgah.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC directed officials concerned to cover refusal and non-attended children on the same day. He said no polio case had been detected in the district for a decade due to frequent drives launched by the district administration, but there was a need to remain attentive.

The DC informed that over 718,000 children below five years of age would be covered during the drive while



the security of polio workers must be ensured. Sharing details of the arrangement for the campaign, Chief Executive Officer of District Health Authority Dr Faiza Kanwal said 2964 polio teams, 663 area in-charges and 240 medical officers were participating in the campaign, with observing COVID-19 health guidelines. Dr Faiza said the drive was also being utilized for creating awareness about COVID-19 and anti-dengue preventive measures. "307 fixed centres have been set up while children coming from outside are being vaccinated at 129 transit points of the district," she added. The CEO informed that over 240,000 children had been immunized on the first day of the campaign.

Meanwhile, according to a Police spokesman, around 1200 cops had been deployed in Rawalpindi district to ensure security of anti-polio staff performing duties during the campaign. He added that a control room has also been set up to monitor the security arrangements.

ICCI slams unprecedented hike in electricity tariff

He said that electricity is a major input for many industries and making addition of Rs.4.74 per unit in the electricity bills for collection in December would further increase production cost

STAFF REPORT

den and attain sustainable economic growth, however, ISLAMABAD: Shakeel Muthe repeated hikes in power nir, President, Islamabad tariffs, POL products and Chamber of Commerce & increase in policy interest Industry said that the govrate have contributed to ernment has made an inmake significant increase crease of Rs.4.74 per unit in in the cost of doing busithe tariff of electricity con-

get rid of foreign debt bur-

sumed in October as fuel cost adjustment, which is a the business harsh decision as it would community put additional financial to compete in burden of Rs.60 billion on the internapower consumers, further tional market escalate the cost of producfor exports. tion and push up inflation He said that leading to harmful conseelectricity is a quences on the economy. major input for Said that Pakistan needed many industries to boost exports in order to and making addition of Rs.4.74 per unit in the electricity bills for collection in December would further increase production cost. Shakeel Munir urged that the government should reduce its dependence on thermal power and focus on

renewable energy sources including hydro, solar and wind to produce cheap energy that

bring

ports

inflation and

make our ex-

more

competitive in the international markets.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI said that the government was assuring to promote the ease of doing business to facilitate the growth of private sector, however, its measures like repeated hike in electricity & gas tariffs and oil prices are creating more difficulties for SMEs and the would industrial sector. down They stressed that the government should reconsider production cost, reduce

its approach and take measures to reduce the cost of doing business that would enable the business activities and exports to flourish and the economy would achieve stable growth.

One more die of Covid in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI: One more patient had died with fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, taking the total death toll to 1606 in Rawalpindi district. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Monday, as many as 1606 people have died in the district since the emergence of the deadly virus, out of which 1222 Rawalpindi's residents and 384 from other districts. The report updated that four more patients were tested positive during last 24 hours, raising the count of confirmed cases to 39.424 in the district included 36.395 from Rawalpindi and 3029 from outside districts. Among the new cases, three of the patients have arrived from Taxila and one from Rawal town. "Presently, 19 confirmed patients were admitted to three city facilities, counting eight in Institute of Urology, seven in Fauji foundation hospital, and four in Benazir Bhutto". - APP

and Executive Director Frequency Allocation Board, said a news release issued here. During the meeting, the two sides discussed matters pertaining to the provision of satellite broadband connectivity in Pakistan and Starlink's future plans for connecting Pakistan to their

global network. The chairman PTA apprised Starlink representatives about PM's vision of Digital Pakistan and prospects in Pakistan's evolving market for quality broadband internet. - APP



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ness due to which it is becoming difficult for



04

TWIN CITIES



Sajid Kayani appointed as new CPO Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab government on Monday appointed DIG Sajid Kayani as City Police Officer Rawalpindi.

According to a notification, Sajid Kayani was holding the posts of DIG Operations Punjab and Punjab Police Information Officer (PPIO). Sajid Kayani has extensive experience in performing professional duties in the most important positions. He is one of the most professional, honest and experienced officer in Police department. Former CPO Athar Ismail Amjad, who was recently promoted to the next grade, was ordered to report to the CPO Office, Lahore. - APP

Secy directs to achieve target of RED campaign

RAWALPINDI: Secretary Livestock, Punjab Naveed Haider Sherazi has directed Rawalpindi" s district administration officers to achieve a 100 per cent target of the ongoing 2nd phase of the 'Red' (Reach Every Door)Corona Vaccination Campaign.

According to a handout issued here Monday, the secretary, while presiding over a meeting to review the performance of the RED drive, said the government was striving hard to ensure vaccination of maximum citizens to prevent coronavirus spread. Sherazi said that the govt had devised a comprehensive plan to achieve the goals of the 2nd phase of the 'Red' Campaign started from December 1, adding the vaccine was mandatory for those above 12 years of age and safe for pregnant and other diseases affecting people. He said that during the 1st drive, which continued from October 25 to November 12, around 13 million had been vaccinated across the province.

Secretary noted that vaccination centres had been

Briefs 18th Frontiers of Information **Technology inaugurated**

Speakers from France, Netherlands, China, Ireland, Portugal, UK, USA and Pakistan are participating in the two-day conference organized by COMSATS University Islamabad in COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Shibli Faraz inaugurated the COMSATS University Islamabad's 18th International Conference on Frontiers of Information Technology on Monday. Speakers from France, Netherlands, China, Ireland, Portugal, UK, USA and Pakistan are participating in the two-day conference organized by COMSATS University Islamabad in COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad.

Shibli Faraz, Federal Minister for Science & Technology,also the Chief Guest of the opening ceremonylauded the efforts of FIT organizers for providing an esteemed platform to researchers, scientists, and industry practitioners from across the world to present their cutting-edge research as well as sharing latest industry insights.

Moreover, he said that no country has the capacity to single handedly tackle the challenges of the global commons like environmental issues, sustainable renewable



energy, diseases and pandemics, explosive population growth and food scarcity etc. He said that it was the foremost priority of the present Government to facilitate academia and local R&D Organizations, so that they mayjointly provide solutions for indigenous problems and contribute towards the socio-economic uplift of Pakistan. He said that creating a Dig-

ital Pakistan was inevitable for good governance and prosperity. Prof. Atta ur Rehman FRS, Vice Chairman, Prime Minister's National Task force on Technology driven Knowledge Economy delivered a keynote address for participating technical experts, students and dignitaries. In his recorded address titled "Open Distance Learning: Creating a

Knowledge Economy", Prof. Rahmanhighlighted the importance of knowledge economy in a highly competitive global skills marketand presented several initiatives which have led to novel solutions in present day Pakistan.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad T. Afzal, Rector, COMSATS University Islamabad, in his remarks appreciated the support extended by

the government in promoting the research and development culture in the country. He said that in order to create opportunities for Pakistan in the arena of Information Technology, it is imperative to ensure greater participation of women in IT. While encouraging female students, Prof. Afzal said that IT offers highly lucrative job prospects for women where they can realize their true potential with respectful and dignified jobs. He assured the participants that COMSATS University Islamabad will always play an active role in nurturingyoung entrepreneurs for creating technology driven solutions for Pakistan. Prof. Afzal called on researchers to engage in meaningful product-oriented research that can benefit the masses and the economy instead of churning out publications which were creating no real impact. Thetwo days conference will comprise series of invited lectures as part of its technical program while aPhD symposium willprovide an opportunity to PhD scholarto present

feedback from industry experts. Chairman CDA inspects construction works

their ongoing research to gather

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman Capital Development Authority along with member engineering and senior officers on Monday visited Rawal Dam Interchange and 7th Avenue Interchange project and inspected the progress of construction work. On this occasion, the Chairman CDA directed the concerned officers to install reflectors around Rawal Dam Interchange site to facilitate commuter as well as to complete the slip roads of the project and open them for traffic this month.Chairman CDA directed the concerned formation to the to ensure high quality of construc-

Anti-Polio drive kicks off in Rawalpindi

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Meanwhile, according to a Police spokesman, around 1200 cops had been deployed in Rawalpindi district to ensure security of anti-polio staff performing duties during the campaign. He added that a control room has also been set up to monitor the security arrangements. – APP

AC imposes fine on profiteers

RAWALPINDI: Assistant Commissioner(AC) Rawalpindi Cantonment area Nausheen Israr on Monday imposed fine amounting Rs 22,500 on shopkeepers for profiteering. While carrying out price checking of essential commodities in different cantonment areas, the AC fined shopkeepers for overpricing and not displaying the price list. She warned that stern action would be taken against those overcharging and not displaying approved rate lists in their shops. - APP One more die, 4 Covid cases reports in 24 hours RAWALPINDI: One more patient had died with fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, taking the total death toll to1606 in Rawalpindi district. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Monday, as many as 1606 people have died in the district since the emergence of the deadly virus. out of which 1222 Rawalpindi's residents and 384 from other districts.



set across the province at the Union Council level and appealed to masses to get themselves vaccinated at the earliest to protect themselves and their family members from the virus. Meanwhile, on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner briefed the secretary that over 1.1 million people had been inoculated against the lethal virus during the first campaign in the Rawalpindi district. He informed that 408 teams were visiting door to door to persuade the citizens of corona vaccination while announcements were also being made from mosques informing the citizens about corona vaccination. He urged the residents to come forward and vaccinate themselves at the earliest as the vaccination was the only way to prevent the fatal disease. The drive will continue till December 31.

Chief Executive Officer District Health Authority Dr Faiza Kanwal, Health Officer Dr Ehsan Ghanni and district administration officials were also present on the occasion. - APP

IRSA releases 86995 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 86995 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 39864 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1445.65 feet, which was 53.65 feet higher than its dead level 1392 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 26800 and 48000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1130.25 feet, which was 80.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded a 3069 and 29000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 53292, 46632 and 33885 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 2800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 7195 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. – APP

ther expidite the pace of ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan, Wada Mitsuhiro calls on the Leader of the House in Senate, Dr. Shahzad Waseem. – DNA work. – DNA

Knowledge platform launches Parĥai buddy

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Knowledge Platform, Pakistan's leading edtech venture, is proud to announce the launch of Parhai Buddy, Pakistan's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered learning coach. Based on the principle of student-centric learning, this intelligent learning system enables a learner to travel along a personal learning pathway to master concepts and progress rapidly.

Parhai Buddy has been initially launched for Grades 6-10 Mathematics, General Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Later, English language learning will be added. Parhai Buddy has been launched on the company's Learn Smart Pakistan platform: https://www.learnsmartpakistan.org/. Any learner may register and improve his or her skills by as little as 15 minutes of AI-driven online learning each day. Parhai Buddy sets a learner on his or her journey by taking a short diagnostic test and generating a customized learning pathway. Evaluating the learner's performance based on his or her performance and the performance of other learners, Parhai Buddy recommends skills-based videos, games and tests. The learner's pathway is continually adapted as he or she engages further, and new strengths and weaknesses emerge.

Students are expected to master over 1,800 concepts or "skills" in Mathematics and Sciences by the time they reachGrade 9. Learning gaps are developed if these skills are not mastered. This is where Parhai Buddy comes in. Parhai Buddy takes the learner back to skills from previous grades if needed to strengthen the learner's foundations. By the same token, a learner with strong foundations can progress more rapidly.

'Brutal lynching of SL national unacceptable to any society'

Shujaat Hamza

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Pir Noor ul Haq Qadri Monday said the brutal lynching of the Sri Lankan manager in Sialkot was not acceptable to any society.

Talking to Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Pakistan Vice Admiral Mohan Wijewickrama, during his visit to the high commission to offer condolence to the brutal killing of a Sri Lankan national by mob in Sialkot, the minister said Prime Minister Imran Khan was taking personal interest in bringing that case to a logical conclusion as soon as possible.

The shameful incident had reminded us of the need of holding a dialogue to promote religious harmony and tolerance, he added.

The minister said, he had recently attended a conference in the UAE titled "Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies," and he had no words to condemn the incident during the conference.

He said his own family was also affect-

ed by terrorist attacks in which many people were martyred. Speaking on the occasion. Sri Lankan High Commissioner said criminals had played religious cards against Sri Lankan manager, such people exist in every society.

The entire Pakistani nation was unanimous in condemning the Sialkot incident as all sections of society, including religious leaders, others had condemned the incident.

People were coming to Sri Lanka High Commission for offering condolences, the high commissioner said adding that it was heartening to note that the

Prime Minister of Pakistan was taking personal interest and started action against those responsible.Sri Lankan government and people were satisfied with Pakistani government's efforts to punish the culprits.

The high commissioner said Pakistan and Sri Lanka were enjoying fraternal ties spanning over 70 years. The high commissioner recalled that

Pakistan had played key role in eradicating terrorism from Sri Lanka. In the condolence meeting, members of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Albert David and Mufti Gulzar Naeemi were also present.



The report updated that four more patients were tested positive during last 24 hours, raising the count of confirmed cases to 39,424 in the district included 36,395 from Rawalpindi and 3029 from outside districts. Among the new cases, three of the patients have arrived from Taxila and one from Rawal town. "Presently, 19 confirmed patients were admitted to three city facilities, counting eight in Institute of Urology, seven in Fauji foundation hospital, and four in Benazir Bhutto,' the report said.

District Health Authority updated that 38,087 patients had been discharged after recovery, 35,067 with Rawalpindi and 3020 from other districts.

In addition, the report informed that 115 were quarantined, including 96 at homes and 19 in the isolation centres.

It further updated that 3,935,770 people, including 44,352 health workers, had vaccinated against the lethal coronavirus across the district since the vaccination drive launched on March 10. – APP

Experts call to enhance youth employment The event provides opportunities for interacting, learning and knowledge sharing among HRD professionals, donors and government sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Human Resource Development Network (HRDN) having a footprint across Pakistan through its 180+ member organizations and 800+ individual members is a think tank of experts and professionals on Human resource development from diverse backgrounds. All Member's Meeting (AMM) is the tradition of HRDN for the last 22 years, which attracts participation from top of the line esteemed institutes and professionals from diverse backgrounds. The event provides opportunities for interacting, learning and knowledge sharing among HRD professionals, donors and government sector. The theme of this year's AMM was carefully selected in the vein of empowering youth to keep pace with a fast-changing world of work.

The main purpose of organizing Hybrid All Members the 22nd Meeting 2021 on the theme "Qual-

ity Apprenticeships: The Way Forward in Pakistan", focusing on Using Apprenticeships as tool to recover job-losses due to COVID-19 was to assess the existing situation of Apprenticeships System in Pakistan and identify strategies to be adopted by the government, development sector and civil society to use Apprenticeship as a tool to re-

cover job-losses due to COVID-19. The conference was organized in collaboration with International Labour Organization (ILO) and Institute of Rural Management (IRM). The eminent experts like Mr. Nazar Ali CEO SDC, Mr. Hafeez Abbasi DG NAVTTC, Mr. Saad Gillani Senior Programme Officer ILO and Ms. Robeela Bangash CEO

HRDN were the panelists to shed light on the topic. Dr. Roomi S. Hayat, Chairperson

HRDN, a prominent expert in the field of Human Resource Development opened the event by welcoming all the participants at the event. He said that Pakistan is a YOUNG County. To empower youth and to enable young people



to acquire the relevant competencies to facilitate their transition from the world of education to the world of work it's time to address the challenge of creating employment opportunities for bulging youth in productive sectors of the economy. He further added that quality apprenticeships have the potential to equip people with the relevant competencies to navigate the challenges in the world of work throughout their lives, they

are considered to be an important element of the system of lifelong learning. Quality apprenticeships also have the potential to improve the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises.

Syed Nazar Ali, CEO, SDC, on the occasion presented an overview of the vocational training in Pakistan and said that the on-job training model is highly effective to engage youth and include them in the skilled work force. Thus, it may lead to economic growth of the country through the creation of new job opportunities.

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

N HE 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 form the government to instil 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.

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 revolutionwhen 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 secondmost 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 Balochistanneeds robust and upgraded systems andpeople 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-tapism 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 separatists' 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 KalbhoshanYedev 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 stake holders 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. Onedoes 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 vesterday 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.

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

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 to 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

ISCONNECTION 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 biasraises. 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 statue 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 Balochistandepends 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 sane voices that believe in democratic process say that Baloch are the

- The writer is a columnist and broadcast journalist. He can be reached at mali.hamza@yahoo.com

in the debilitating almost seven-yearlong war in Yemen

NCREASINGLY, 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 Tahnoon 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-

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 Baharoon, 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.

Esfandyar Batmanghelidj, 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 \$12billion 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. Batmanghelidj 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 Malavsia.

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, Spreaker, Pocket Casts, Tumblr, Podbean, Audecibel, Patreon, and Castbox,

– Dr. James M. Dorsev is an awardwinning 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 Russianmilitary activities may be...



TUG-OF-WAR is in full swing between Russia and Ukraine on the one h the US and Russia on the other. Russia and Ukraine on the one hand and 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 Russianmilitary 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 frommembership 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

06

WORLD / SPORTS

Islamabad **POST** Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Briefs

Pakistan not given due credit: PM

FROM PAGE 01

He said lack of in-depth research led to reliance on second-hand information by the western think tanks on important issues such as Afghanistan. Pakistan, he said, was the country that suffered most in collateral damage in the wake of the Afghan conflict, however was made a scapegoat for the mistakes of the superpowers. He mentioned that inability of the national leadership to handle the Afghan situation wisely landed the country into two main pro and anti-America divisions. He said the role of local think tanks in this situation was important to effectively highlight Pakistan's perspective in the world rather than being under continuous criticism by the western lobbies. On Islamophobia, he said, a strong response by Muslim think tanks was important to nullify the impression of Islam's linkage with terrorism.

He said unequal distribution of resources leads to anarchy among the people who are left out of the mainstream development. He said the uplift of the underprivileged segment of the society was critical to

ensure national security. PM Imran Khan stressed that rule of law and equality for all were the preconditions for democracy. He also pointed out that corruption, particularly of the elite, was detrimental to the development of a country.

The prime minister emphasized the importance of research by the think tanks of the country to counter the negative propaganda in the world. "Research leads to original thinking within a society. You have to define yourself instead of letting others define you," he said.

PM gets briefing on Sialkot...

FROM PAGE 01 Prime Minister Imran Khan directed that more attention should be paid to public welfare and development works under construction should be completed on a priority basis. Sources said that the investigation into the Sialkot tragedy is being carried out in a modern way with the help of technology. Footage of 150 cameras of the factory has been sent to the forensic laboratory. According to sources, the police are expecting a major crackdown soon based on the evidence. The police are first investigating the murder incident on the roof of the factory. the challan into the tragedy will be submitted by the mid of January. Sources said that the government investigating the case from every aspect and trying to prevent an innocent person from being dragged into the case.

Pak thrash West Indies by 63 runs in the first T20I

The visitors were never in the hunt of the target as they were dismantled by a superior Pakistan bowling attack and folded at 137 in 19 overs

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: West Indies were bowled out for 137 with one over to spare, chasing a mammoth total of 200 by Pakistan in the first Twenty20 International (T20I) in Karachi on Monday. Rizwan smashed a 52-ball 78 with 10 boundaries - his 12th half-century and 11th this year - while Haider scored a career-best 68 to guide the hosts to 200-6 in their 20 overs. The visitors were never in the hunt of the target as they were dismantled by a superior Pakistan bowling attack and folded at 137 in 19 overs.

Fast bowler Mohammad Wasim took a career-best 4-40 while spinner Shadab Khan grabbed 3-17. Opener Shai Hope topscored with 31 but became one of leg-spinner Shadab's two wickets in the same over, Shamarh Brooks being the other for five.



Odean Smith (24), Rovman Powell (23) and Romario Shepherd (21) also had good contributions but never threatened Pakistan. This becomes Pakistan's 13th win in 19 Twenty20 internationals against West Indies, taking a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Pakistan were once again anchored by Rizwan who has had a

phenomenal 2021 in Twenty20 international cricket, having already crossed 1,000 runs in the calendar year. Rizwan and Haider added 105 for the third wicket after

skipper Babar Azam fell without scoring and Fakhar Zaman made just 10, with West Indian bowlers getting early success.

It was a rare failure for Azam ranked number one in T20I cricket - as he edged a sharp turning ball from spinner Akeal Hossein. Zaman top edged Shepherd before Rizwan and Haider rescued Pakistan. Haider cracked four sixes and six boundaries in his 39-ball knock

Mohammad Nawaz gave the final touches to the innings with a brisk 10-ball 30 not-out spiced with two sixes and three boundaries. West Indies, hit with three Cov-

id-19 positive tests among their T20I players, brought in Brooks and Devon Thomas from their one-day squad, giving Brooks a debut in the shortest format. The remaining matches will be played on Tuesday and Thursday; both matches will be played at National Stadium Karachi.

Israeli PM, UAE crown prince...

FROM PAGE 01 the relationship of cooperation towards more positive steps in the interests of the people of the two nations and of the region". The Palestinians, whose diplomacy with Israel has been stalled since 2014, have deplored the Israeli-Emirati rapprochement. Israeli Ambassador Amir Hayek declined to elaborate on any discussion of Iran but he told Israel's Army Radio: "The prime minister did not only come here solely to address the Iranian issue."

With world powers now trying to renew the Iran nuclear deal, Abu Dhabi last week sent an envoy to Tehran. A US delegation is due in the UAE this week to warn Emirati banks against non-compliance with sanctions on Iran. Iran is Israel's arch-foe, but it has not been mentioned publicly by Bennett since he set off on Sunday to the UAE with pledges to promote bilateral commerce and other forms of civilian cooperation. The Israel Hayom newspaper, quoting unnamed officials, said Bennett was expected to brief Sheikh Mohammed on intelligence regarding Iranian-supplied militias and drones in the region. Israel last month broached setting up joint defences against Iran with Gulf Arab states. Hayek said military sales to UAE are in the works, though Israeli industry sources say advanced Israeli air defence systems have yet to be offered.

Pakistan's first omicron...

FROM PAGE 01

Results of the samples were received on the completion of the genomic study, they said, disclosing that the sample of a 65-year-old woman was found to be carrying the new strain of coronavirus. She had not gotten herself inoculated against the viral disease, the sources said. The affected patient has been isolating at home since December 8.

In a Twitter statement, the NIH said it has been able to "confirm (via whole genome sequencing) that a recently suspected sample from Karegion. which rachi is indeed the 'Omicron variant' of SARS-CoV2. "This is the first confirmed case but continued surveillance of suspected samples is in place to identify the trends." On Dec 8, the Sindh government claimed that a suspected case of Omicron variant has been detected in Karachi. Health Minister Azra Fazal Pechuho had said, "The symptoms of the female patient was pointing out a likely case of Omicron variant."

Man Utd, Villa hit by Covid outbreaks Leicester have also been affected with seven players missing for their 4-0 thrashing

of Newcastle on Sunday LONDON: Manchester United and Aston Villa are the latest Premier League clubs to be affected by outbreaks of coronavirus cases, according to reports on Sunday. United's Premier League clash with Brentford on Tuesday is in doubt after multiple positive cases were detected among players and staff on Sunday morning, the BBC reported. All the players involved had tested negative ahead of Saturday's 1-0 win at Norwich. Training was switched to non-contact, individual drills outside to prevent further spread of the virus. Villa chose to cancel their training session on Sunday due to a number of positive cases, according to The Athletic. Only one Villa player is believed to be positive with more cases among training ground staff. Tottenham's trip to Brighton, scheduled to take place on Sunday, was postponed earlier in the week after an outbreak in the Spurs camp affecting 13 players or staff. Spurs also face being eliminated from the Europa Conference League after a date could not agreed to

replay their final group game against Rennes. Leicester have also been affected with seven players missing for their 4-0 thrashing of Newcastle on Sunday. Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has called for clarity over how many positive cases are required for a match to be postponed. The Gunners' season opener at Brentford in August went ahead despite four cases among Arteta's squad. Premier League sides were told to return to emergency protocols this week to limit the spread of the virus amid fears over the potential impact of the surging Omicron variant on the English top flight. From Wednesday, supporters will have to provide proof of vaccination or a negative test result to enter stadiums with more than a 10,000 capacity in England as part of a range of measures designed to slow the spread of Omicron. - Agencies

EU has little appetite to join US diplomatic Games boycott

BRUSSELS: Several European Union nations have made it clear they have little appetite to join the U.S. initiative for a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Games because of concerns over China's human rights record. EU foreign ministers were seeking a united front on how to handle the issue, following France's position last week that a noshow of leaders and dignitaries at the opening of the Olympics would have little true impact.

"Politicizing sporting events like the Winter Olympics does not seem useful to me, said Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg. German Foreign Minister AnnalenaBaerbock told ZDF broadcaster that as little as possible should be taken away from the participants themselves. "Athletes prepare for years, sometimes half their lives, for this, and

South Korea says no boycott of Beijing Olympics

SYDNEY: South Korea's president on Monday ruled out joining a US diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, citing the need to work with China. Visiting Canberra, Moon Jae-in said he was "not considering" snubbing the Olympics to protest China's human rights abuses as several Western nations have done. "We have not received a request from any other country including the United States to participate in the diplomatic boycott," he said.

China has warned the United States, Australia, Britain and Canada that they will "pay the price" for protesting the Games. The boycott was prompted by China's abuses against the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang and its smothering of democracy in Hong Kong. Moon stressed that South Korea wanted to promote a free and open Pacific region, but Beijing Winter Games, citalso had to consider China's role in trying to bring peace to the Korean Peninsula.

We need the constructive efforts of China to enable minority in the northwest denuclearisation of DPRK (North Korea)" he said, Xinjiang adding that Seoul wanted a harmonious relationship with Beijing. Moon is currently on a three-day state They also point to Beijing's visit to Australia, where the two countries signed a suppression of democratic series of technology and military cooperation agreements. They include the sale of 30 howitzers - mo- a sweeping crackdown on bile artillery guns - to Australia as part of a contract dissent in the semi-autonoworth around US\$720 million. - APP

not expecting the initiative to garner a worldwide fol-

lowing. Even though the 27 EU nations will send individual teams and the bloc as such will not have its own athletes, the EU foreign ministers want to streamline their participating in the largely symbolic diplomatic dance preceding and at the Feb. 4 opening ceremony for the games.

A joint no-show of the 27 nations would add gravitas to U.S. President Joe Biden's initiative, but the EU nations appear hesitant. China has vowed to respond to the U.S. with "firm countermeasures" over the boycott, but has given no details on how it plans to retaliate. Rights groups have called for a total boycott of the ing Chinese human rights abuses against its Uyghur

Japan announces US\$ 4.35m...

FROM PAGE 01 "The Polio eradication efforts made substantive progress this year by limiting the virus circulation resulted significant decrease of Polio despite challenges cases posed by COVID-19. The programme is confident to permanently interrupt all types of polioviruses by the end of 2023," said Dr. Shahzad Baig, National Coordinator of the Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme. Appreciating the support of the Government of Japan, Dr Shahzad said, "We are grateful to the people and the Government of Japan for their unwavering support for the children of Pakistan, the new funding will enable us to reach every child with the essential polio vaccine."

H.E. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan, appreciated the significant progress made this year in controlling the spread of poliovirus, saying that "we are now only one step away from the goal. polio-free Pakistan." He reiterated his support to the initiative for eradicating all types of poliovirus by the end of 2023 and noted that "Japan has provided assistance in maternal and child health, polio eradication, and routine immunization in Pakistan for decades and will continue its support that will directly benefit vulnerable people."

that's why it should not be used for political issues." China has dismissed the decision by Canada and the United Kingdom to join diplomatic Washington's boycott as a "farce" and was



Amb. Sajid inaugurates Pakistan Pavilion at Food Africa

CAIRO: Ambassador Sajid Bilal inaugurated the Pakistan Pavilion at "Food Africa" Exhibition at Egypt International Exhibition Center, today. The Trade and Investment Section of the Embassy and companies from Pakistan including Ahmed Foods, Baba Enterprises, Shezan International, Mohammad HashimTajirSurma, Durvesh International, Pure Foods Company, RM Salt, Minex International, Vania Foods, RAD International, Ajmair Foods, and BM Confectionary, have put up their stalls at the Pakistan Pavilion. The Pavilion represents an array of flavors and tastes of Pakistan, including indigenous products such as basmati rice, pink salt, spices, honey, pulses, juices, pickles, sauces, herbs, confectionary, and processed foods. Pakistan is among the world's top exporters of rice and home to 800 million year old salt range that produces the famous pink salt. The food and beverages sector in Pakistan is the second largest industry after textiles, and is a major export earner for the country. Food Africa is the continent's largest International Trade Exhibition specialized in the Food and Agro industries. The three day event will conclude on 14 December 2021. - DNA

some have called genocide. protests in Hong Kong and mous territory. - APP

Ibra snatches point for Milan at Udinese

MILAN:ZlatanIbrahimovic snatched a late point for AC Milan in Saturday's 1-1 draw at Udinese which gives the Serie A leaders' title rivals a chance to steal the top spot, while Juventus drew 1-1 at Venezia to slip up in the Champions League race.

Ibrahimovic struck with an acrobatic effort in the 92nd minute to claim a point for the Rossoneri but Inter Milan, who are two points behind their local rivals in second, will end the weekend in the first place if they beat struggling Cagliari at the San Siro.

Napoli is a further point back and can move level on 39 with Milan before Inter kicks off with a win over Empoli in Naples, with some of their key players including Andre-Frank ZamboAnguissa and Lorenzo Insigne back in the squad. Also waiting in the wings are Atalanta, who sit fourth but are only five points behind Milan ahead of their trip to Verona. Milan are in the midst of an injury crisis, with starting centre-back Simon Kjaer out long-term and forwards Olivier Giroud, Rafael Leao and Ante Rebic all sidelined, and it was another low-key display after being dumped out of Europe by Liverpool midweek.

"The boys know they aren't playing to the best of their abilities," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli.

"We need to do better and I'm convinced we will because we have ambition and the ability to both understand our mistakes and work on them." - APP

Int'l moot on China-Pakistan cooperation held

Pakistan Ambassador to China, MoinulHaque highlighted that Pakistan-China ties are rooted in bilateral trust, mutual understanding and commonality of views on major global challenges

DNA

BEIJING: In order to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Pakistan and China, an International Conference on China-Pakistan Cooperation was held here at Tsinghua University, Beijing. The event was jointly organized by the Tsinghua University's International Centre for Communication Studies and Pakistan Cultural and Communication Centre.

Held in offline/online formats, the conference was attended by more than 100 participants including Ambassador of Pakistan; Professor Peng Gang, Vice President of Tsinghua University; Li Xiguang, Director, Pakistan Cultural and Communication Centre; Senator MushahidHussain; DrShahidHashmat and Professor EjazAkram. Leading experts, intellectuals and



representative from several Pakistani and Chinese universities also participated in the event. Speaking at the event, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moinul-Haque highlighted that Pakistan-China ties are rooted in bilateral trust, mutual understanding

and commonality of views on major global challenges. Reviewing the steady development of economic and people-to-people

relations, he observed that Pakistan and China would continue their successful cooperation to make China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a high quality development project of the Belt and Road Initiative and further deepen

bilateral cultural cooperation. The Ambassador expressed hope that both sides would continue to use existing mechanisms to foster stronger relations between the academic and research institutes and professionals of the two countries for joint benefit. During the conference, experts from both sides exchanged views on deepening cultural, economic and trade ties between Pakistan and China.

They noted that due to ever increasing trade relations between Pakistan and China, bilateral cultural and people-to-people ties have been strengthened which was necessary for the healthy growth of future ties.

Country facing...

FROM PAGE 01

The court issued notices to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) when Hamza Shehbaz, Shehbaz's son and Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, filed a petition for his acquittal in Ramzan Sugar Mills' reference in the light of NAB

amendment ordinance. The petitioner stated that he was implicated in the reference with a mala fide intent, and the NAB's act was politically motivated. "The case against me has no grounds. The case was filed because I was the CEO of the mills. At the same time, let me remind you that I am not the only owner of the mills," he argued. And since, he went on to add, there is no chance that he would be convicted in the case, he be acquitted.

Bilawal defends...

FROM PAGE 01

"Karachiites believe that PPP can resolve their issues," he said, lamenting that everybody has the right to criticise but one should not lie. Sharing details of the developmental projects under PPP, Bilawal mentioned that the party has been allotting houses since 1970 to the masses, while PTI has "just started this initiative now.'

"PPP is the only party that understands the problem of the citizens," the chairman boasted, highlighting that his party has given more powers to local body representatives.

Shedding light on the tenure of Asif Ali Zardari as the president, Bilawal mentioned that he gave all the powers to the Parliament.

N7

BUSINESS / WORLD



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 bilat-

eral 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.

Briefs 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 actual-

ly 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 largescale 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.

Germany approves climate fund

Islamabad **POST**

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

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 govern-

ment 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 Balaq mountain range, south of the city of Marib, said two officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised 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.



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

Blinken competes with top Russian official in Indonesia

News Desk

shev's visit, saying he would be in the ing the speech. The Russian embassy Indonesian capital for the same two said Patrushev's main interlocutor in days as the top American diplomat. Indonesia would be Law and Security 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, includ-

Affairs Minister Moh 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.3

Australia-S. Korea sign defense deal

CANBERRA: Australia and South Korea signed a \$720 million defense deal Monday as South Korean President Moon Jae-in became the first foreign leader to visit Australia since the pandemic began. Worth about 1 billion Australian dollars, the deal will see South Korean defense company Hanwha provide the Australian army with artillery weapons, supply vehicles and radars. It's the largest defense contract struck between Australia and

an Asian nation, and comes at a time of heightened tensions between Australia and China. Australia recently announced a deal to build nuclear-powered submarines in a partnership with the U.S. and Britain - a move that China has strongly condemned. Moon met with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison during his visit, and the two leaders agreed to upgrade the formal ties between their nations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership." The leaders also said they would work together on developing clean energy technologies, including hydrogen, and on facilitating the supply of critical minerals, which Australia has in abundance. Morrison said the new defense contract would create about 300 jobs in Australia, where a division of Hanwha operates.

"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 cas-

es were detected on Nov. 27 in the United Kingdom, Johnson has imposed tough er 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 Kayy al, 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

more than 100 countries and international organizations



BEIJING: SCO Secretary General Vladimir Norov ad dressed 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

IAKARTA: 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 Patru-



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 lo-

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 o 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

cated in Basarkechar region.

The ministry stressed that responsibility for the tension and bloody crime committed

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.

Referendum on Donbass Ukraine's internal affair

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: A possible referendum on Donbass, which was not ruled out by Ukrainian President Vladimir is Ukraine's Zelensky, 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 Presi-dent 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 belliger ence towards Pakistan.

He said as regards the issue of terrorism, the international community was well aware of how the Hindutva-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



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 Iournalists here. The Indonesian envoy said that this is the century of Asian region in which the next Southeast 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 (ASE-ANs) countries, he said. The Ambassador said that emerg-

ing 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.



ing tourism, trade, e-commerce and defense. He said that cooperation in the

tourism sector on both sides could

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.

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 (retd) 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 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 I-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



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 iab," 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.

IPEMC meets today to decide vacations

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Inter-Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC) has been summoned on Tuesday (today) to make final decision on winter vacations.

The meeting will be held tomorrow (Tuesday) under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Education Shafqat Mahmood in which the issue of vaccination of children will also be considered.

The meeting will also consider a proposal to shift the winter break to January, while reviewing reforms to the provincial education system. On Thursday, the government of Sindh announced winter vacations for schools and colleges public and private - across the province.

Schools and colleges will remain closed for winter vacations from December 20 till January 1, 2022, as per a decision taken by the education department s steering committee.-DNA

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 ASE-AN and Islamic world and both of the countries have great potential for cooperation in all fields includintroduce 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

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

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.

trillion, which is expected to reach

The Ambassador said that Paki-

stan 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

He said Indonesia has set a US\$50

billion e-commerce trade target by

2025 to connect with the biggest

Ambassador said that Pakistan

and Indonesia can be linked with

e-commerce trade to increase bi-

lateral trade as well as connect

US\$ 5.4 trillion by 2022.

the countries.

sector of global trade.

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

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 high 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 stav 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 shocked 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 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 to 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

Country Representatives

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 Sangpyoand 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 Sangpyoand



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