



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Beijing not afraid of clash with the US, says China's FM

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White collar mega cases to be probed

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TRNC indebted to Pakistan for its support

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Briefs

PM fulfilled promise of LG polls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Hussain says

only Prime Minister Imran Khan fulfilled the promise of strong local government by conducting local bodies elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a tweet on Monday, he said for the first time, power is being transferred directly to the elected representatives at tehsil level. The Minister said Imran Khan is the only leader who puts his political interests behind him and thinks for the country and the people.

Shaukat Tarin elected Senator

DNA

PESHAWAR: Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate

Shaukat Tarin has been elected a senator on a vacant seat from KP. According to unofficial results, Shaukat Tarin grabbed the Senate seat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after securing 87 votes. ANP candidate Shaukat Amirzada and JUI (F) candidate Zahir Khan got 13 votes each. According to provincial Finance Minister Taimur Jhagra, as many as 122 members of the KP Assembly cast their votes while 22 abstained from voting. Nine votes were rejected while 87 votes were balloted in favour of Shaukat Tarin.

China to work closely with Afghanistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong has said his country is willing to work closely to support Afghanistan to achieve a better future. In a tweet, he congratulated Pakistan on successfully hosting the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Ambassador said OIC serves an important bridge for cooperation between China and the Islamic world.

Fazl's party surprises PTI in KP polls

JUI-F wins Peshawar Mayor seat; Opp. leading in majority of Tehsils; PTI says inflation behind govt's loss

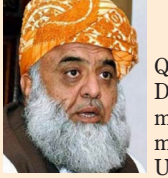
BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The ruling PTI suffered a major setback on Monday after the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) candidate won the seat for the coveted post of Peshawar mayor in the first local government elections held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since the merger of tribal districts, according to unofficial and unverified results. According to the unofficial results, JUI-F's Zubair Ali — a relative of party chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman — won with a margin of around 11,500 votes after securing 62,388. PTI's Rizwan Bangash received 50,669 votes and PPP's Zarak Arbab got 45,000 votes. The unofficial results also show that the opposition parties have a combined lead over the ruling PTI for the post of mayor/chairman of the 63 tehsil councils. The local bodies elections were held for the first time after the merger of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into the province in 2017.

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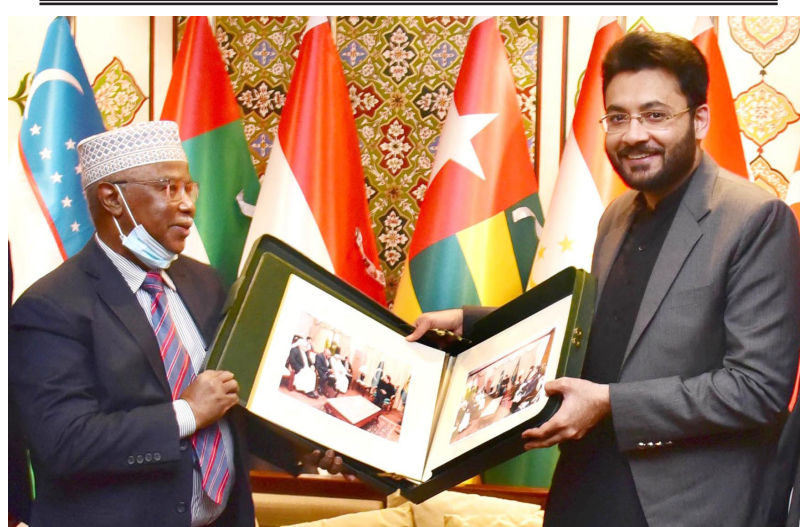
LB elections proved that PTI govt is fake: Fazl

STAFF REPORT



QUETTA: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) Chairman and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on Monday that his party has emerged largest party in the first phase of the local body elections held in 17 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PDM chairman said this after meeting former Balochistan CM Aslam Raisani. Various issues including political situation were discussed in the meeting. Maulana Abdul Ghafoor

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ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information, Farrukh Habib presenting a photo album to Secretary General OIC, Hisein Brahim Taha of his Pakistan visit. — DNA

EU ambassador felicitates Pakistan

— World leaders, diplomats also praise Pakistan OIC Chief terms moot great success



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Androulla Kaminara has congratulated Pakistan for successfully holding 17th Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In a series of tweet on Monday, she said EU's staff in Afghanistan is working day and night to reach Afghans through

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KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Organization of Islamic Cooperation secretary-general Hisein Brahim Taha has termed the 17th extraordinary meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of OIC, a great success in resolving the looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

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RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa exchanging views with US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West, who called on him. — DNA

Change to end soon: Maryam

Govt has pushed 220 million people into problems, she added



STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Amid the ongoing local government elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz Monday took a jibe at the PTI for its losses and said that the change that the party had promised is approaching its end, that too in a humiliating fashion. "Change is not coming — it is going," she wrote on Twitter, referring to PTI's famous slogan "tabdeeli aa nahai rahi, tabdeeli aa gai hai" (change is not coming, it has already arrived). She further said that the promised tabdeeli is approaching its end, that too in a disgraceful and humiliating fashion. The government has pushed 220 million people of the country into problems such "as inflation, lawlessness, and incompetence," as a result of which the masses have been cursing the government, she said.

PTI to challenge Peshawar mayor election

DNA

PESHAWAR: The ruling PTI has decided to challenge the results of Peshawar mayor election after losing it to rivals JUI-F with a wide margin. According to the unconfirmed and unofficial results, JUI-F's Zubair Ali won the coveted seat by securing 63,388 votes while PTI's Rizwan Bangash could only manage to bag 50,669 votes. PTI's Peshawar chapter spokesperson Rahat Akbar Mughal said in a statement on Monday that the party will file an application for a vote recount, claiming that the number of rejected votes of PTI exceeded the victory margin of JUI-F candidate. Referring to a viral video clip, the PTI spokesperson alleged that the rival candidate poured Rs20 million into the elections to win the mayorship of the provincial capital. Those who lured villagers and neighbourhood councillors with money should be held accountable, he added. The spokesperson further claimed that the polling process at women's polling stations was deliberately slowed down and the polling staff was also offered bribes.

'World cannot afford unstable Afghanistan'

During a meeting with COAS, Thomas West lauded Pak role in Afghan situation

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa said on Monday that the world and the region cannot afford an unstable Afghanistan and stressed upon need for global convergence to avert a looming humanitarian catastrophe. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR), he was talking to US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West, who called on him in Rawalpindi on Monday. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, current security situation in Afghanistan and bilateral cooperation opportunities in the context were discussed. The Army Chief thanked the dignitary for participating in the 17th Extraordinary Session of Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Thomas West appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation, special efforts for effective Pak-Afghan border management and pledged to play his part for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.

Amir Muttaqi downplays PM Khan's remarks

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Motaqi Monday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's comments over women's rights in Afghanistan are his personal comments and are not humiliation to Afghan people. Addressing a press conference at the Kabul International Airport after returning from Islamabad, Motaqi said that he believes remarks made by the Pakistani prime minister at the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) summit in Islamabad were not an insult to Afghanistan. He also said Khan's remarks were critical of the former governments, which may have therefore caused former government officials to feel compelled to show a reaction.

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Moderna says booster dose improves protection

Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel called the results 'reassuring'

PARIS: Giving a full dose of Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine as a booster shot provides more antibody protection against the Omicron variant than currently authorised half-strength injections, the company said Monday. The lab study measured the levels of Omicron-neutralising antibodies in blood samples from 40 people who had low levels of these antibodies before getting the booster. The current recommendation is to give 100 micrograms of the Moderna jab as a first and second dose for protection from Covid-19, followed by a 50-microgram booster. Antibodies were measured 29 days after booster participants got the third jabs, with half getting a 50 microgram dose and half getting 100 micrograms. — APP

EU approves Novovax vaccine

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: The European Union has approved the Novovax vaccine for use, the fifth jab so far, as nations in the region battle with surge in new cases. The 27 nation bloc has so far already approved the Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. Israel has added the United States to its "no-fly" list, citing concerns over the spread of the new Omicron coronavirus variant.

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TRNC indebted to Pakistan for whole-hearted support

Turkish Cyprus FM Tehsin Ertugruloglu says other OIC states response to Cyprus problem disappointing; comes down heavy on EU for unilaterally accepting Greek side as EU member

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Tehsin Ertugruloglu the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has thanked Pakistan for whole-hearted support on the issue of Cyprus adding the rest of the Muslim world, unfortunately, was yet to pay heed to our difficulties. The TRNC Minister expressed these views while talking to media people in Islamabad on Monday. He visited Islamabad to take part in the OIC extraordinary session on Afghanistan. Minister Tehsin is a seasoned politician and this is his fourth ministerial stint. He further said, motherland Turkey and Pakistan have always been forthcoming whenever TRNC needed support. "I would say categorically that Pakistan, among the OIC member countries, has a clear understanding of what is going on in the island". Minister Tehsin was all praise for people of Pakistan as well. To a question about the recently held 5+1 talks, the minister said even before the beginning of the talks the TRNC side

was convinced that nothing tangible will come out of this exercise only because of intransigence of the Greek side. "As I had clearly mentioned during my Zoom interview with you a few months ago that if these talks fail, we will then go for international recognition. And I believe these talks have not produced desired results therefore there was no question of any further talks on this issue. As regards international recognition, the option was very much on the table," he added. He said we are only waiting for the UN Secretary General's call who, after the 5+1 talks, told us that he will get in touch with TRNC government after finding some common grounds for further negotiations. But, hitherto there is no call from the UN Secretary General. To yet another question about Azerbaijan and Pakistan recognizing TRNC, the minister said there is no doubt that they had unique relationship with these two countries however TRNC has not sought recognitions from Azerbaijan and Pakistan. "Both the countries are very close brothers and we do not want our brothers to be in any difficult situation



ISLAMABAD: Tehsin Ertugruloglu the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus talking to media. — Photo Shahid Raju

because of us", Mr. Tehsin added He said the European Union did a great injustice with the people of TRNC when it unilaterally accepted the Greek part as member of the EU. It ostensibly dis-

turbed balance of power in favour of the Greek side and literally killed the concept of equality. Now, under prevailing circumstances how can we have negotiations that are based on equality when the one side is

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Briefs

UBG musters support from Punjab for FPCCI polls

DNA

LAHORE: The majority of chambers of commerce and industry and affiliated trade associations in Punjab have openly announced to support the United Business Group panel in forthcoming Federation of Pakistan Chamber of commerce and industry.

Talking to media prior to their departure for Multan for campaigning here on Monday presidential candidate Dr Nouman Idris Butt, SVP Hanif Gohar and VP candidate Malik Sohail Hussain claimed that UBG top leadership led its Chairman Iftikhar Ali Malik and patron-in-chief SM Munir a couple of days ago held result oriented successful campaigns at Lahore, Faisalabad and Sialkot where all chambers and Fpcci affiliated trade associations of adjacent cities also attended our meetings and made public their support by reposing full confidence in the UBG policies for effectively safeguarding the interests of the business community at all levels.

Shahzad Ali Malik former President Lahore chamber and senior UBG leader said that UBG will continue to live upto the aspirations and expectations of their voters and take chambers and associations into confidence before compiling uniform proposals to be placed before government for redressal of genuine grievances being confronted by business community across the country.

PDMA prepares contingency plan 2021-22

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has prepared a winter contingency plan in consultation with all the stakeholders to undertake a coordinated response to minimise the loss of life and property in the events of disasters.

The plan had been made after consultation with various relevant quarters including the district administration, the provincial and federal departments and humanitarian partners in order to minimize disaster risks, identify hazards, vulnerabilities, risks and resource mapping for ensuring timely coordinated response.

Director General PDMA Sharif Hussain said that "the process of winter contingency planning started from October 2021 and a web based tool was developed and data for assessing district and sector specific hazards, vulnerability and associated risks, past winter events and consequent damages, compensation paid, resource mapping, need assessment, coordination and mechanism collected through that tool." - APP

Seminar on "Fall of Dhaka" held at GCUF

FAISALABAD: A seminar was held here at Government College University Faisalabad in connection with "Fall of East Pakistan" under the aegis of Department of History on Monday.

While addressing, Chairman department of History Dr Rizwanullah Kokab said the nations that did not learn from history were doomed. There was a dire need for taking measures, to ensure rights to all Pakistanis without religious, geographical and racial discrimination. He said that one of the major reasons behind the fall of Dhaka was denial of the democratic rights to the people of East Pakistan.

The chairman said that it was our responsibility as a Muslim to ensure others' rights, fulfill our responsibilities as an individual, a nation and a state. Chairman History Department Punjab University Dr Mahboob Hussain, Chairman History Department Bahawal Din Zykria University Multan Dr Muhammad Shafique, Incharge Department of History Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, and others also spoke on the occasion. - APP

Devolution of power provides freedom & flexibility: Imran

Governor said the "Civil servants need new attitudes of citizen-focused service delivery and management techniques to create more service-oriented bureaucratic practices"

NAZIR H SIYAL

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Imran Ismail has highlighted that devolution of Power is important to ensure decisions made on local level communities and businesses they affect. It provides greater freedoms and flexibilities under local bodies can work more effectively to improve public services in the area.

Talking to delegation of probationary officers (48th STP) of Pakistan Audit & Accounts Service at Governor's House here on Monday, Imran Ismail stressed on the need for true professionalism and development of skills through training to encourage officers to build upon their knowledge and expertise; and contribute more effectively in governance and public sector financial management he said.

Governor said the "Civil servants need new attitudes of citizen-focused service delivery and management techniques to create more service-oriented bureaucratic practices.

Strengthening the technical competencies of the public administration through modernization and technology diffusion is necessary for improving the quality of service delivery and to turn the public sector into a growth driver", he added.



He underlined the need of concerted efforts to improve revenue collection, especially through stronger enforcement of tax policy, to be able to expand the state's ability to finance its programs.

"The present government has taken several immediate steps to arrest economic decline and stagnation. These include measures to reduce non-productive expenditure

and raise revenues, the announcement of an energy policy, resolution of the circular debt issue, rationalization of subsidies, and introduction of incentives for the private sector. These steps have helped in stabilizing the macroeconomic environment of the country, which is evident from growing foreign exchange reserves, robustness in the stock market and

growing economic engagement of private sector in the development process", he observed.

Governor Sindh also highlighted significance of Karachi Transformation Plan (KTP) under which Greenline BRT project and procurement of 52 fire tenders for the city have already been completed. He also spelled out key features of Kamyab Jawan Program,

Ehsas Program, Sehat Sahulat Card, Ration Card facility with 30% concessional rates on basic kitchen items. "These programs have been initiated to improve life of a common man but unfortunately government of Sindh is not starting significant programs like Sehat Sahulat Card and Ration Card for the welfare of the people of the province", he maintained.

Graduation ceremony of combat commanders' course held

DNA

GUJRANWALA: The Graduation Ceremony of No 55 Combat Commanders' Course was held at Airpower Centre of Excellence (ACE), today. Air Marshal Syed Noman Ali, Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

While addressing the course participants, the Chief Guest said, "Meticulous training has always been our core strength and we would continue to guard it". He further said that ACE remained at the pinnacle of PAF's combat training and played a pivotal role for developing excellent aerial combat skills of future air warriors. He also expressed his satisfaction on implementation of emerging warfare concepts in the elite institution of PAF.



Air Marshal Syed Noman Ali, Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force also awarded certificates and trophies to the graduating officers who underwent a strenuous and professionally demanding course.

The Chief of the Air Staff Trophy for overall best performance amongst combat pilots was awarded to Squadron Leader Muhammad Bilal Khan, while Air Officer Commanding Air Defence Trophy for overall

best performance amongst combat controllers was awarded to Squadron Leader Rana Muhammad Abid. The ceremony was attended by Principal Staff Officers and field commanders of Pakistan Air Force.

Shahbaz Gill terms OIC meeting as a great success

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Political Communication Shahbaz Gill has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government under the able leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan had paid special attention towards tree plantation and awareness was being created at different levels to overcome smog situation.

He said this while addressing a press conference at Governor's House on Monday. He said that the premier's initiatives aimed at ensuring clean environment had been acknowledged globally. "Pakistan was taking steps to end carbon emission and the country's contribution was in positive terms for ensuring neat and clean environment", he added.

Shahbaz Gill said that holding of Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) meeting in Pakistan was a matter of great pride for the country. He said that after four decades it was an honour for the country that entire Muslim Ummah arrived here to attend the summit. There was an apprehension that more than 90 percent people in Afghanistan would go below the poverty line or face food shortage crisis, he maintained.

He said that foreseeing the possible situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Prime Minister Imran Khan were the first to raise voice in this regard.

Special Assistant said that the Prime Minister Imran Khan in all his international interviews talked about possible humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and stressed upon the need to make collective efforts for handling the situation by setting aside all types of prejudices. - APP

RMI celebrates 100th kidney transplant



STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: Fully endorsing the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's initiative of ensuring better health services to general people through Sehat Card, the private sector is practically contributing to the government's efforts of complete health cover to population across the province.

As part of this mission, a private sector health entity Rehman Medical Institute (RMI) has operated 100 kid-

ney transplant surgeries including over 50 free of cost cases under the provincial government's Sehat Card, in Peshawar. The institute has established the Kidney Transplant Unit to provide state-of-the-art inpatient and outpatient healthcare to ensure complete cure. The RMI arranged a ceremony in Peshawar to celebrate its 100 successful kidney transplant surgeries and appreciate the KP government's Sehat Card launched early this year to facilitate poor & marginalized population.

DC Faisalabad reviews cleanliness work in city

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad went to various areas to check the cleanliness situation and inspected the cleaning operation on the roads and streets in the morning. CEO Faisalabad Waste Management Company Kashif Raza Awan and other officers of the company were also present.

The Deputy Commissioner visited Warispora, D Type Gole and other areas and while inspecting the presence of waste workers said that the cleaning process should be completed in the city before the commencement of normal life.

He said that more steps should be taken to raise the standard of cleanliness so that the city looks clean and beautiful in all respects as per the expectations of the citizens. He directed to disposed off garbage in a save manner and said that the attendance of waste workers should be monitored regularly.

He asked the residents of areas about the presence of Waste workers and



performance of them and on some complaint he asked the CEO for early resolve. He went to Church of the area and checked the cleanliness situation. He also distributed awareness pamphlets among citizen regarding precautionary measures adopted against smog and said that avoided to burn the waste so that clean environment

should be made.

He said that district administration was active against smog and anti measures are being implemented besides precaution but the public role cannot be ignored in this regard therefore there cooperation is necessary. CEO FPMC briefed about cleanliness plan and implementation.

'Experiments put the country into turmoil'

Zardari lashes out at government over its failures

DNA

NAWABSHAH: Launching a fresh verbal attack on Prime Minister Imran Khan-led federal government, PPP co-chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari said on Monday that repeated 'experiments' had thrown the country into turmoil.

Speaking to the media in Nawabshah, the Pakistan Peoples Party leader said that only his party had what it takes to run and manage the country's affairs, media reported. "Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has successfully dealt with every challenge thrown at it in the past... and we are still ready [to run the country's affairs]," he said.

"First let go of these rulers, then talk to us, then we will show you how to run this country."

The former president said that there was a crisis of sugar and flour during former military ruler Pervez Musharraf govern-



ment as well and sugar and flour were being imported. "We ended the crisis within a year of coming to power and started exporting these items," he maintained.

"Whoever comes against the people's power, whether he is Sardar or Mir or Pir, everyone should remember that the people's vote is ours and the time to come belongs to the PPP." In a statement a fortnight ago, the veteran politician had warned that some foreign elements were conspiring to disintegrate Pakistan.

"The world wants to break Pakistan," he said, assuring the workers that Pakistan Peoples Party will fight against everybody for the sake of the country.

"We want to make Pakistan a successful country for generations to come," former president Asif Ali Zardari said and added that a person who is not ready to breathe his last in Pakistan does not have a stake in the decision of the country.

"We belong to this land and we will die here," he had reiterated.

Japanese CG assures FPCCI of support

DNA

KARACHI: "Japan will provide full support and co-operation to Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) for promotion of trade and investment between Pakistan and Japan", this assurance was given by Toshikazu Isomura, Consul General of Japan, on the occasion of visit of the FPCCI delegation who called upon him at the Japanese Consulate.

The FPCCI delegation included Hanif Lakhany, VP FPCCI; Rameez Sattar, Chairman Pakistan-Japan Business Council (PJBC) of FPCCI; Sultan Rehman, Coordinator FPCCI Head Office Karachi and Pir Ijlal Zaidi & Arbaaz Rameez, Directors PJBC. Okamoto Yu, Head of Commercial Section was also present during the meeting.

Rameez Sattar presented to Consul General detailed and comprehensive proposals for acceleration of trade and investment between Pakistan and Japan. He discussed in details the salient features of the proposal; identified opportunities for Japanese traders and potential of export promotion of Pakistani products to Japan. He also emphasized on the need for frequent interactions of the business community of the two countries for confidence building measures leading to expansion of trade and investment.

Indian Hindu pilgrims appreciate arrangements at Kataraj

RAWALPINDI: Indian Hindu pilgrims have appreciated excellent arrangements made at Kataraj Temple and thanked the government of Pakistan for all the facilities being provided to the pilgrims.

A special ceremony was organized at the historic Kataraj Temple by Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), Government of Pakistan in honor of Indian Hindu pilgrims arrived in Pakistan to participate in the religious rituals at the historic Kataraj Temple near Chakwal which is considered to be the oldest and holiest place of the Hindu religion in Pakistan.

Additional Secretary, Shrires, ETPB, Pakistan Rana Shahid Saleem was chief guest on the occasion while Deputy Secretary, ETPB, Syed Faraz Abbas, Assistant Commissioner, Choa Saidan Shah and other officers concerned were present.

The group leader of the Hindu pilgrims, Pandits and others thanked the government of Pakistan for excellent arrangements and facilities provided to the pilgrims. They also expressed gratitude for the security and other arrangements made by the district administration of Chakwal, police and thanked Deputy Commissioner, District Police Officer and Assistant Commissioner Choa Saidan Shah. Addressing the participants of the ceremony, Additional Secretary, ETPB said that the government on the directives of Prime Minister Imran Khan was making all-out efforts for protection of the rights of all the minorities including Hindu community.

He said that the government was giving special attention to improve and protect religious and worship places of the minorities. - APP

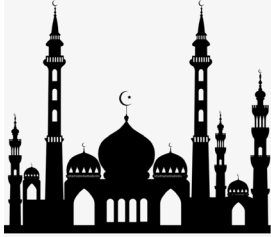
Three killed in road accidents

FAISALABAD: Three persons including a child were killed in separate road accidents here in the city and suburbs during the past 24 hours.

Police said on Monday, motorcyclist Naveed s/o Siddique was travelling on Jhimra road when he collided with a rickshaw. He was shifted to Allied Hospital in critical condition but he succumbed to his injuries.

In another accident, a collision between two motorcycles left Afaq of chak 401-GB dead and Sarwar injured. Meanwhile, a unknown vehicle ran over a 12-year-old boy Abdullah who was walking alongside the road. The victims were handed over to heirs after completing legal formalities. Police registered cases. - APP

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:38 am
Zohr.....	12:05 pm
Asr.....	03:25 pm
Maghrib.....	05:02 pm
Isha.....	06:32 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

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



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CAA.....	9281092



Hospitals

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



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CDA.....	9221334-43
CDA.....	9208301-04
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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.....	9266316
Wapda Islamabad.....	9217579
Wapda Rawalpindi	111-309-309

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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KOPIA distributes laptops among NARC's researchers

The Ambassador of Korea H.E. Mr Suh Sangpyo lauded the efforts made by the Pakistani scientists and reaffirmed their commitment to support Pakistan in achieving self-sufficiency and food security through successful transfer of modern technology

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Korea Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) Pakistan Centre distributed eight laptops to the scientists actively participating in ongoing three Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP's) for successful implementation. The ceremony, was arranged at the Community Hall in the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), Ambassador of Republic of Korea, Suh Sangpyo Dr. Cho Gyoung-rae, Director KOPIA also attended the ceremony. The Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, appreciated the Government of People of Republic of Korea for the support and discussed future bilateral cooperation. The technical cooperation projects include self-sufficiency of virus



free potato seed multiplication by 'Aeronic Technique', Chilli production and post-harvest management technology development in Paki-

stan, and establishment of production technology of major fodder crops in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion the Ambassador of the Re-

public of Korea H.E. Mr Suh Sangpyo lauded the efforts made by the Pakistani scientists and reaffirmed their commitment to support Pakistan in

achieving self-sufficiency and food security through successful transfer of modern technology. Dr. Cho Gyoung-rae, Director KOPIA appreciated

the untiring efforts and dedication of Pakistani scientists for the success of projects. Later, the Ambassador visited the TCP project sites.

Police to introduce software for tracking

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police will introduce a software to track the cases registered at police stations and ensure update about the development on them. Following the vision of IGP Islamabad Ahsan Younus, a software is being introduced which would have complete record of registered cases besides information about the progress on them and timeline provided to the complainants to resolve their cases.

It would have also the data of all those involved in crime cases in Islamabad. A formal session to acquaint police officials was held at police line headquarters which was also participated by all Muharrars of Islamabad police, front desk staff of police stations, shift in-Charges and computer operators. The officials of Punjab police briefed the participants about this system while DIG (Headquarters) Sadiq Ali and SP (Headquarters) Arif Hussain Shah were also present on the occasion.

4 injured in gas blast in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: At least four people were injured in a blast due to gas leakage in house located in Chaman abad Misryal road Rawalpindi on Monday. The injured were identified as Anum 32 year old, Dua 8 year old, Momin 13 year old and Iman 10 year old and were shifted to HFH. After hectic efforts fire was controlled. No casualty was reported in the incident, an official of Rescue 1122 added. Low gas pressure and suspension of gas supply in various areas of Rawalpindi have forced people to turn to alternate fuel sources to cook meals and keep themselves warm in the chilly weather. - APP



RAWALPINDI: Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Aibek Artekbaev being presented a bouquet during his visit to RCCI. - DNA

DC holds 'Khuli Katchery' to address complaints

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Muhammad Ali here on Monday held a 'Khuli Katchery' at his office with an aim to address complaints of the people at the earliest. The 'Khuli Katchery' was attended among others by a large number of citizens while on this occasion, officers concerned were also present. The DC also listened to the complaints of the citizens and issued on the spot orders to the officers concerned. The DC received applications from senior citizens and women on priority and issued necessary orders. He said that Chief Minister Usman



Buzdar wanted to solve the problems particularly of revenue matters on priority and all the revenue officers should solve the revenue problems of the citizens within shortest possible time frame.

He said that revenue officers should also personally listen to the problems of the citizens on daily basis.

On the occasion, the DC said that the purpose for holding such meetings was to resolve the grievances of the people as soon as possible and to provide relief to the citizens. He said, negligence on part of officials concerned would not be tolerated. - APP

NCOC revises travel protocols for UK passengers

The directives stipulate that flights from the UK to Pakistan be adjusted in such a way so that rapid antigen tests of all passengers at airports can be completed timely

ISLAMABAD: In view of growing cases of Omicron in the United Kingdom, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has revised the travel advisory for the flights coming from the UK to Pakistan.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority, the NCOC has issued new instructions regarding flights from the United Kingdom to Pakistan. Rapid antigen tests (RAT) have been made mandatory at airports for all passengers on flights.

The directives stipulate that flights from the UK to Pakistan be adjusted in such a way so that rapid antigen tests of all passengers at airports can be completed timely. Similarly, one flight after another should have enough time to complete the rapid antigen test of all the passengers of the previous flight. Passengers will be required to take the COVID-19 PCR test 48 hours before boarding the flight.

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) officials said the move was made in the wake of the increasing number of Omicron variants of coronavirus in the UK. It is to be noted that a new strain of coronavirus is spreading rapidly around the world. - DNA

Anti-polio drive in Rwp concludes

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) District Health Authority Dr Faiza Kanwal on Monday said the polio campaign, which started in the entire district on December 13, had concluded successfully. The CEO told APP that as many as 718,000 children below five years of age were administered anti-polio drops during the campaign launched in all tehsils and towns of the district. Dr Faiza informed that the campaign had been extended for one day to reach thousands of children who missed. - APP

Shamim case: IHC seeks more arguments before indictment

CJ Minallah remarked that the affidavit pointed that all judged had compromised. He said it was an open inquiry as judges could not hold a press conference, nor could they issue a press release

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the contempt case of former GB top judge Rana Shamim, Chief Justice Islamabad High Court Athar Minallah has said that the case is an open inquiry as it is the accountability of judges. The chief justice also sought initial arguments in the case before the next hearing in which the indictment would begin. The Islamabad High Court on Monday heard the contempt case against a former top judge of Gilgit-Baltistan Appellate Court Rana Shamim for writing an af-

fidavit accusing former chief justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar of collusion to deny bails to top PML-N leaders before general elections of 2018.

CJ Minallah remarked that the affidavit pointed that all judged had compromised. He said it was an open inquiry as judges could not hold a press conference, nor could they issue a press release.

Lawyer Latif Afridi told the court that the original affidavit was submitted to the Islamabad High Court and Mr Shamim stuck to his earlier statement. The additional attorney general who attended the hearing told the court

that since the attorney general of Pakistan was in the hospital, he appeared before the court. Counsel for Shamim told the court that the original affidavit was sealed and was brought to Pakistan now on the order of the court. The chief justice remarked that the court had not opened the sealed envelope as yet. He said it seemed that Rana Shamim gave a very big statement without any proof. It's a very sensitive matter, he said adding was anyone allowed to point a finger at a judge? He wondered if there was complete freedom to publish anything uttered by anyone against judges.

Kyrgyz Deputy FM visits RCCI

RAWALPINDI: On the sidelines of the 17th extraordinary session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers, Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Aibek Artekbaev and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary H.E. Ulanbek Totuiev visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and called on President Nadeem Rauf. Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Asim Malik, Vice President Talat Awan and members of the Executive Committee were also present on the occasion. Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Aibek Artykbaev exchanged views on issues of bilateral importance and trade relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan and stressed on enhancing exchange of delegations at Chamber level. He said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have deep friendly relations. Ambassador Ulanbek Totuiev said that the volume of bilateral trade is only close to 1.8 million dollars, which could be further increased. Chamber President Nadeem Rauf gave a detailed briefing to the Deputy Foreign Minister on the ongoing activities of the Chamber and future programs. He said that there is a huge potential in the tourism sector for enhancing bilateral trade relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan. Direct flights should be launched. There is a need to increase bilateral trade links and networking at the Chamber of Commerce level, he suggested. - DNA

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For further information please contact the following.

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Mobile: 0300 8553342

Briefs

Police to introduce new digital system

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police has decided to introduce a new digital system for record keeping of police stations and other offices of the department.

The new application was being developed in line with the vision of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younus to ensure maximum facilitation to the complainants, said DIG headquarters Sadiq Ali Dogar.

Addressing at a training session, organized here to apprise the police personnel about the features of new system, he said the state-of-the-art digital system would keep a complete record of First Information Reports, criminals' data and complainants details.

"The system will not only solve the problems of 'Saileen' but play an important role in making the registration and processing of cases in a transparent manner," he remarked. — APP

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Lehtar Road, Zeeshan Colony, Rahara, Bahria Enclave, CM Pak Zong, PHA-1, Isolation Hospital, Park Enclave, 6th Bakhtawar, Chakri, Arsalan Poultry Farm, SPD, Padijal, Gagan, Chahan, Mahuta, Bank Road-II, City Center, Kashmir Road, Azharabad, Hekmadad, Model Town, Pepsu, Sarwar Shaheed, Mehboob Shaheed, Swan, RCCI Express, RCCI-1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, Kahuta City-1, Khawaja, Panjar, Cricket Stadium, T&T, Asghar Mall, B Block, New Malpur, Shakrial, Jamia Masjid Road, Adiala, Jhaura, Shah Jeewan, Azizabad, Chowki No. 22, Cantt, Lalkarti, Zia Masjid, Ghauri Garden, Scheme-2, Karpa, G-6/3, Bani Gala, Abdul Rahim, Crotile, G-9/3, Industrial-1, I-10/2, PHA-1, F-11/2, Rahara, PHA-1, CM Pak Zong, Bahria Enclave, Isolation Hospital, Sunny Bank, Cecil, Barin, Bilwara, Bari Imam, Dhok Hakmadad, Arya Mohalla, Sarafa Bazaar, Jinnah Road, Dhok Hasso, Muslimabad, Syedpur Road, B Block, Shakrial, Gulzar, Quaid, Tariq Shaheed, Tench Bhatta, Dhok Chaudhry, Officer Colony, Nest Road, Lakho Road, I-14/3, Mohanpura, Bank Road-2, Jahangir Road Feeders and surrounding areas. — APP

EETL handles 1,226 bcf LNG annually

ISLAMABAD: Engro Elengy Terminal Limited (EETL), Pakistan's first LNG terminal has handled around 25 million tonnes per annum Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) (1,226 bcf Gas), since it's commissioning in 2015, to meet the energy needs of the country. The terminal has successfully handled about 419 Ship-To-Ship cargoes safely and at the fastest speed in the world, said Chief Executive Officer of Engro Elengy Terminal (EETL) Yusuf Siddiqui in a media briefing. He underlined the need for expansion of existing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals and the development of onshore terminals to tackle the prevailing gas crisis in the country effectively. He said, "To curtail the gas crisis, Pakistan must prioritize the expansion of existing terminals under the approved Third-Party Access (TPA) rules on an immediate basis, while eventually transitioning towards onshore terminals for greater energy security." Highlighting the achievements of EETL, the CEO shared that EETL had set new industry benchmarks in over five years of its safe and essentially non-stop operations with an availability factor of around 98 percent. — APP

HEC, Microsoft renew ETA to help learning outcomes

This ETA will be providing universities with knowledge transfer workshops and trainings on trending Microsoft technologies including Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365, and Microsoft Azure

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Microsoft in Pakistan has renewed the Education Transformation Agreement (ETA). Both organizations partnered once again to help enable positive changes to learning outcomes for the students in the country. The collaboration reimagines the education landscape, which is facing a lot of challenges, especially in post-Pandemic recovery. Under the umbrella of this academic alliance, Microsoft and HEC will be providing number of services to all HEIs in leveraging new technologies to make learning inclusive, personalized, and student centric by blending remote and physical classrooms. This ETA will be providing universities with knowledge transfer workshops and trainings on trending Microsoft technologies including Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365, and Microsoft Azure. So far during Pandemic, more than 150 Universities and 500,000 plus students took advantage of effective learning, all in one place, which let students, faculty, educators, and staff meet, work together, create content, and share resources in Office 365 Education – featuring the simple, intuitive power of Microsoft Teams.

One of the flagship programs of this agreement is Imagine Cup, a global students technology competition organized by Microsoft with the local support of the Higher Education Commission. It provides an opportunity for student technologists, developers, and aspiring entrepreneurs from all



academic backgrounds to collaborate, develop a technology application, and bring their passion to life while gaining a perspective of what is needed to bring a concept to market. In Imagine Cup, the brightest young minds join to exemplify the power of student innovation.

Each year, a team is chosen from Pakistan that competes against the best from around the world, to get a chance to win USD 100,000 and a mentoring session with Microsoft's leadership team. This year, Imagine Cup is live

again and students can register at <https://imaginecup.com/Pakistan>.

"Our long-term partnership with Microsoft empowers the students to use their creativity in addressing real societal problems using Modern Technology. Microsoft has been very helpful in nurturing creative minds through Imagine cup competitions so many of the participants practically implement their ideas into successful startups and turn it into companies. It is proud moment for HEC that our talent is being exposed at Global events and bring laurels for Pakistan" Said HEC Director General IT Nazeer Hussain. Country Education Lead for Microsoft Pakistan Mr. Jibrin Jamshed express his views "We know that technology is a key to fuel economic development, increase work force competitiveness, transitions to a knowledge-based economy and help drive job creation.

The single most important use of technology is to improve education and yet in many countries in the world we have not yet seen digital transformation in education. Change requires strong partnerships and trust. Under HEC's visionary leadership, the aim of this ETA is to keep up with the rapid pace of innovation and design classrooms that foster reform and inspire students to achieve a plethora of success."

Malaysian FM visits Riphah International University



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister (FM) Malaysia, Dato Saifuddin Abdullah participated in the panel discussion on "peaceful coexistence" held here at Faculty of Public Policy, Riphah International University, on the invitation of Riphah International University.

Vice Chancellor Riphah, Prof Dr Anis Ahmad welcomed the Minister with great joy and affection, extending an invitation to a renowned figure as our primary guest at an event to explore many aspects of peaceful coexistence. He also commended the Minister for making it possible for him to attend the event despite his busy schedule at the 17th extraordinary meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad.

Dato Saifuddin said "Malaysia has always been a firm believer in all efforts and initiatives that promote peaceful coexistence between nations, faiths,

cultures and the country is multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-religious". Respect and mutual understanding must be at the core of our interactions and speech, discourse and diversity can be a powerful source of strength and resilience, he stressed.

It is necessary to learn to appreciate them and treat them with real curiosity and respect. In the midst of global uncertainty, it is imperative that we work together to achieve peace and harmony. He affirmed that being OIC and UN member states we must speak with one voice on the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities in all corners of the world and a focus on alleviating human suffering. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of strengthening international collaboration and multilateralism, as well as thinking of ourselves as a family of nations. The Minister reaffirmed that Pakistan

and Malaysia have strong and enduring links between the two fraternal countries, defined by warmth, cordiality, and mutual trust, and that bilateral relations has reached a new level in numerous domains, implying increased engagement and cooperation.

This is also commendable that Pakistan hosted OIC Foreign Ministers meeting to discuss the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan as there is an urgent need to accelerate the relief of Afghan people. The Minister praised Dr Anis for his national and international academic contribution at various fronts.

The other distinguished participants included; Professors of leading Universities of Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Member of Parliaments, Chairperson National Commission on the Rights of Child, Diplomats, Researchers, leading Anchors, Political Analyst and the students. — APP

AIUO, JICA join hands to exploit CPEC potential

ISLAMABAD: The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIUO) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are joining hands to launch a project for provision of skill-based training to the people in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) that are being set up along the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route.

"Initially, under the project training will be started in Rashakai and Gilgit-Baltistan Industrial Zones while later its scope will be extended to all other SEZs," AIUO Vice Chancellor, Dr Ziaul Qayyum told APP in an exclusive interview.

Under the said project, the VC said, the varsity has designed specific course for the local people to get them trained keeping in view the requirements of the industrial zones so that they could easily find relevant jobs and get benefit from the multi-billion CPEC project. He expressed the hope that this would be a sustainable model to engage local people, adding the university was already in process of designing courses in this regard.

To a question about skill-based education, the VC said that it was basic mandate of the varsity since its establishment to provide skill-based education to the people.

The university had devised special courses in computer, tractor repairing, poultry and farming to provide technical training to the people and help them earn respectable livelihood.

He said even the university arranged courses in tailoring and embroidery with private partnership to train girls in Gilgit Baltistan region.

To a question the AIUO VC told APP that the university was providing education to all irrespective of their age, gender or social status. He said, there no age bar on acquiring education from AIUO, adding free education was being provided to transgender community, jail inmates and children of martyrs while concession was also being provided to orphans and poor students.

He said the university was also going to further extend education programme being provided to jail inmates. In this regard, he said that he has already hold meetings with IGs Prisoners so that education could also be provided to those children who were in jails with their mothers.

Regarding faculty development programme, the VC said 45 members would be sent abroad for Ph.D on university expenses while Human Resource and administrative training would also be given to the staff.

He said admission process was also divided into phases for conveniences of the students and papers were also being sent to other regional offices randomly for marking to reduce burden on main campus.

The university has also introduced a concept of smart classrooms in areas where internet facilities were not available, he added. — APP



Two Capital's colleges facing staff shortage

ISLAMABAD: The two colleges of Islamabad Capital Territory were still facing acute shortage of staff due to non-creation of remaining posts of teaching and non-teaching staff despite lapse of even two and half years.

According to an official source, the Planning Commission recommended 34 posts of teaching and 22 non-teaching posts for Islamabad Model College for Girls (IMCG) Bhara Kahu and 35 teaching and 30 non-teaching posts for Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB (Sihala) in 2017. The cases of creation of posts of both the colleges were presented in the meeting of the austerity committee (Finance Division) held in May 2019.

The committee decided that initially around 55 percent posts of both the colleges would be created and remaining 45 percent posts of the staff would be sanctioned in the next fiscal year (2019-20). Consequently, 46 percent posts for IMCB Sihala were reduced and the college got 20 out of 35 teaching posts and 16 out of 30 non-teaching posts.

Similarly, 40 percent posts for IMCG Bhara Kahu were reduced and college was allocated 19 out of 34 posts of teachers and 15 out of 22 posts of non-teaching staff. The case of creation of the remaining 22 teaching and non-teaching posts of IMCG Bhara Kahu and 29 teaching and non-teaching posts of IMCB Sihala is pending for the two and half years.

A Professor on the condition of anonymity said, "This unnecessary delay in creation of the remaining posts of both the colleges speaks of lack of interest on part of authorities at the helm of affairs because the case has not been pursued effectively and sustainably." He further said that there is an acute shortage of qualified teachers in almost all the FG colleges including these two colleges. — APP

Five more diagnosed with corona in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: Five more patients were tested positive for the fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours in the district, including one of each belonging to the Rawalpindi Cantonment, Rawal town, Potohar town, Chakwal and Islamabad areas.

According to the new data issued by the District Corona Management centre on Monday, 24 coronavirus confirmed patients were admitted to three city facilities, including 13 in the Institute of Urology, six in Fauji Foundation Hospital and four in Benazir Bhutto Hospital. The report updated that three patients were on ventilators in critical condition, seven stable and 14 on oxygen support.

The report added that during the last 24 hours, 903 samples were collected, out of which 898 were declared negative, while the positivity rate was recorded at 0.55 percent. — APP

Rwp sees rise in divorce ratio

ISLAMABAD: The garrison city's family courts have recorded over 32,000 family disputes in one year of which 3500 ended up in divorce and behind this significant rise social transformation is blamed as a major reason.

Women's economic independence, awareness of rights and freedom from interference are reshaping archaic social structure and they are no longer ready to remain stuck in a bond to which they consider a "surrendered relationship," accomplished by their mothers and grandmothers.

Advocate High Court Rawalpindi Shagufta Arif who has been dealing family cases for two decades told this scribe, many of these divorce cases come with the background of forced marriages where one of the partners agreed to marry just to fulfill family's wish or to protect their honor. There are two types of litigants they have to deal with,

Shagufta said. An uneducated rigid class who want to teach each other a lesson through courts in a conflict while the educated couples who realize their relationships are "emotionally barren" and they try to reach an amicably registered break-up to avoid physical or emotional abuse, "and part their ways." "Mostly, there are cases of dissolution (Khula) by females blaming physical violence inflicted from her spouse or in laws and they consider being divorced is better than being a dead" she said. "People are more willing to dissolve the marriage rather than dragging an abusive relationship", she remarked.

According to information received through Right to Information (RTI) provided by the district judiciary of Rawalpindi, some ten percent increase is recorded in the divorce cases as compared to the previous year. — APP

SAWIE Launches Pakistan Agriculture Network of Yield Enhancement

Eng. Mushtaq Gill CEO, SAWIE, said we are honoured to celebrate farmers' day. Pakistan needs to take immediate steps to improve water productivity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: SAWIE launched Pakistan Agriculture Network of Yield Enhancement (PAYNE) to fast track the innovations in climate smart agriculture to farmers across Pakistan through a yield competition.

Ms. Shandana Gulzar chair Commonwealth Parliament Association and member National Assembly Special Committee on Agriculture Products, chaired the launching ceremony of PAYNE Network held online. She emphasised the need of innovative solutions to address food security.

Prof. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH (OIC ministerial standing committee on scientific and technological cooperation) said, we need to develop interdisciplinary approach to address the food security, malnutrition and water scarcity challenges. He said, there is a need to engage with the OIC member countries that have similar challenges.

Prof. Masroor Babar, Vice Chancellor, Dera Ismael Khan Agriculture University said, we need to upskill our farmers the way we plant crops

and raise livestock to enhance productivity. He said there is a need of data collection to compare and benchmark cost of production.

Prof. Fateh Muri, Vice Chancellor, Sindh Agriculture University Tando Jam said, we need to improve and innovate our sowing practices. He said, irrigation management and use of inputs have a direct impact on our crop yield.

Eng. Mushtaq Gill CEO, SAWIE, said we are honoured to celebrate farmers' day. Pakistan needs to take immediate steps to improve water productivity.

Dr. Abdul Wakeel said, we need to improve our soil health & nutrient use efficiency that has major role in cutting down losses and greenhouse gasses emissions to mitigate climate change. Dr. Saghir Ahmed, Director Cotton Research Institute said, the PAYNE competition is step in the right direction to encourage adaptation of beneficial management practices to address the pest and diseases issues in the cotton crop. Mr. Babar Farid, a progressive farmer said, he has saved 90 hours of irrigation per acre that has helped to increase his Maize productivity.

Mr. Kenta Ohno, JICA advisor said, he is delighted to see ecosystem approach of PAYNE fostering capacity building of farmers through a competition to promote climate smart agriculture technologies in Pakistan. PAYNE is organizing first national competition of farmers across Pakistan to compare their crop yield and costs using the advancements of digital technologies. It is led by an independent unbiased advisory service – SAWIE with representatives of research and industry. PAYNE will conduct the farm comparison that includes the crop yield of major crops selected by this network. It will calculate cost-benefit analysis and benchmarking achievements of the selected farmers at the end of each crop season – Rabi and Kharif.

The objectives of PAYNE Network are aligned with the plan of government of Pakistan to transform agriculture and enhance productivity. This knowledge-based approach will support fast transfer of innovative solutions to farmers. The farmers will be able to share the impact and success stories of new farm interventions from tillage to harvesting of the crop. This will help

to outreach to farmers to improve their productivity and income through creating an environment of competition among them.

Ms. Shandana Gulzar formally announced the PAYNE network. She said, that the network is opening new avenues to educate farmers and promote innovation to increase farmers productivity and income. I'm glad to see the support from credible universities and research organisations of Pakistan, she said. The PAYNE competition has seven award categories per crop. Each category will have further three winners (Gold, Silver and Bronze). The deadline for application is 18th January 2022, the winners will be announced on 18th December 2022 on Kissan day. The award categories include: economical & sustainable yield, climate smart agriculture farm innovation, water productivity, young farmer, women farmer, crop residue management, farmer entrepreneurship/ service provider.

Ms. Shandana Gulzar invited farmers across Pakistan to take part in this competition to enhance agriculture productivity and contribute towards prosperity of the country.

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Crippling GST

THE government's intention of increasing the General Sales Tax (GST) to 17 percent on the import of computers and digital accessories is being strongly opposed by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. It has rightly pointed out that this move will hamper the growth of the IT industry and will raise input costs for businesses that are already struggling to remain afloat in the current economic environment. Given how important digitisation has become in a world suffering from a pandemic, the trickle-down effects of this will be disastrous. The government currently is acting under inflationary pressures with the hopes that a higher tax will discourage imports and thereby, decrease our trade deficit. However, applying blanket tax policies without considering the impact it may have on major sections of the economy is not the solution. Any initiative to bring more technology into domestic businesses and industries will simply become too expensive of an option. They will also lose out as most business transactions now occur digitally and if they lack the equipment to enter the market, then they will simply fade into insignificance. This will also prove to be counterproductive as our local businesses will not be able to contribute to the economy positively. The government must also keep in mind that the education sector, and consequently students and teachers, will be affected the most by this policy. The uncertainty that prevailed during the pandemic forced this sector to go online which necessitated the use of laptops, computers and their accessories. We are not yet in the clear, especially with the new Omicron variant spreading across the world, so a higher GST would completely disadvantage major sections of the public and come in the way of their education. It was the PM's vision to make Digital Pakistan a reality but with the kind of policies being pitched by the government, this vision might just remain a vision. Pakistan has a long way to go in regards to the IT sector and the process of coming up to date technologically with the rest of the world. We must not stand in the way of the little progress we have made and must instead, find alternative solutions.

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Omicron surge

“KEEP calm like Ma'am,” the Sun's front page urged, favourably comparing the Queen's decision to carry on with her Christmas plans to the actions of politicians who “lose their heads over Covid”. By Thursday morning, Her Majesty had cancelled her pre-Christmas lunch, following the biggest single-day rise in cases since the pandemic began. Many of her subjects have already made similar decisions; more will follow. Schools are closing early due to staff shortages. By late afternoon, another mammoth surge in recorded infections had been announced: 88,376 new cases. Chris Whitty, England's chief medical officer, warned MPs that the country could see record daily hospitalisations, above the previous peak of just over 4,500. There is an eerily familiar feeling to this pattern: sharply rising cases, scientists sounding the alarm, the public acting accordingly, and Downing Street continuing to hedge its bets while other nations go further, with Nicola Sturgeon asking Scots to stay at home “as much as is feasible”. The government appears to hope it can dodge responsibility for the economic costs of curbing Covid by muddling its messages, doing too little to protect an NHS which was already under severe strain while essentially pretending that the shuttered businesses and laid-off workers are not its problem. The hospitality industry is still hoping for relief from the Treasury, but some venues have already closed at what is usually their busiest time of year and theatres have cancelled performances. Mr Johnson, who managed to keep a straight face while declaring that “I follow the rules”, doesn't want to hamper people's festivities, while claims of yet another lockdown party in Downing Street – with the prime minister himself reportedly in attendance – are emerging. Nor does he want to further anger backbenchers emboldened by the 100-strong rebellion over Covid passes, who have already turned on Prof Whitty. The hope is that the doubling rate will slow as people take more precautions, buying time for boosters to take effect; and that the outbreak could ebb faster than previous strains did. Within a year and a half, new antivirals and vaccines able to cope with a wide range of strains will mean that most of the response to future variants will probably be medical, Prof Whitty suggested. Eighteen months, however, is a long way off. Most of the public would be satisfied to know what the next nine days hold in store.

It is time to hold the FBI accountable for its crimes

Steve Downs

The FBI placed innocent Muslims on the no-fly list, in order to force them to become informants against their own communities. It is now reported that the FBI's secret informants committed more than 22,000 crimes during the last decade which cost taxpayers \$42m on average per year

ON November 18, a New York judge threw out the convictions of Muhammad Aziz and Khalil Islam, 55 years after the two men were convicted of the February 1965 assassination of Malcolm X. A two-year investigation by the Manhattan district attorney's office revealed that both the New York Police Department and the FBI failed to disclose exculpatory information about the men, which likely would have led to their acquittal. Judge Ellen Biben, who presided over the hearing, spoke about the “serious miscarriages of justice”, while district attorney, Cyrus Vance, apologised for “serious unacceptable violations of the law and the public trust” by the FBI and the NYPD, and stated that the defendants did not receive a fair trial and their convictions must be vacated. The men's exoneration was not a surprise. Historians, journalists, and legal scholars have known for decades that the two men were innocent, while the men themselves have long maintained their innocence. The surprise was that the NYPD and FBI had kept silent about their exculpatory information, apparently content to see two innocent men framed and incarcerated for decades for a crime they did not commit. Black and other marginalised communities have also learned over the decades not to trust the FBI, given the agency's well-documented history of targeting and

animus against them. Yet, this shocking perversion of justice raises serious questions: Were the real killers working with the FBI? And is that why the FBI withheld the information? What does it say that the only witnesses who placed Aziz and Islam at the scene of the crime were FBI informants? We do not know the answers because the NYPD and FBI still lack transparency. The hidden exculpatory evidence was presumably gathered covertly as part of the notorious FBI counterintelligence programme from the 1950s to the 1970s known as COINTELPRO. It sought to “neutralise” Black power leaders through illegal tactics such as surveillance, infiltration, and disruption. For those familiar with these abuses and this era more broadly, the FBI's questionable role in this case was unsurprising. US Representative Bobby Rush, a former Black Panther leader from Chicago, immediately pointed the finger at the FBI for the wrongful convictions. In a November 18 statement, he said, “I am struck by this most dastardly and evil fact that two men suffered decades of imprisonment as a result of the active collaboration and treachery of J Edgar Hoover's FBI. Malcolm X was a shining example of Black American manhood and humanity. For his opposite, J Edgar Hoover – a low life – to be at the centre of his assassination is indeed an American tragedy and flies in the face of Malcolm's high ethical standards. There are still questions that must be answered regarding Malcolm's assassination. Who knew what, and when did they know it?” Indeed, if the FBI had a hand in Malcolm X's assassination, it would not be their first assassination. The FBI has now paid substantial damages for participating in the COINTELPRO assassinations of Black Panther Party activists Fred Hampton and Mark Clark on December 4, 1969. And the FBI has acknowledged allowing Black Panther leader Geronimo Pratt to be convicted of murder in 1972 and spending almost 30 years in jail, while they silently held evidence from their COINTELPRO surveillance that he was 400 miles (640km) away at the time of the murder. The “discovery” of exculpatory material in Malcolm X's murder suggests that the FBI must immediately conduct an independent review of all their COINTELPRO files to determine what other cases might be affected and what other innocent defendants might be freed. The lack of transparency about Malcolm X's murder becomes even more troubling when we consider the FBI's conduct in the war on terror. After the 9/11 attacks, the FBI was tasked with preventing the next attack supposedly being organised by vast networks of terrorists in the US.

The FBI used the broad powers of the national security apparatus to surveil Muslims and other marginalised communities, and soon discovered that there were virtually no terrorist networks in the US. All of the surveillance that went on for some two decades failed to uncover a single terrorist plot. Yet instead of declaring that terrorism was not coming from the American-Muslim community, the FBI set out to manufacture terrorists from innocent Muslims to prove their false premise of a looming threat. Hundreds of Muslims were preemptively prosecuted, charged for engaging in constitutionally-protected activities like speech or charity. Others were entrapped by offers of money, or suffered from mental illness and were manipulated into participating in FBI terrorism schemes. The FBI placed innocent Muslims on the no-fly list, in order to force them to become informants against their own communities. It is now reported that the FBI's secret informants committed more than 22,000 crimes during the last decade which cost taxpayers \$42m on average per year. In practice, the FBI's policies had disastrous effects on Muslim communities. When it became known that mosques and their members were under intense electronic and physical surveillance, Muslims were forced to self-censor, avoiding conversations with strangers or even close friends who might be FBI informants, or struggling about what to share on social media. Families of Muslims wrongfully accused of terrorism were often shunned by their communities. Careers were destroyed by false FBI accusations and lengthy incarcerations. Yet the FBI was able to blame their own terrorist plots on the Muslim community and make it appear that Muslims were disloyal and violent. The exoneration of Malcolm X's falsely accused killers underscores just how long the FBI has operated without transparency and effective oversight to impede justice and destroy lives. Forcing innocent men to serve decades in prison by withholding exculpatory evidence that would have set them free has never been acceptable. Now is the time for a thorough re-assessment of the FBI's legacy from COINTELPRO to the war on terror. One step towards accountability would be through the passage of Rush's bill, the COINTELPRO Full Disclosure Act, which would compel the FBI and other government agencies to release all records related to the COINTELPRO operation. Finally, it is time to install independent oversight such as a conviction review unit in the Department of Justice to ensure that the FBI protects all US residents and citizens equally, and does not scapegoat those who are least able to defend themselves.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Rohingya refugee island is a prison in all but name

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

Cox's Bazar is a sprawling shanty town that emerged as refugees fled into the area from Myanmar.

There was no pre-planned infrastructure

A BANGLADESH government plan to relocate some Rohingya refugees from the sprawling camps in Cox's Bazar to purpose-built facilities on Bhasan Char island has worried human rights observers since it was announced. Now the Red Cross is echoing the concerns of activists after its own evaluation of the situation on the ground. Coming from an organization with a strict policy of avoiding politics, this must spur Dhaka to address the issues with its relocation plans. Bhasan Char is a small silt island in the Bay of Bengal that only emerged in 2006. The low-lying islet remains prone to flooding and, in the event of a tsunami, may well be permanently submerged once again. There is little in the way of topsoil, so agriculture on any scale is impossible. And it is much too small to hold the entire Ro-

hingya community. The most generous estimations suggest that it might accommodate 200,000 people. The total number of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar is upwards of 1 million. Refugees relocated to the island will find themselves more than 37 miles offshore on a precarious piece of land that cannot feed them. There is no obvious economic value to the island, so there will be no jobs. Thus, the entire population will likely be economically dependent on the mainland in perpetuity. Those living on the island will remain permanently at the mercy of the government, with no power to provide anything for themselves. And the minority of the Rohingya community who choose to take up residence there will find themselves increasingly isolated over time from the larger community in Cox's Bazar, as travel between the two areas is difficult and will require assistance from the government. We have said before that we are sympathetic to the authorities' motivations for building Bhasan Char and inviting some of the Rohingya refugees there. Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, and there are few places where facilities could be built for the refugees. Cox's Bazar is a sprawling shanty town that emerged as refugees fled into the area from Myanmar. There was no pre-planned infrastructure; the shacks, such as they are, are a fire hazard and refugees frequently die in blazes. Retrospectively providing the area with decent civic, health and education infrastructure has proven difficult. And to top it all, the area is geologically unstable and in the path of the region's monsoons. For all the problems with Bhasan Char, the Red

Cross found that at least the housing stock seems decent, so fires and squalor will be a less pressing concern. This is not to detract from the efforts of Bangladesh to build decent infrastructure for the refugees. In this respect, at least, the country seems to be taking its responsibility toward the refugees seriously – even if, as the Red Cross notes, healthcare and education facilities on the island remain inadequate. The problem with Bhasan Char, however, remains that the concept was fundamentally flawed from the beginning. Given the isolation and lack of economic opportunity for those who move there, the island simply does not have the capacity to host a functional community. Once you have moved there, there is nothing for you to do with your life except sit and hope that the government keeps sending you food and other supplies. Such a place is where communities go to die. It may not look like a prison, and may not be intended as a prison, but that is what it will end up becoming for those who live there. After they have fled genocide in Myanmar, the Rohingya who end up on Bhasan Char will probably end up spending the rest of their lives wasting away in hopelessness on a pile of silt. This is not a solution to genocide. This looks frighteningly close to the completion of a genocide. If we are to avoid this scenario, Bhasan Char must either be abandoned or developed into an economically viable area, with close trade and transport links to Cox's Bazar. Building a few houses in the middle of nowhere and dumping people there helps nobody, even if the authorities have the best of intentions.

Courtesy: Arab News

US' malign influence in Iraq remains

Tallha Abdulrazaq

The US intervention was coordinated with its regional nemesis Iran, which also had a vested interest in keeping the Iraqi state alive, if only on life support. The American “Great Satan” provided close air support to Iran's sectarian militias of the “Great Imam” and eventually managed to defeat Daesh culminating in the recapture of Mosul

US-IRAN geopolitical challenges and a dysfunctional Iraqi government mean the country is teetering on a precarious edge. More than seven years after it intervened militarily to push back Daesh and prop up its client state in Iraq, the United States officially announced this month that it has ended its combat mission in the country it tore apart with war and corruption. While the Iraqi government has trumpeted this in a vain attempt to appear sovereign, the reality is that American troops remain in Iraq and will almost certainly be a flashpoint for tensions with Iran-backed militant groups, particularly as the nuclear negotiations with Tehran flounder and each side looks for leverage against the other. As a result of these geopolitical considerations, as well as the US and Iran fostering militia rule, constant military and political interventions, and domestic politics in a state of perpetual chaos and flux, the formalities of US involvement may have changed, but it is likely that this is the end of one chapter of violent conflict in Iraq and the beginning of another. The end of this combat mission is the second such time in less than two decades that the United States has announced a military disengagement from Iraq. The first was, of course, the 2003 invasion orchestrated by former President George W Bush and his partner in crime, then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Under the Barack Obama administration, the US formally ended (at least on paper) more than eight years of invasion and occupation in late 2011. However, this was not to last, as the sectarian system Washington intentionally left in its wake led to the increased despotism of men like Shia Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki, who Iraqi lawmakers directly linked to the rise of Daesh. By June 2014, Obama deployed his military to conduct extensive airstrikes in Iraq against Daesh which had – alongside other Iraqi militants they later betrayed – conquered a third of the fragile country in a matter of months and were now threatening both the federal capital in Baghdad and the Kurdish regional government in Erbil. The US intervention was coordinated with its regional nemesis Iran, which also had a vested interest in keeping the Iraqi state alive, if only on life support. The American “Great Satan” provided close air support to Iran's sectarian militias of the “Great Imam” and eventually managed to defeat Daesh culminating in the recapture of Mosul in 2017. The irony almost writes itself. Since then, the US maintained its troops on a combat footing using the justification that Daesh still needed to be fought. The American military presence in Iraq, in conjunction with the rise of former President Donald Trump and regional geopolitical disputes relating to Iran's nuclear programme,

caused Iraq to serve as a flashpoint between Washington and Tehran. To pressure the Trump administration into returning to the nuclear deal it abandoned in 2018, Iran used its Iraqi Shia proxies to attack US interests. This escalation led to the storming of the US embassy as 2019 closed out, an action that enraged Trump to such a degree that he ordered the unprecedented measure of assassinating Major General Qasem Soleimani by drone strike. Soleimani was not only the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force, but also Iran's point man for its regional ambitions for decades. His death sent shockwaves not only through Iran, but also through the patronage networks of Shia militias and politicians he had cultivated in the post-Saddam era. While Soleimani's death represented a grievous blow to Iran, this did not stop Shia militant attacks against American targets even after incumbent President Joe Biden took office with the promise of returning to the nuclear accords. Shia militias have demanded US troops evacuate Iraq by the end of the year or else face war. It was in light of this ultimatum, combined with increasing American isolationism and recalibration towards China and the Pacific that the joint US-Iraqi strategic dialogue took place earlier this year, and set yet another “final” timetable for an end to US operations by December 31, 2021. However, while formal combat operations have ended, America's military presence in Iraq has merely shifted posture from kinetic operations to one of “advising, assisting and enabling” the Iraqi military, as recently confirmed by Biden's Middle East and North Africa Coordinator, Brett McGurk. Clearly, this falls short of what was expected by Iran and its militias and, if the “empty shell” nuclear deal currently being renegotiated falls through, there is a high possibility that Tehran will resume its proxy attacks against Washington's interests, including the troops that remain in Iraq. While the geopolitical effects of American interventionism in the Middle East are clear to see, it is the domestic effects that often go underreported. This is particularly the case when state-society relations are examined, relations that have remained strained and fraught for two decades. Domestically, Iraq has had a fragile political system ever since the 2003 invasion. While the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party was oppressive, it still commanded a certain level of respect as it was viewed as indigenous. In contemporary Iraq, however, democracy has become a byword for corruption, mismanagement, and subservience to foreign powers and their whims. Iraq has consistently ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world. This corruption has led to violence, entire ministries being pumped for money by patronage networks, and incessant problems with water and power supplies. Baghdad is also powerless to prevent foreign powers from using it as a plaything, and does nothing apart from issuing occasional statements of discontent. This inability to monopolise and control violence within its own borders – one of the fundamental definitions of a state – has led to Iraqis losing faith in their government. A lack of faith in the capabilities of government due to corruption and lack of sovereignty also inevitably leads to a lack of faith in the process by which these governments come to power. While much was promised to Iraqis in terms of democracy finally granting them freedom from oppression, their lived reality since 2003 has been one of spiralling violence, insecurity, a lack of prosperity, and the perception that foreign powers decide who sits in the driving seat, irrespective of what they vote for. The last election itself is being placed in doubt by the losing parties seeking to declare the vote fraudulent. Similar to Afghanistan, another US experiment, Iraq is on a cliff edge and the slightest instability could send it hurtling into the abyss from a dysfunctional democracy into a full-blown civil war. If Washington fully disengages, and if the US decides to confront Iran militarily, then the two main pillars supporting this vacuous enterprise will disintegrate and will come crashing down in an orgy of violence. Once again, it will be regular Iraqis who pay the price for a tragedy they had nothing to do with.

Courtesy: TRT World

Briefs

Fazl's party surprises PTI in KP polls

FROM PAGE 01

The elections were held in 17 districts, comprising 64 tehsils, on a party-basis as per the ruling of the courts. Out of 64 tehsils, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) headed by Maulana Fazlur Rehman is leading on 18 tehsil chairperson seats, whereas the PTI is trailing behind with 14 seats. The Awami National Party (ANP) also managed to win nine seats. Independent candidates have bagged nine tehsil chairperson seats as well, the results suggested.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Jamaat-e-Islami, and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf managed to grab two seats each. The PTI also lost the Peshawar mayor seat to the JUI-F with a wide margin. JUI-F's Zubair Ali secured 63,388 votes whereas PTI's Rizwan Bangash secured 50,659 votes. Out of seven tehsils in Peshawar, the PTI could only win one seat, while the JUI-F and ANP grabbed three and two seats, respectively.

In Mardan, the PTI was wiped out; the JUI-F secured victory in three tehsils and the ANP came in first in two tehsils. In Bannu, the PTI candidate is in the lead on the mayoral seat. It has also secured the tehsil chairperson slots in Buner, Kagara, Daggar, Gambat and Rustam. In Charsada, JUI-F's Hamza Asif secured over 33,000 votes to win the tehsil chairperson slot in Shabqadar. In Tank, the JUI-F secured a win in both tehsils. In Lakki Marwat's tehsil Nowrang, JI candidate Haji Aziz got over 17,000 votes to secure the seat for his party.

LB elections proved that PTI govt...

FROM PAGE 01

Haideri and Maulana Abdul Wasi were also present in the meeting. Talking to media in Quetta on Monday, he said that the local body elections in KP proved that the PTI government is fake and we should be optimistic about next year's elections. Fazlur Rehman said that it has been proved that the words of corruption are used as a weapon, adding that defamations and humiliation of politicians should end now. Politicians who propagate against politicians are a thousand times more corrupt. He went on to say that his party has emerged as the largest party in the local body elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it was proved that the PTI government is fake.

Regarding Aslam Raisani, the JUI-F chief said, "I have been here before and have always received respect here. Whenever there was any parliamentary issue, Nawab Aslam Raisani always stood by me."

Amir Muttaqi downplays...

FROM PAGE 01

"It was a summit, everyone has an opinion," Muttaqi told reporters in Kabul when asked about his stance toward Prime Minister Khan's remarks. "Imran Khan criticized the former (Afghan) governments. I think officials of the former governments felt obligated to react, I don't see (Khan's remarks) as insulting." Imran Khan, at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting on Afghanistan, said Daesh threatens Pakistan from Afghanistan and so stability in Afghanistan is necessary. "We have had attacks from (the) Afghan border, from ISIL, into Pakistan," he said Khan also said that due to years of corruption in the Afghan government, poverty was widespread in Afghanistan even before the former government's collapse. He also made cultural remarks about Afghanistan. "We must understand... when we talk about human rights, every society is different. Every society's idea of human rights and women's rights are different," Khan said. "Culture in Kabul was always different to rural areas just like in Peshawar it is completely different (the culture) to the districts joining the Afghanistan border."

Muzammil, Ushna wins BB National Tennis C'ship crown

Senator Taj Haider and Senator Farhatullah Babar were the chief guest in the concluding ceremony of the championship and distributed trophies and cash prizes to the players

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Muzammil Murtza and Ushna Sohail wins the championship titles in Men's and Women's singles categories finals by defeating talented Mohammad Shoab and Sarah Mahboob in the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed National Tennis Complex here at Islamabad Tennis Complex (ITC).

In the first Men's singles final, Muzammil Murtaza brought an end with talented Muhammad Shoab's winning spree in an exciting and closely fought match, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

Mohammad Shoab who overcame Pakistani number one tennis player Aqeel Khan in the semifinal of the championship lost the first game in the final by 4-6 but fought back in the second game by 6-4.

In the third and decisive game Muzammil



controlled his nerves in the match and not allowing Shoab to make pressure on him as Muzammil won the last game by 6-3 to clinch the championship title. In the women's singles final Ushna Sohail triumphed over Sarah Mahboob by easy

victory as Sarah failed to show her best in the final match. Ushna used her experience to down the opponent as she took the lead in the first game by 6-3 and won the second game by 6-1.

Senator Taj Haider and Senator Farhatullah Babar were the chief guest in the concluding ceremony of the championship and distributed trophies and cash prizes to the players.

In the men's doubles final, Aqeel Khan, with his partner Muhammad Abid beat Mohammad Heera Ashiq and Yousaf Ali 6-3, 6-0. The Under-18 girl's title was won by Amna Ali, who beat Sheeza Sajid 6-1, 6-2 in the final.

Boy's under 18 final was won by Abdullah Adnan as he beat Hamid Israr 6-3, 6-4. Boy's under 14 final was won by Mohammad Salir, who beat Ibrahima Ashraf 4-5(6) 4-2, 4-1. Boy's under 12 category was won by Hamza Roman, who beat Abdul Basit 4-1, 4-0.

Emma Raducanu wins BBC sports personality of the year

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Teenage US Open champion Emma Raducanu has been voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2021. Raducanu, then 18, ended Britain's 44-year wait for a women's Grand Slam singles champion with her remarkable victory at Flushing Meadows. Her fairytale win followed a run to the Wimbledon fourth round in July on her Grand Slam main draw debut.

In a public vote, diver Tom Daley placed second and swimmer Adam Peaty was third. Manchester City and England forward Raheem Sterling, boxer Tyson Fury, and Great Britain's

most successful Paralympian Sarah Storey were also shortlisted for the main award. "It's such an honour just to be among these nominees. Congrats to you and all your achievements," Raducanu said.

US Open champion Emma Raducanu wins BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2021 "I'm really happy with this, I've watched Sports Personality of the Year growing up and it's an honour to be among those past winners. "I'm happy for British tennis as well, and that we've managed to get this award... again! "Thanks to all the fans and voters, this year has been insane. The energy this year playing at Wimbledon in front of my home crowd, that was

something I've never felt before."

Now 19 and ranked British number one, Raducanu becomes the first female tennis player to be crowned Sports Personality of the Year since Virginia Wade in 1977 - the last British woman to win a Grand Slam singles title. Andy Murray was the last tennis player to win the award, with his third coming in 2016. Raducanu is the first female to win the award since Zara Phillips, now Tindall, in 2006.

Fresh from completing her A-Levels, Raducanu burst onto the scene at Wimbledon, where she was handed a wildcard into the main draw late on after making her WTA Tour debut earlier in June. Wins over impressive opposition and appearances on show courts followed as she progressed to the fourth round, and in doing so, became the youngest British woman to reach the Wimbledon last 16 in the Open era.

Her dream run ended in heartbreaking fashion as she was forced to retire from her fourth-round match with breathing difficulties - but little did anyone know what was around the corner. In winning the US Open title in September with a 6-4 6-3 victory over fellow teenager Leylah Fernandez, Raducanu became:

- The first qualifier in the Open era to win a Grand Slam
- The youngest women's Grand Slam champion since Maria Sharapova at Wimbledon in 2004
- The youngest Briton to win a Grand Slam title
- The first woman to win the US Open without dropping a set since Serena Williams in 2014

She will enter 2022 ranked 19th in the world and with a new coach, Torben Beltz.



Shaheen to lead Lahore Qalandars in HBL PSL 7

LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars has announced Shaheen Afridi as the new captain of the side as he replaces Sohail Akhtar who led the Qalandars in the previous edition of the marquee domestic competition HBL Pakistan Super League.

Shaheen Afridi's appointment was confirmed in a press conference on Monday where the CEO of the franchise Atif Rana confirmed the previously rumored news. The appointment of Shaheen Afridi will end Sohail Akhtar's reign at the helm after two years as he remains the most successful captain for the franchise, who led them to their only final in the competition back in PSL 5. "My priority is always to polish and see a young cricketer improving his career towards betterment. Never saw any cricketer groom so well and quickly with the skills as Shaheen Afridi," said head coach Aqib Javed, who was also present at the event. It is worth adding that the Pakistan superstar left-arm pacer was previously the deputy to Sohail Akhtar in PSL 6 and this will be Shaheen's first-ever captaincy stint in professional cricket.

The 21-year-old joined the Lahore Qalandars franchise in the third edition of the tournament and since then, he has been a standout performer. He is currently the leading wicket-taker for the franchise and overall the seventh-highest wicket-taker in the tournament's history. The left-arm pacer has 50 wickets at an average of 21.20 and an economy rate of 7.65 in 37 matches. Regarded as one of the best bowlers in the world right now, Shaheen lit the world cricket on fire after a supremely impressive 2021. He proved pivotal in Pakistan's run to the semifinals in the T20 World Cup before Pakistan crashed out to Australia, he has joined the Pakistan greats in the list of leading Test wicket-takers as well. - DNA

Serena National Ranking Tennis C'ship starts

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tennis Federation is pleased to inform that the Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Championships-2021 commenced at the PTF Complex, Islamabad on 20th December 2021. The Serena Hotels are playing a very important role in the promotion of sports and especially tennis as part of their sports diplomacy. Mr Salim Saifullah Khan President-PTF thanked Serena Hotels Management for their continuous support. 180 entries have been received in the mega event from all over Pakistan, which is very encouraging and shows the growth of tennis in Pakistan. A total number of 52 matches were played on the opening day from Tuesday, 21st December, at 9:30 am, where the top-ranked players will be seen in action. **Following are the results: Men's Singles Qualifying Matches: (1st Round)** Ahmed Murad w/o Shafiqat Rasool; Hamza Rehmat by Imran Haider 6-1; Musa Chudhary bt Syed Murtaza



6-1; Faizan Shahid bt Kamran Irfan 6-4; Parbhat Kumar w/o Bilal Farooq; Nalain Abbas bt M. Salar 6-1; Yawar Abbas bt Abdullah Khan 6-2; Bilal Asim bt Ibrahim Bin Sohail 6-0; Talha bin Asif bt M. Talha Khan 6-1; Azeem Shahid w/o Shaheen Mahmood; M. Huzaifa Khan bt Aqil Khan 6-1; Raahim Veqar bt Anayat Raja 6-1; Sami Zeb Khan bt M. Talha Khan 6-2; Abbas Khan bt Adnan Rashid Khan 6-2; Abdullah Karim w/o Hasan Ali; Asad Zaman w/o Haseeb Silat; Jabir Ali bt M.

Ibrahim Ashraf 6-0; Mahatir Muhammad bt Mamoon Ilyas 6-1; Tahirullah Khan bt Mustansir Ali Khan 6-1; Ikram Ullah bt Inam Qadir 6-3; Hasam Khan w/o Bilal Taibzad; Ahmed Nael Qureshi bt Kamran Khan 6-4; Farman Shakeel w/o Abdul Hanan Khan; Shaeel Durab bt Zaeem Ghafoor 6-2; M. Abdullah bt Azeem Sajid 6-0; Farzan Ahmed bt Zalan Khan 4-1 ret; Zaryab Khan bt Shafiqat 6-1; Shawal Azeem w/o Nazar Asghar; Hamid Israr bt Uzair Khan 6-0.

Men's Singles Qualifying Matches: (2nd Round) Jibril ul Haq bt Ahmed Murad 6-0; Musa Chudhary bt Hamza Rehmat 6-1; Parbhat Kumar bt Faizan Shahid 6-3; Nalain Abbas bt Abdullah Khan 6-4; Talha bin Asif bt Bilal Asim 6-2; M. Huzaifa Khan bt Azeem Sajid 6-0; Sami Zeb Khan bt Raahim Veeqar 6-2; Abbas Khan bt Abdullah 6-0; Asad Zaman bt Jabir Ali 6-3; Mahatir Muhammad bt Tahir Khan 6-3; Hasam Khan bt Ikramullah 6-2; Farman Shakeel bt Ahmed Nael Qureshi 7-6(2); M. Abdullah bt Shaeel Durab 7-6(5); M. Zaryab bt Farzan Ahmed 6-2; Hamid Israr bt Shawal Azeem 6-0. - DNA

Chinese tennis star denies making assault claim

AGENCIES

LONDON: Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai has denied making an accusation of sexual assault, in her first media interview since alleging a top Chinese leader had coerced her to have sex. Ms Peng sparked global concern when she disappeared from public view after posting the allegations online. She has now said there had been "a lot of misunderstandings" about the post. The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) said it was still concerned that she was being censored by the state. In the video interview with Lianhe Zaobao, a Singaporean Chinese-language newspaper, Ms Peng explained: "I have never said or written that anyone sexually assaulted me. This point must be emphasised very clearly." In her original note, which was posted on the Chinese social media platform Weibo in November, she accused former Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli of forcing her to have sex with him. Ms Peng, who appeared to have trouble hearing the reporter in the interview, and seemed surprised at the line of questioning, said she was not under surveillance. "Why would anyone monitor [me?] [I have] always been very

free," she said. Lianhe Zaobao is read in mainland China and has in recent years been known for its pro-Beijing coverage. The interview was carried out on the sidelines of a sporting event in Shanghai, where she appeared with national athletes including basketball player Yao Ming. A video of Ms Peng speaking to the basketball star was posted to Twitter by a state media journalist in which

the tennis player is the only person not wearing a mask. Other images of her in Shanghai

were posted to Twitter by sports executive Ding Li.

Responding to her latest comments, the WTA, the governing body of women's tennis, said it welcomed her appearance "in a public setting" but that it did not "alleviate or address... concerns about her wellbeing and ability to communicate without censorship or coercion." "We remain steadfast in our call for a full, fair and transparent investigation... into her allegation of sexual assault, which is the issue that gave rise to our initial concern," the WTA said. On 2 November Ms Peng posted a 1,600-word note on Weibo, kicking off what would become the most significant case of its kind in China's slow-moving #MeToo movement. The note, addressed to Mr Zhang, claimed they had a romantic relationship and that he had also coerced her

into having sex. "Why did you come back and seek me out, take me to your home, and force me to have sex with you," read one line. The post was swiftly scrubbed from Weibo, but not before it quickly went viral. Her account remains under restrictions with not a single media post displaying more recently than 10 September. Ms Peng then vanished from public life for weeks, sparking concern worldwide about her safety. A #WhereIsPengShuai campaign was launched, fuelled by calls from other tennis stars including Naomi Osaka, Serena Williams and Novak Djokovic. The WTA has spearheaded calls for an investigation into her initial claims. Chinese state media subsequently published pictures of her and carried a widely questioned e-mail that she purportedly wrote to the WTA where she said "everything is fine". The International Olympics Committee (IOC) also spoke to Ms Peng twice in video calls in which she reportedly said she was safe and well. But many continue to believe the tennis star is under state duress and is being censored. The WTA has questioned the veracity of the email they received from Ms Peng.

EU approves Novovax vaccine

FROM PAGE 01

Acting on health ministry recommendations, Israeli cabinet ministers voted on Monday to put the United States, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Hungary, Morocco, Portugal, Canada, Switzerland and Turkey on the no-fly roster. In Europe, Germany has ruled out a Christmas lockdown but warned a fifth COVID-19 wave could no longer be stopped amid the spread of Omicron.

OIC Chief terms...

FROM PAGE 01

Talking to the media at Islamabad International Airport before his departure, the OIC Secretary General expressed gratitude to the people and the government of Pakistan for their hospitality.

The secretary-general said Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet has been appointed as a special envoy for Afghanistan who will coordinate with stakeholders to provide assistance to the interim Afghan government in view of humanitarian crises. Hissen Brahimi Taha said the newly appointed envoy for Afghanistan has made his first contact with the Afghan delegation yesterday. He expressed hope that the whole world will play a role in providing funds for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. Speaking on the occasion Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farukh Habib said Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC in Pakistan will open a new chapter of engagement with Afghanistan. He expressed hope that decisions made in the meeting will be implemented. He thanked all the delegations for attending the meeting. Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan was also present on the occasion.

EU ambassador felicitates...

FROM PAGE 01

United Nations and other humanitarian partners. Androulla Kaminara said European Union has provided three million euros' humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. The world leaders, government functionaries, diplomats and analysts termed the meeting of the 57-member Muslim states' body, as a milestone achievement for Pakistan which also manifested its commitment for a stable Afghanistan besides recognition of its stance.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, in a post-session statement, said the establishment of a Trust Fund and adoption of a resolution for the Afghan banking system's revival were great successes achieved by the summit. The foreign minister, who also chaired the extraordinary meeting, said it was not a matter of the Taliban but 38 million people of Afghanistan who were faced with hunger.

TRNC indebted to Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01

a legislative bill to establish a so-called national investment fund to manage unilaterally the future capital income from hydrocarbon reserves. Moreover they have signed bilateral agreements with many countries regarding the delimitation of its unilaterally declared so called exclusive economic zone. As a result of Greek Cypriot side's increasing unilateral actions, the Turkish Cypriot side has been obliged to take steps to protect its own rights and interests regarding the hydrocarbon resources around the island. To a question about COVID situation in TRNC, the Foreign Minister said everyone is suffering and so is the TRNC. But daily cases in our country are less and number of deaths is very low, but then you know we are a small country. Our government is conscious about spread of virus and we are thankful to motherland Turkey for providing us the vaccines. To yet another question he said he was looking forward to host Pakistani leadership, especially the Foreign Minister Qureshi in his country. Similarly he hoped the TRNC leadership would also pay a visit to Pakistan.

Briefs

Dubai airport fully operational since pandemic

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: Dubai airport, one of the world's busiest travel hubs, is fully operational for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic erupted in March 2020, officials said Monday.

The opening of sections closed as the Covid-19 crisis took hold comes as the United Arab Emirates records a rise of infections amid fears of the new Omicron variant. "Following the opening of the final phase... (the) airport is 100 percent operational with all terminals, concourses, lounges, restaurants, and retail outlets now open," said a statement carried by the UAE's official WAM news agency.

Travel via Dubai increases at the end of the year, with foreigners – who make up the majority of the emirate's population – heading home for the holidays, while visitors come to celebrate the New Year. Last year, Dubai International Airport reported a 70 percent drop in traffic, from more than 86 million travellers in 2019 to 25.9 million in 2020.

In the first half of this year, 10.6 million people passed through the airport, a 41 percent drop from pre-pandemic figures.

Tigray forces announce retreat

FOREIGN DESK

ADDIS ABABA: Rebellious Tigrayan forces fighting the central government are withdrawing from neighbouring regions in northern Ethiopia, a step towards a possible ceasefire after 13 months of brutal war.

"We trust that our bold act of withdrawal will be a decisive opening for peace," wrote Debrezion Gebremichael on Monday, the head of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

His letter to the United Nations called for a no-fly zone for hostile aircraft over Tigray, imposing arms embargos on Ethiopia and its ally Eritrea, and a UN mechanism to verify that external armed forces had withdrawn from Tigray. Ethiopian government spokesperson Legesse Tulu did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Debrezion said he hoped the Tigrayan withdrawal, from the regions of Afar and Amhara, would force the international community to ensure that food aid could enter Tigray. The United Nations has previously accused the government of operating a de facto blockade – a charge the government has denied. "We hope that by (us) withdrawing, the international community will do something about the situation in Tigray as they can no longer use as an excuse that our forces are invading Amhara and Afar," TPLF spokesman Getachew Reda told Reuters news agency.

Japan begins recruiting astronauts

WEB DESK

TOKYO: Japan on Monday announced a recruitment campaign for astronauts as it aims to send a mission to the Moon in the latter half of 2020s.

For the first time in 13 years, the Japan Space Agency (JAXA) announced recruitment for the coveted post which will likely conclude by 2023.

"We are looking for people who can contribute to the development of aerospace research and development from various fields, not limited to the experience of the aerospace industry," a JAXA statement said.

Last October, Japan's former Education and Science Minister Koichi Hagiuda had said the aim is to have a Japanese national on the Moon for the first time.

The country has seven astronauts as part of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and three of them have already traveled to outer space.

Beijing not afraid of clash with US: China's FM

Wang said. "We will resolutely fight against any threats and challenges that endanger China's sovereignty, security and development interests; we will resolutely fight back against any malicious acts that interfere in our internal affairs and wantonly spread rumors and smear

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China would not fear confrontation with the United States but would welcome cooperation if it is mutually beneficial, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Monday. Problems in the U.S.-China relationship were down to "strategic misjudgments" by the American side, he said in a speech, posted on foreign ministry website. "If there is confrontation, then (China) will not fear it, and will fight to the finish," he said.

Wang said "there is no harm" in competition but it should be "positive". Relations between the United States and China are at a low over a range of disagreements including the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, trade, human rights, and Beijing's increasing pressure on Taiwan.

In a call last month that lasted for more than three hours, U.S. President Joe Biden pressed his counterpart, Xi Jinping, on human rights while Xi warned that China would respond to what it called provocation on Taiwan.

The U.S. Senate passed legislation on Thursday to ban imports from China's Xinjiang region over concern about forced labour, the latest U.S. response to Beijing's treatment of the Uyghur Muslim minority there. Taiwan is not a chess piece to be used by others, Wang's top diplomat said on Monday, emphasizing



the need for China to be reunified with the island territory it claims as a "breakaway province."

"Taiwan is a wanderer who will eventually go home, not a chess piece that is used by others. China must be unified," Wang Yi, China's state councillor and foreign minister, told an international symposium on Chinese diplomacy in Beijing. "There is a new round of tension in the Taiwan Strait. The crux of the problem is that the Taiwan authorities are trying to rely on the United States for independence and

the United States and individual countries intend to use Taiwan to control China."

He said the "connotation of the One China principle is in danger of being falsified or even hollowed out," according to a statement released by the Chinese Foreign Ministry. "It is these perverse acts that have changed the status quo across the Taiwan Strait, undermined the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait, and violated the consensus of the international community and the basic norms of international relations," said Wang.

Pro-Beijing candidates sweep HK polls

HONG KONG: Candidates loyal to CCP won a landslide victory in Hong Kong's legislative elections after pro-democracy activists were imprisoned and authorities received the power to exclude those deemed inappropriate for office. Candidates loyal to Beijing won a majority of the seats in Sunday's election after the laws were changed to ensure that only pro-Beijing "patriots" could run the city. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said during a news conference Monday she was "satisfied" with the election despite a 30.2% voter turnout – the lowest since the British handed Hong Kong over to China in 1997. She said that the number of registered voters reached 92.5%, a record high compared to the 2012 and 2016 elections, when around 70% of voters had registered. "For registered voters, deciding whether they want to exercise their voting rights in a particular election is entirely a matter for themselves," she said. "In this election, 1.35 million voters cast their votes. They did not just return candidates of their choice to LegCo, and I think it was also because of their support for the improved electoral system." – Agencies

DG Beltamozhservis visits Pakistan embassy Minsk

DNA

MINSK: Director General of Republican Unitary Enterprise "Beltamozhservis" Mr. Vadim Babarikin accompanied by Director Mr. Alexandr Skachkovsky and Deputy Director of Minsk branch of "Beltamozhservis" Mr. Pavel Kovalchuk visited the Embassy on 17 December. CEO of Bridging Trade International Wasim Khokhar accompanied the delegation.

The Ambassador briefed the delegation on bilateral ties, trade and tourism opportunities and gave a guided tour to the Display Centre recently established at the Embassy.

RUE Beltamozhservis is the largest logistics operator in Belarus with more than 20 years of experience that provides road, rail, sea and air transportation of goods of all types to Europe, the Baltic region and Asia, warehouse services, performs as a custom representative and sells software products.



2nd Sino-Pak Matchmaking workshop held

BEIJING: 2nd Sino-Pak Matchmaking Workshop was held to advance science & technology transfer and cooperation under CPEC.

According to China Economic Net (CEN), themed by 'Deepen China-Pakistan STI Cooperation to Support the Construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor', the workshop was held in Kunming and Islamabad online and offline. Various promising scientific cooperation and technology transfer in modern agriculture, new energy, biomedicine and digital economy, etc. between the two countries are loading to inject new impetus to CPEC development. Over 100 Chinese and Pakistani government officials, scientists and other representatives attend the 2nd China-Pakistan Matchmaking Workshop in Kunming and Islamabad on Dec. 16, 2021. – APP

More than 200 dead after typhoon slams Philippines

AGENCIES

MANILA: The death toll following the strongest typhoon to batter the Philippines this year has risen to more than 200, with 52 other people still missing and several central towns and provinces grappling with downed communications and power outages and pleading for food and water, officials said Monday. At its strongest, the typhoon packed sustained winds of 195 kilometers (121 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 270 kph (168 mph) before it blew out Friday into the South China Sea.

At least 208 people were killed, 52 remained missing and 239 were injured, according to the national police. The toll was expected to increase because several towns and villages remained out of reach due to downed communications and power outages although massive clean-up and repair efforts were underway. Many died due to falling trees and collapsing walls, flash flood and landslides. A 57-year-old man was found dead hanging from a tree branch and a woman was blown away by the wind and died in Negros Occidental province, police said.

Governor Ariene Bagao of Dinagat Islands, among the southeastern provinces first hit by the typhoon, said Rai's ferocity on her island province of more than 130,000 was worse than that of Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most powerful and deadliest typhoons on record and which devastated the central Philippines in November 2013 but did not inflict any casualties in Dinagat. "If it was like being in a washing machine before, this time there was like a huge monster that smashed itself everywhere, grabbed anything like trees and tin roofs and then hurled them everywhere," Bagao told The Associated Press by telephone.

Tashkent Youth Forum kicks off at Congress Hall

NEWS DESK

TASHKENT: For the first time, this large-scale event, organized by the khokimiyat of Tashkent at the initiative of the head of state, took place in 2020. Then more than 10,000 boys and girls took part in it. By the time of the opening, 15,000 participants have registered to participate in this year's event via the Telegram bot. Tashkent Youth Forum - 2021 will be held on December 20-21, 2021 in the capital's Congress Hall. The organizer of the Forum is the khokimiyat of the city of Tashkent.

The goal of the Tashkent Youth Forum - 2021 - is to unite active, purposeful and proactive youth, to form in them a sense of belonging to the life of the country, to support ideas and initiatives.

Young people will become direct participants in a large-scale event and will meet with the heads of ministries and departments, scientists, experts, representatives of the arts, culture and sports, media figures.

Today, on 20 December, the grand opening of the Forum took place. On the same day, meetings with Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and Sports Aziz Abdulkhalkimov, Minister of Justice Ruslanbek Davletov, Minister of

Higher and Secondary Special Education Abdukodir Tashkulov, Minister for Development of Information Technologies and Communications Sherzod Shermatov, and Minister of Culture Ozodbek Nazarbek will be held on the main stage. Forum participants will have the opportunity to ask their questions using the "open microphone".

Other halls will host dialogues between representatives of the embassies of Germany, Russia, the United States, Switzerland, France and Japan, a meeting with First Deputy Director of the Civil Service

Development Agency under the President of Uzbekistan Otabek Khasanov, master classes with writers and artists, as well as screening of the documentary film "Abdullah Qadiri".

The official partner of the forum Bank Apelsin will present a conversation with the Chairman of the Board Sergey Gimadiev on the topic "Financial literacy of youth and employment in digital banking". Young people will be able to learn how to save and increase their funds and get a job in a rapidly developing sector of the economy.



Pak-China co-op in Biohealth Agriculture to flourish

It refers to a modern way of agricultural production that employs advanced biotechnology and processes and can be applied to crop cultivation, livestock farming, rural tourism, farm produce, etc

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Cooperation in Biohealth Agriculture sector will flourish in the days to come, says a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Monday.

"After thirteen years of endeavor from both Pakistani and Chinese sides, the Pak-China Biohealth Agriculture Demonstration Park has been inaugurated", said Professor Zhang Lixin from Northwest A&F University, China in an interview with CEN.

The interview panel was also attended by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Honorary Chairman of Pak-China biohealth cooperation project, Ex-Chairman of Pakistan Science Foundation, and Vice Chancellor of the University of Lahore, and several other renowned Pakistani

professors, business leaders, and Ph.D. students studying in China. The concept of "Biohealth Agriculture" (BHA) was put forward by Professor Zhang Lixin in 2017 at the first International Symposium on the Belt and Road Bio-health.

It refers to a modern way of agricultural production that employs advanced biotechnology and processes and can be applied to crop cultivation, livestock farming, rural tourism, farm produce, etc. Subsequently, Silk Road Biohealth Agricultural Industry Alliance and China-Pakistan Agricultural Biological Resources Research Center were formed in a bid to provide safe and green biohealth agricultural produce. The recent third International Symposium on the Belt and Road Bio-Health draws the participation of 54 Pakistani scientists. "The demonstration park is more than a limited stretch of

land. Rather, it is a platform that facilitates Pak-China cooperation in scientific research, talent cultivation, international exchanges, and technology transfer", Professor Zhang told CEN.

"The agriculture sector in Pakistan faces major challenges like depleting water resources, lack of technology and innovation, and low quality of seeds. Therefore, biohealth agriculture practices should be promoted, as they will not only support Pakistan's food security, but also help export to China and other countries", analyzed Naheeda Begum, Botany Ph.D. in Northwest A&F University and currently a post-doctoral candidate of Nanjing Agriculture University.

In the universities of Lahore, Faisalabad, and Bahauddin Zakariya, demonstration sites have been established. An assortment of food, such as maize, wheat,

chili, carrot, and spinach are under research. Nano and earthworm fertilizers have been introduced. For example, new wheat varieties that combine Chinese and Pakistani germplasm and have the potential to increase the yield by 2.7% per annum have accounted for 3% of the total in Punjab.

"Farmers are impressed by our technology", said Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf. For example, a private company has delivered exciting results in promoting the "zero-tillage technology".

"With our zero-tillage technology, crops can be planted on undisturbed soil. Aided with the multiple-cropping system and rotation, it can maintain the prime condition of the ecological system in the soil, which accumulates a large amount of biomass and microorganism", Prof. Dr. Muhammad

Ashraf introduced to CEN.

"We tested that technology for 2 years. At the initial stage, there was no difference with the conventional method. But later on, its effect in preserving the soil condition manifested".

For now, three Pakistani students are committed to their construction. "In the near future, more Chinese and Pakistani students will be involved", said Professor Zhang. "The flourishing of the biohealth agriculture also requires the participation of more enterprises". Looking ahead, Naheeda recommends more workshops to be organized in different regions of Pakistan to raise the awareness of farmers and landowners. "Also, the modern techniques in China like compound planting, smart agriculture gain, greenhouse and good varieties should be applied in Pakistan".

Japan approves record extra budget

TOKYO: Japan's parliament has approved the first extra budget of the 2021 fiscal year, with a record spending of \$317 billion (36 trillion yen), to help the economy withstand the fallout of Covid-19, further straining the industrial world's heaviest debt burdens.

Monday's approved budget earmarks funds for tackling Covid-19, including to secure vaccines and drugs, while it also features cash payouts for families with children and funds for the promotion of tourism.

The budget also includes subsidies for small businesses, and pay rises for nurses and care-givers.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said his first extra budget was aimed at restoring the Covid-hit economy and achieving a virtuous cycle of growth and wealth distribution while fixing the country's public finances in the long run.

The budget is also targeted at promoting tourism, ensuring corporate funding, boosting growth in the green and digital transformation and strengthening semiconductor factories and supply chains.

It will also be a source of funding for the government's record \$695 billion (79 trillion yen) economic package unveiled last month.

The government says the package, which includes a record \$490 billion (55.7 trillion yen) in spending, will boost gross domestic product by around 5.6 percent – an estimate private-sector economists say is too optimistic.

The extra budget will be followed by an annual budget for the next fiscal year, to be compiled later this week, securing 16-months' worth of spending.

The budget will be partly financed by some \$193 billion (22 trillion yen) worth of additional government bonds to be issued in the current fiscal year.

Belarusian diplomat hurt in London embassy

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The government of Belarus said Monday that it summoned a British diplomat in protest after its embassy in London was "attacked" and a diplomat injured.

The Belarus Foreign Ministry said in a statement that a group of people smeared the facade of the embassy building and then physically assaulted Belarusian diplomats who arrived at the scene. It added that one of the diplomats "sustained serious injuries requiring urgent medical assistance" and was diagnosed with a broken nose, a concussion and a broken tooth.

The government said it had summoned a British envoy in Minsk to make a formal protest and demand that those responsible be brought to justice.

Posts on social media show a small demonstration outside the Belarusian Embassy on Sunday. London's Metropolitan Police force had no immediate information on the alleged incident. Belarus' authoritarian president,

Alexander Lukashenko, has unleashed a sweeping crackdown on protesters, journalists and civil society groups since he was reelected in an August 2020 presidential election that the opposition and the West rejected as rigged.

Briefs

Another Rs4.33 electricity price hike likely

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The power tariff is likely to witness a hike of Rs4.33 on account of fuel charges adjustment as the National Electrical Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) received a request for the increase from Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPA). The NEPRA will conduct a hearing on the request on December 29. The consumers will face an additional Rs40 billion burden if NEPRA approves the application. The CPA has requested the increase under the fuel adjustment for the month of November. The CPA has stated in the application that 8.24 billion units of electricity had been generated in the month of November with a cost of Rs66 billion. Diesel and furnace oil generated the most expensive electricity, costing Rs20 to Rs27 per unit, and LNG generated electricity, costing Rs17 to Rs20 per unit.

Lira plunges as Erdogan defends cuts in interest rate

NEWS DESK

ISTANBUL: Turkey's troubled lira nosedived on Monday after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan cited Muslim teachings to justify not raising interest rates to stabilise the currency. Erdogan has pushed the central bank to sharply lower borrowing costs despite the annual rate of inflation soaring to more than 20 per cent. Economists believe the policy could see consumer price increases reach 30 per cent or higher in the coming months. But Erdogan said in remarks aired by state television late Sunday that his Muslim faith prevented him from supporting rate hikes. "They complain we keep decreasing the interest rate. Don't expect anything else from me," he said in the televised comments. "As a Muslim, I will continue doing what our religion tells us. This is the command." Islamic teachings forbid Muslims from receiving or charging interest on loaned or borrowed money.

NAB chief vows to probe white collar corruption cases

Justice Javed Iqbal says the NAB has set a time limit of 10 months for the disposal of cases, of which, positive results have already been started pouring in

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has said that Business Community play important role in the economic development and prosperity of the country. NAB has great regard for Business Community. NAB had referred cases of sales tax, income tax and under invoicing to FBR for appropriate action as per law. Taking mega corruption white collar crime cases to logical conclusion and eradication of corruption is the top most priority of NAB and extraneous efforts are underway to achieve above mentioned goals of corruption eradication and taking mega corruption cases to logical conclusion. NAB officials are fulfilling the duty of eradicating corruption from the

country as a national duty. NAB received most complaints about illegal housing/Cooperative Societies and Modaraba/Musharka scandal. He said illegal housing/Cooperative Housing societies allegedly involved in looting hard earned money of poor people through sales of plots in different housing and cooperative societies without having NOC/Layout plan approval as well as sufficient land required for the society. In some cases, illegal housing societies has no land for the housing scheme. The trapped people to buy plots by attractive advertisement campaign. Chairman NAB has directed the regional bureaus to submit the latest report of illegal housing societies, cooperative societies and Modaraba scandals so that progress on ongoing cases would be reviewed, besides expediting



efforts of resolving complaints and recovering hard earned money of the effectees. He said that NAB has introduced a joint investigation team (CIT) system to benefit from the collective wisdom of its senior supervisory officers, besides giving two months from complaint to complaint verification, four months time from complaint verification to inquiry and four months time from Inquiry to investigation.

He said the NAB has set a time limit of 10 months for the disposal of cases, of which, positive results have already been started pouring in. In addition, the NAB has established forensic science lab to investigate cases on modern lines with a view to further improve the quality of investigations on the basis of which the prosecution effectively pursues NAB cases in the learned courts on the basis of solid evidence. That is why, 1194 accused were not only convicted by the esteemed accountability courts due to vigorous prosecution of NAB for the last 4 years but also imposed fined worth billions of rupees. He said that NAB has established its own Pakistan Anti-Corruption Training Academy which aimed to provide training to NAB's investigating officers and prosecutors on

modern lines so that they could further peruse NAB cases in the esteemed courts. He said that NAB has chalked out three pronged strategy comprising awareness, prevention and enforcement. He said that NAB is a human friendly organization which believes in the self respect and esteem of every person as NAB's affiliated to the state of Pakistan and not to any political party, group or individual. NAB always believed in carrying out its duties in accordance with the Constitution and the law. Since its inception, NAB has exported Rs 821 billion directly and indirectly, while in the last four years, NAB has recovered Rs 539 billion directly and indirectly, which is a record achievement - duly acknowledged by reputable national and international organizations.

3 terrorists killed in Peshawar operation

DNA

PESHAWAR: Three suspected terrorists were killed in a joint operation conducted by Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and police personnel in Peshawar Monday. The operation was conducted within the jurisdiction of the Fagirabad police station. The police relayed that terrorists, on seeing the personnel, opened indiscriminate fire on them and in the ensuing shootout, three militants including a top Islamic State Khurasan Province (ISKP) commander Hilal were killed. The killed terrorists were involved in heinous crimes, including the targeted killing of security forces and other acts of terrorism, the police said. One of the terrorists was identified as Suleman, who hailed from Bajaur while the identity of the rest is yet to be ascertained. Arms and ammunition were seized from their possession. As per reports, Hilal was ISKP's leader in Peshawar, involved in the killing of Satnam Singh. He was killed in Peshawar in the first week of October. ISKP group was also involved in the targeted killing of police officials during polio campaigns and had been extorting businessmen.

WEF to differ annual meeting due to Omicron

NEWS DESK

GENEVA: The World Economic Forum (WEF) will defer its 2022 annual meeting from January to early summer, it said on Monday. The meeting, scheduled for Jan. 17-21 in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, was postponed due to the "continued uncertainty over the Omicron outbreak." "Current pandemic conditions make it extremely difficult to deliver a global in-person meeting," the WEF explained in a news release published on its website. Preparations of the WEF annual meeting have been guided by expert advice and have benefited from the close collaboration of the Swiss government at all levels, the WEF said, adding that the transmissibility of Omicron and its impact on travel and mobility have made deferral necessary. The health and safety of everyone involved in physical meetings have always been the Forum's priority, it stressed. "The deferral of the annual meeting will not prevent progress through continued digital convening of leaders from business, government and civil society," said Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF. According to the Forum, participants of the annual meeting will instead join a headline series of "State of the World" sessions bringing together global leaders online to focus on shaping solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

LG polls: ECP rubbishes reports of holding results

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has denied the reports of holding results of the local government (LG) polls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).



The ECP spokesperson clarified in a statement on Monday that the reports of holding LG polls' results in different parts are baseless. The spokesperson added that the ECP officials are currently working on compiling the election results. It added that the provincial election commissioner will hold a briefing session on December 22. The commission will also decide on suggestions forwarded to organise re-election in different areas. The spokesperson said that the final decision on re-election will be taken by the ECP higher authorities.

The counting of votes in 17 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) for local government elections is underway. According to the unofficial and unconfirmed results of 31 Tehsil chairman seats, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F) has overtaken Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf by securing 12 chairman seats. KP's ruling party has won 10 seats of chairmen so far. Independent candidates have got five seats. Awami National Party (ANP) four, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) two and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) have managed to grab a single chairman seat. 2,032 candidates had been elected unopposed during the first phase of local government (LG) polls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in 17 districts. In Peshawar, 62 candidates were elected unopposed on general seats, 145 on women seats, 105 on farmers seats, 45 on minorities seats. In Nowshera, 12 candidates were elected unopposed on general seats, 51 on women seats, 19 on farmers seats, 34 on youth seats and 11 on minorities seats. Nine candidates were elected unopposed on general seats in Charsadda, 55 on women seats, 9 on farmers seats, 30 on youth seats and 9 on minorities seats.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi chairing a high level meeting. - DNA

Turkey and Qatar may control five airports in Afghanistan

KABUL: Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that Qatar and Turkey will probably control five airports together in Afghanistan after negotiations between Doha and Kabul. Speaking with his Malaysian counterpart in Islamabad Cavusoglu said, a delegation that will also include a technical team of the two countries is supposed to visit Afghanistan to assess the nature of controlling these airports. Kabul International Airport is also rumored to be among the five airports but names of all the airports are not disclosed yet. The delegation is supposed to submit suggestions of the two countries to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan by next week. Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also met Afghanistan's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Motaqi at the sideline of the OIC session in Islamabad and discussed the issue. - DNA

Massoud, Taliban agree on ceasefire till second round of talks

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Supporters of Ahmad Massoud, the leader of the resistance front against the Taliban, and Taliban representatives held their first meeting on Wednesday afternoon in the center of Parwan province to seek an alternative to fighting. The resistance front delegation was composed of 12 people led by Almas Zahid, a former Mujahideen commander, and the six-member Taliban delegation was led by Mohammad Mohsin Hashimi, the Taliban's deputy leader of intelligence. A representative of the resistance front, Mohammad Alam Ezediyar, wrote on his Facebook page that both sides agreed to not attack each other until the second round of negotiations is held. The representatives met for three hours and then returned to their respective sides to share the discussed issues with their leaders. "After three hours of discussion, it was decided that both delegations will share the message with their leadership and resume the negotiations to reach a durable peace in the country. It was also decided that the parties should not attack each other until the second round of negotiations," wrote Ezediyar. A member of the Taliban delegation, meanwhile, said that the Taliban wanted to discuss the issue of Panjshir, but Massoud's

supporters wanted to discuss the structure of the future government. Thus the negotiations had no tangible outcome, he said. "The Panjshir delegation was more focused on the overall structure of the governance system. Since there were big differences between the two sides' demands, both sides decided to take the messages to their leaders," said Anamullah Samangani, a member of the cultural commission of the Taliban. The negotiations followed both sides' threatening to use military force. "The discussions will bear results in the coming days. If the discussions have no results and they use another option (military), we will do the same," said Noorullah Noori, a member of the Taliban's political office. "We are still waiting for the outcome of the negotiations. Despite this, we have all the military preparations as well," said Hamid Saifi, a member of the resistance front. Ahmad Massoud in a recent interview with the BBC said that if an inclusive and acceptable government for all is not established, Afghanistan will be isolated both politically and economically. "We are negotiating with the Taliban. So far, several countries like Canada has said it will not recognize an exclusive government. If that happens the people will continue to suffer," Massoud said. The Taliban has said they will form an inclusive government, but the terms have still not been clearly defined.

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