

Islamabad POST

Friday, December 24, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Pakistan keen to further enhance ties with Saudi Arabia

Detailed News On Page-08

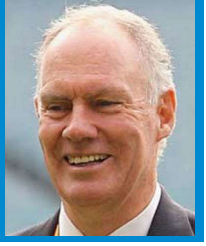
Asif Zardari to launch anti-govt campaign

Detailed News On Page-01



Strong Pakistan team vital for world cricket

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

PML-N stands by teachers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Expressing solidarity with the teachers, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz said on Thursday that placing teachers under the local bodies (LBs) was the worst example of 'incompetence'. In a tweet, she said categorically that she and her party stood by these teachers. She demanded deletion of that clause of the presidential ordinance which had affected the teachers.

SEZs to pave way for IT revolution

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication Dr Shabbaz Gill on Thursday said Special Technology Zone would pave way for Information Technology's revolution in Pakistan. In response to the statement of Maryam Aurangzeb, he said all money which was used for corruption in past was now being spent on health, agriculture, education and industry. Today, work was being carried on people welfare projects, he added. Gill said in past, every project was designed only to facilitate the Sharif family.

Govt should get ready to go home

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday has advised Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan to stop re-inaugurating the project of her party. In a statement, Marriyum Aurangzeb said that PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif had already inaugurated the Knowledge Park in Lahore. You should better get ready to go home, she added. She said that the nation doesn't want your fake work but resignation. Earlier, Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the people of KPK have signaled the departure of Imran Khan.

Berlin warns of 'worst' Afghan crisis

Outlining an "action plan", Baerbock seeks to assure that outside aid reaches the neediest Afghans

NEWS DESK

BERLIN: Germany's new foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock, pledged on Thursday to work with international partners to help avert in Afghanistan what she called "the worst humanitarian catastrophe of our time". Outlining an "action plan" two weeks after taking office, Baerbock said Berlin sought to assure that outside aid reached the neediest Afghans and step up the evacuation of those most threatened under the Taliban, especially women and girls. "Before our eyes, Afghanistan is heading into the worst humanitarian catastrophe of our time," Baerbock told reporters. "Major sectors of the economy have collapsed, many people are starving. One can hardly bear it when one reads that families in their desperation are selling their daughters to buy food." She said 24 million Afghans were estimated to need assistance to survive this winter.

Continued on Page 06

Pak welcomes UNSC, US decisions

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Thursday shared that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) moot in Islamabad has paved way for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and its people. In a tweet, the Foreign Minister says Pakistan welcomes two important developments taken place in support of the Afghan people following the extraordinary session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Islamabad. He said the UN Security Council has adopted a resolution to

Continued on Page 06

PML-N, PPP suffered defeat in KP: Fawad

Minister says Maryam Nawaz should express sympathy with her party's losing candidates

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Thursday said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) vanished in the local governments (LG) elections in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Talking to the media here along with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication Shabbaz Gill, he said that PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz, instead of celebrating victory of other opposition parties in KP LG elections, should express sympathy with her party's losing candidates and motivate them after their sheer defeat in polls. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is still the largest political party at village council level in KP, he added. Ch Fawad Hussain said that political leaders like Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif had caused severe damage



to the national economy through foreign debts, adding that the PTI government had to pay off those loans. He said that Asif Zardari used wheelchair whenever he was supposed to appear before the court, attempting to show that he was suffering from serious diseases. But after getting a bail from the court, he started raising hollow slogans and making tall claims, the minister said. Fawad Ch said that Pakistan People's Party even did not have

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Nicolae Goia, Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan called on Muhammad Ayub Afridi, Advisor to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) and congratulated him on his appointment as Advisor. - DNA

Karachi: Six more suspected cases of Omicron

The suspected patients of the Omicron variant have a travel history,

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Six more suspected cases of Omicron variant of the novel coronavirus were reported in Karachi, Sindh Health Department sources said Thursday. The suspected patients of the Omicron variant have a travel history, the sources privy to the matter said, adding that four of them arrived in Karachi from South Africa, where the new Omicron variant was first identified, and two others from Britain. Samples taken from the suspected patients have been sent to a private hospital for further confirmation and the patients have been shifted to a quarantine centre in the metropolis, said the sources. Pakistan has so far reported one confirmed and 39 suspected cases of Omicron variant. The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), on December 13, had confirmed it had detected Pakistan's first-ever case of the Omicron variant of coronavirus in a patient - who had no travel history - through gene-sequencing. A second case of the Omicron variant of coronavirus had been reported from Karachi, sources within the Sindh Health Department had said later in the week.

PTI govt has fully wrecked Pakistan's economy: Shehbaz

- Says Imran Niazi's govt is going to end

DNA

LAHORE: Lashing out at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif has said that Prime Minister Imran Khan Niazi has destroyed Pakistan in his 3-1/2 years tenure as people are offering Fateha on the demise of economy.

Addressing a function in Lahore, the PML-N president said that Imran Niazi has ruined the economy of Pakistan and sold it to the IMF. He said time has come for the accountability of this government. He said the current rulers are in the habit of putting up plaques of their names on development projects actually launched by the PML-N government. But now the people would not become fool through these gimmicks as they have rejected the PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa local government elections. He said those who voted for the PTI, are now regretting Shehbaz wondered why the government is not giving gas and electricity to people when it has the availability of both the utilities.

Continued on Page 06

Asif Zardari to launch campaign against govt

DNA

TANDO ALLAH YAR: Emphasizing that the time had come to send the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government home, former president and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday announced he was going to launch a protest campaign against the government, and for that Lahore would be his base camp. Addressing an event at Tando Allah Yar in Sindh, he said that PPP had always worked for the people's welfare. Zardari said of course there were some issues between the Sindh government and the federal government, and these issues would persist. "For the late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB), resolution of people's problems had always been a top priority," he recalled. The former president said it was the time to counter the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led federal government. He said he would challenge the

Continued on Page 06

COAS lauds troops' combat readiness

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa Thursday visited forward areas along Line of Control (LOC) and appreciated the troops' combat readiness and high state of morale. The COAS was briefed on ground situation along the LOC and operational preparedness of the formation, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) media release. The Army Chief interacted with the troops deployed along LOC in Kot Kotera Sector. "Continuous vigil and readiness to counter all threats and contingencies is vital for ensuring security along the LOC," the COAS emphasized. Earlier, on arrival at LOC, the COAS was received by Corps Commander Lieutenant General Sahir Shamshad Mirza. - APP

Suicide bomber killed in Kabul passport office

KABUL: A would-be suicide bomber was shot dead on Thursday outside Kabul's main passport office, police said, as hundreds of Taliban fighters lined up for travel documents on a day reserved exclusively for their applications. "He was identified and killed at a checkpoint at the entrance," Mobin Khan, spokesman for Kabul police, told AFP. There have been several attacks against Taliban fighters since their return to power in August - most claimed by the local chapter of the Islamic State group. Around 200 Taliban fighters had gathered at the passport office from dawn after authorities announced that Thursdays would be set aside exclusively for them to apply for passports.

It was unclear why the fighters wanted passports - or where they planned to travel to - as security operatives barred reporters from interviewing them. Civilians who arrived to process their applications were held back or sent home by Taliban security, who also tore up documents of some as they pressed to enter. "Issuing passports to the Taliban members was cancelled due to overcrowding," said Qari Shafiqullah Tassal, a spokesman for the office. Many people were also falsely claiming they had Taliban links, he told AFP. Taliban fighters were also given the opportunity on Thursday to apply for passports in the southern city of Kandahar, according to an AFP reporter there. - Agencies

Inside...

- Innovative inventions must be legally protected - Page 02
- Pak welcomes 3rd country investments in CPEC SEZs - Page 03
- NOVA Group, ARCHEA join hands for technology transfer - Page 04
- Voiceless no more: The Russell Tribunal on Kashmir - Page 05
- Pakistan stun Afghanistan in U-19 Asia Cup opener - Page 06
- Putin urges west to offer security guarantees quickly - Page 07
- Pakistan, Saudi Arabia vow to strengthen bilateral ties - Page 08

Palestine urges World to halt Israeli expansionism

It is past time for the international community to act, collectively and concretely, to implement UNSC 2334

DNA

RAMALLAH: On the fifth anniversary of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2334, the State of Palestine warns against the continued inaction and complacency of the international community in implementing the long-standing and impregnable international consensus on the Question of Palestine. Allowing Israel to expand its colonial settlement regime at this unprecedented rate without consequence or accountability is a political failure of the first order that must be corrected. Israel has made it clear that it will not abandon the spoils of its illegal colonial occupation, land grab, and mass displacement, or its institutionalized persecution and apartheid.

Continued on Page 06

Int'l community must take its laws seriously: UN envoy

WEB DESK

GENEVA: The international community must hold Israel to account for its 54-year occupation of Palestine, a UN human rights expert said today, five years after the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for an end to all settlement activities in Palestinian territories. "On the fifth anniversary of the adoption of Resolution 2334 by the United Nations Security Council, the international community has to take its

Continued on Page 06

BOOKINGS OPEN FOR ALL

MONAL MARQUEE PESHAWAR

For Bookings:
 ☎ 091 7242223
 ☎ 0301 1189122
 ☎ 0301 1189123
 @ monalmarqueepeshawar
 mcm.peshawar@themonal.com

Monal Square, Adjacent Peshawar Services Club, Sahibzad Gul Road, Peshawar Cantt

Innovative inventions must be legally protected

He appreciated the organization of this awareness session and said that it will give businessmen an in-depth knowledge to protect their products from theft under intellectual property rights act

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Creative and innovative inventions and technologies must be legally protected to promote and encourage its businesses in this age of digitalization, said Rana Fayyaz Ahmad, Vice President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He was addressing an awareness session on "Intellectual Property Rights" organized by leading law firm Messes Ali & Associates. He said that human evolution has

entered into its fastest computerized era which has further spurred economic growth. He said that new technologies have converted this earth into a global village rife with the theft and copying of new and innovative products and technologies. He said that it has become necessary to protect the products introduced by individuals or firms. In this connection brands were introduced with trademark and copyright laws in the first phase, however, now intellectual property rights have become imperative to protect the ownership of

an innovative product or technology. He appreciated the organization of this awareness session and said that it will give businessmen an in-depth knowledge to protect their products from theft under intellectual property rights act. Mr. Noman Ali Khan, General Manager brand protection and intellectual property attorney, gave a detailed presentation about the facilities offered by Ali Associates inside and outside Pakistan. Later he also gave a detailed presentation about the facilities offered by Ali Associates.



ISLAMABAD: Saudi ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf Bin Saeed Al maliki calls on renowned Pakistan scholar Maulana Tariq Jameel. – DNA

Jhelum district health office celebrates Christmas



STAFF REPORT

JEHLUM: District Health Authority Jhelum celebrated Christmas Merriments with Christian community in the Office of Chief Executive Officer DHA Jhelum. Dr. Wasim Iqbal, CEO DHA Jhelum, Dr. Mian Mazhar

Hayat, DHO (PS) Jhelum, Dr. Hafeez ur Rehman, Gen Sec PMA, Dr. Shabbir Akhtar Shah, General Surgeon and other Officers & Officials of District Health Authority Jhelum were present in the event. After cake cutting ceremony Dr. Wasim Iqbal, CEO DHA Jhelum distributed cash gifts to Christian Staff of CEO & DHO (PS) Office Jhelum.

IGP orders elimination of agent mafia at licence offices

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Rao Sardar Ali Khan Thursday said that elimination of agent mafia from driving licence issuing centres in all districts should be expedited. He was presiding over a meeting on improving traffic management at the Central Police Office here. He ordered for making process of driving licence more convenient with the help of modern technology. He assigned special targets to newly appointed DIG Traffic Punjab for prevention of traffic accidents. Rao Sardar Ali Khan said that strict action should be taken against the public and private transport especially buses and wagons for over-speeding. The ongoing campaign against vehicles endangering lives of citizens by over-loading, especially tractor-trolleys of sugarcane straw, should be intensified.

SBBWU arranges Gul-e-Dawoodi exhibition

PESHAWAR: Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) has arranged one-day Gul-e-Dawoodi exhibition here at the university where 102 different varieties of the plant were put on display. Secretary Higher Education Department Daud Khan inaugurated the exhibition while representatives of forest department also presented different medicinal plants for attraction and awareness of the students and teachers. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Dr Razia Sultana appreciated the efforts of direction administration and other organizers for arranging the colorful event and said that such event would be arranged at large scale for the general public as well. She said that it is joint responsibility of every individual to plant flowers and trees in their surroundings to make the country clean and green. – APP

S. Punjab chambers to support UBG panel

DNA

LAHORE: All Chambers of Commerce and Industry and affiliated trade associations of South Punjab Thursday unanimously enblook announced to support the all candidates of United Business Group panel in the forthcoming annual election of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). Tanvir Ahmad Sheikh, former president FPCCI hosted a grand reception in honour of UBG Chairman Iftikhar Ali Malik, patron-in-chief SM Muneer, presidential candidate Dr Nouman Idris Butt, SVP candidate Hanif Gohar and others which was overwhelmingly attended by a large number of nominated members executive committee of chambers and general body of associations hailing from South Punjab. Speaking on the occasion Iftikhar Ali Malik said that "we are proud that south Punjab chambers and associations always supported the UBG policies and traders of this region will be brought to main stream of national economy". SM Muneer said that under developed



south Punjab will be brought at par with big cities by offering them loans on soft terms and conditions for industrialisation. Shahzad Ali Malik former president Lahore Chamber announced that after coming into power special attention will be focused on all local chambers for addressing their genuine grievances on top priority. He said agriculture and textile sectors of this region will be accorded great importance and ultra modern research lab will be established for getting bumper crops. Dr Nouman Idris Butt said that if voted to power, will hold regular meetings with chambers and affiliated associations of the Punjab every month and take them into confidence on all important issues. Tanvir Ahmad Sh who hails from south Punjab thanked the voters and supporters for assuring full backing to UBG panel in the forthcoming annual election. Along with others Executive Committee Member Lahore Chamber Momin Ali Malik, founder Secretary General SAARC Chamber Rehmat Ullah Javed, Principal political adviser Waqar Ahmad Mian were also present on the occasion.

87 Hindu yatrees return to India

LAHORE: About 87 Hindu yatrees returned to their homeland, India, through Wagha border crossing here on Thursday after completing their religious rituals. Additional Secretary Shrines Raja Shahid presented gifts to the yatrees on the behalf of Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) chairman. The yatrees had come to Pakistan from India to visit the Krishna Mandir at Ravi Road here on Wednesday and perform their religious rituals. The ETPB officials and local Hindu leaders were also present. Talking to the media, party leader Sanjeev Kumar said that the yatrees thanked the Pakistan government and the Board for making good arrangements including security and accommodation for them. He said that minorities were enjoying complete freedom in Pakistan. He also appreciated the steps taken by the Board for the look after and renovation of their gurdwaras. – APP

Illegal structure in Pak Arab Society demolished

LAHORE: The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) Directorate Private Housing Schemes Thursday demolished various illegal structures at the Pak Arab Housing Scheme at Ferozepur Road here. According to an LDA spokesperson, the Authority demolished eight illegal structures which were constructed on public land and mortgaged plots. During the operation, police officials and enforcement squad were present. LDA Director General Ahmed Aziz Tarar said that the operation against land grabbers and illegal structures would continue till complete suppression of illegal constructions and commercial activities, adding that no illegal activity would be tolerated within the LDA jurisdiction.

DC distributes food hampers among Christian community

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Under the arrangements of district administration, a Christmas function was held at Holy Rozi Catholic Church. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad and CPO Ghulam Mubashar Maiken was chief guest and cut the Christmas cake along with Christian leaders and distributed food hampers among Christian. Addressing the cake-cutting ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner wished happy Christmas to Christian community and said that the civilized nation celebrated their joys and other festivals jointly which strengthened the national relationship and sentiments of patriotism. He said that Christian community was playing their role equally for the development and progress of Pakistan and we would maintain peace and brotherhood

as a united Nation. He informed that the district administration had made strict security arrangements on the Christmas day and for the recreation of Christian special arrangements had been made in parks and other places. Deputy Commissioner informed that District Administration had established 8 Christmas bazars in the district for three days where all necessary items were provided on cheap rates. CPO also informed about security plan for Christmas day. Leaders of Christian community said that Christmas day was a message of peace and love. In the end a special pray was offered for the prosperity, brotherhood, love and peace of the Pakistan. Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain, Chairman PHA Mian Waris Aziz and DG PHA also cut the Christmas cake at Bagh e Jinnah. They greeted happy Christmas to community.



CTP introduces website service

FAISALABAD: The City Traffic Police (CTP) has introduced a website service to facilitate the licence-seekers. A CTP spokesman said on Thursday that now the driving licence-seekers did not have any need to visit traffic police office for inquiring about the worth of licence ticks because a calculator was made available on website of traffic police www.ctpsd.gop.pk. The applicants can easily calculate the amount of their driving licence and after purchasing tickets of the said worth, they can submit their applicants for renewal of driving licences as well as issuance of duplicate driving

licences too. The CTP is already providing online guidance to the road users through its helpline 1915. The commuters and motorists can contact the traffic police helpline any time to inquire about guidance in case of any emergency, he said, adding that traffic police also restored "Rasta App" which can be downloaded in mobile phones from Play Store to get the latest and in-time information about roads and routes. – APP

25 'criminals' arrested

FAISALABAD: Police Thursday arrested 25 alleged criminals and recovered drugs and illegal weapons from them. According to police, raiding teams nabbed four proclaimed offenders and 10 drug-pushers and recovered 0.3-kg hashish and 194-litre liquor from them. The police also held five gamblers and recovered Rs 14,300 from them. In crackdown on illegal weapons, police arrested six persons and recovered two pistols, three guns, one rifle and a number of bullets from them. – APP

Islam teaches interfaith harmony: SACM

He said that Islam never supports violence and oppression but it has taught peace and non-violence to the world in every age

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister KP for Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said that Islam teaches interfaith harmony, love and peace and therefore no one has the right to treat minorities harshly or mistreated. He was addressing a charismas event organized by China Window, a Chinese cultural center in Peshawar. Bishop Ernest Jacob, Member Provincial Assembly Ravi Kumar, Former Member KP Assembly Dr. Zakir Shah, Religious Scholar Maulana Muhammad Shoaib, Director General Audit Israr Ul Haq, Member National Cultural Committee Ali Jan, Honorary Consul General of Tajikistan and Vice Chairman KPBOIT Engineer Syed Mahmood, Head of Christian Students Fellowship Augustine Jacob and Professor Jamil Chitrali also addressed the gathering and wished the Christian community a Merry Christmas. Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif also highlighted the historical

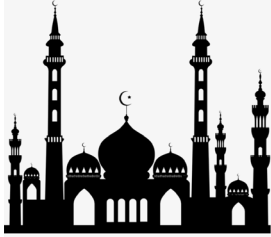


significance of the relationship between Muslims and Christians and said that the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad PBUH had taught tolerance and love towards minorities. It is government's responsibility to protect the rights of the minorities. He said that Islam never supports violence and oppression but it has taught peace and non-violence to the world in every age. Barrister Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali Saif said that the main reason for Islamophobia spreading in the world at present is that the basic teachings of Islam have not been understood. In order to curb the negative propaganda against Islam, it is necessary to promote inter-religious harmony in the society and provide a better environment for the minority community. Barrister Muhammad Ali

Saif lauded the organizers of China Window for sharing the joys of the Christian community. On this occasion, special prayers were offered for the development and prosperity of the country and the nation. Christmas Cake also cut at this occasion. Speakers from different walks of life congratulated the Christian community on Christmas, highlighting the importance of Christmas and religious harmony. Earlier, China Window Administrator Amjad Aziz Malik, in his address to the gathering, said that the Christmas celebrations are being held at a time when we need far-reaching initiatives for religious harmony. He said just as the friendship between Pakistan and China is everlasting and we consider the happiness of the people of China as our happiness, so this event by China Window is undoubtedly the first and unique event of its kind to be held in Peshawar which conveys this message to the minorities. It is also intended that our Chinese brothers and sisters share in your happiness.

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:40 am
Zohr.....	12:07 pm
Asr.....	03:27 pm
Maghrib.....	05:04 pm
Isha.....	06:34 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
-----------------------	---------



Emergency

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



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange.....	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....	5555489
CAA.....	9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

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



Complaints

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
-----------------	--------------

Pak welcomes 3rd country investments in CPEC SEZs

Experts expressed their views at an international conference titled "CPEC: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Way Forward" at the Institute of Regional Studies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Industrial Cooperation chapter of CPEC is all-inclusive in nature and open for third country participation. All SEZs [Special Economic Zones], including CPEC SEZs, are open for investment to all investors, whether domestic or foreign, with equal treatment," said Minister of State and Chairman of Board of Investment (BOI) of Pakistan Mr Azfar Ahsan. He was speaking at an international conference titled "CPEC: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Way Forward" at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). The BOI Chairman highlighted that necessary infrastructure and utilities as well as special incentives under an effective legal framework will be provided to all investor from all over the world to invest in

the SEZs established under CPEC. He added that Pakistan had a total of 22 notified SEZs but only four of them, i.e., Rashakai in KP, Allama Iqbal Industrial City in Punjab, Bostan in Balochistan, and Dhabaji in Sindh, were in an advance stage of development. He specifically mentioned the electric vehicle, mobile manufacturing, and construction sector policies, as well as other incentives for the SEZs as government's steps for attracting foreign direct investment. Mr Ahsan lauded the overwhelming response to the recently held CPEC Business-to-Business (B2B) Industrial Investment Conference for Punjab. He said that the over six hundred delegates to the conference included around seventy Chinese investors. He elaborated that the conference featured several B2B sessions on an array of areas

of cooperation. He said that while the first phase of CPEC required a leading role for the governments, the second phase called for an enhanced role of industrialists, private sector, and business community from both the countries. Earlier, in his opening remarks, President IRS Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz stated that CPEC was inherently a representation of connectivity in all realms of development. He added that over the years Pakistan had directed its focus towards ensuring investor-friendly policies and to come up with legal frameworks that enabled a smooth trajectory to sustainable development. In that, he maintained, the primary focus of the government had been on ensuring that the investments and projects planned under CPEC were successfully materialised. Pakistan's former ambassador to China Ambassador

Masood Khalid appreciated the developments in the power and transport infrastructure sectors under CPEC. Sharing data from the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ambassador Khalid said that 46 projects under CPEC had either been completed or were near completion with net Chinese investment of \$25 billion. He added that 5,320 MW of electricity had been added to Pakistan's national grid with the completion of power projects like Sahiwal and Port Qasim in record time. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade Mr Hassan Daud Butt emphasised the importance of CPEC for the economic development and prosperity of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan needed to create 1.3 million additional jobs on average every year and CPEC had the potential to do exactly that. He added

that CPEC was opening the doors of new business opportunities and could make the country an international business destination. The Director of Center of Pakistan Studies at Peking University Prof Dr Tang Mengsheng highlighted the importance of agricultural mechanisation for sustainable development and added that China was cooperating with Pakistan in the field of agricultural technology to boost its agricultural capacity and production. Chinese journalist and author Ms Lin Wang compared the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with the Build Back Better World (B3W) and Global Gateway projects spearheaded by the US and western European countries, respectively, and enumerated their similarities and differences. She argued that it was critical to gauge the benefits of CPEC in a more global perspective than a regional one.

This, she maintained, could also help undo the propaganda that surrounded CPEC and China's engagement with Pakistan. Head of the Department of International Relations at the National Defence University Dr Khurram Iqbal talked about the security challenges in the way of the success of CPEC at the global and regional level. He argued that the US viewed the BRI as an instrument of challenging the US-dominated unipolar world and was, thus, trying to dissuade countries from becoming part of it through persuasion or coercion. Regionally, he maintained that India was trying to present alternatives to the BRI but was unable to materialise any such plans. He also gave instances of Indian role behind terrorist attacks on Chinese nationals and interests in Pakistan as evidence of undeclared aggression against CPEC.

ITP speeds up crackdown

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has accelerated its crackdown against those vehicles having tinted glasses, fancy number plates and hampering smooth flow of traffic due to wrong parking. Following directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, ITP force has accelerated efforts to take action against those vehicles having tinted glasses and involved in different violations. Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Rai Mazhar Iqbal was supervising these efforts himself while special squads have been constituted to check violations of traffic rules. Several grand operations were conducted during last six months in various areas including G-8 Markaz, G-9 Markaz, G-11 Markaz, F-10 Markaz, F-11 Markaz, I-8 Markaz, Bahria Town, Blue Area, Jinnah Super, F-6 (Super Market), Aabpara and Bhara Kau Market. A total of 370 fine tickets were issued over wrong parking while several vehicles were impounded at various police stations. As many as 451 vehicles were fined for having tinted glasses, 520 for having fancy number plates. SSP (Traffic) has appealed to avoid using tinted glasses and follow traffic rules to ensure safe road environment in the city. - APP

Court grants interim bail to senate's officer

ISLAMABAD: A lower court of Islamabad on Thursday accepted the interim bail of an officer of Senate Secretariat Rana Azhar Siddiq in a case pertaining to harassment of women. Additional District and Session Judge Atta Rabani heard the case of Rana Azhar. His lawyer stated that his client was innocent and he had no connection with the crime. The court accepted the pre-arrest bail of the accused till December 31, against surety bonds worth Rs50,000. Meanwhile, another lower court sent a police officer to jail on judicial remand in a case for allegedly handing over the sensitive information to a foreigner diplomat. The concerned Assistant Sub-inspector (ASI) was presented before the court of Additional District and Session Judge Muhammad Sohail by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). At the outset of hearing, the defence lawyer opposed the request of further physical remand and said the FIA had recovered the relevant material on the spot. After listening arguments, the court sent the accused to jail on judicial remand. - APP

Fines on hotels for SOPs violations

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Administration on Thursday launched a campaign to check violations of Covid-19, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and imposed fines amounting to Rs 25,000. The drive was initiated on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Muhammad Ali, informed spokesman district administration, adding, Assistant Commissioner (AC) City, Waqas Sikandari conducted the crackdown. He informed that the traders and the residents had also been advised to get vaccinated from their nearest centers at the earliest. He said raids would continue and action in accordance with the law would be taken against the violators. He informed that the DC had directed the Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates to remain in the field and ensure strict implementation of the SOPs and other preventive measures issued by the government to contain spread of corona virus. The DC urged the citizens to adopt all possible precautionary measures against corona as implementation of SOPs was inevitable to control spread of the virus. He informed that the administration had accelerated its ongoing operation to ensure implementation of SOPs and conducting raids in entire district. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani expressing views with Chairman of Shura Council of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Abdullah Bin Muhammad Bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh. - DNA

FIA seizes various crypto accounts, opens probe

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency has seized 1,064 cryptocurrency accounts across the country and registered cases against the account holders for indulging in illegal trade. The FIA sources informed on Thursday that the government has decided to launch a probe into the cryptocurrency accounts of Pakistan as many of them are possibly laundering their money through this medium. The FIA would also detect the money trail needed to buy the digital money. It will see what ways have been adopted to buy cryptocurrency and it will also probe whether the money was white or black. According to the FIA, more than 1,000 Pakistanis have invested \$20 billion in cryptocurrency which is also causing dollar shortage in the country. Yesterday, the FIA Cybercrime Wing seized 1,064 cryptocurrency accounts. It said that in cryptocurrency, Pakistanis did 2,923 transactions of worth \$51.1 million. According to the Circular No. 3 of the State Bank of Pakistan 2018, the buying and selling of cryptocurrency is outlawed in Pakistan. President FPCCI Nasir Hayat Maggon on Wednesday advised the government to allow cashing of the cryptocurrency in the country as Pakistanis were hoarding \$20 million in digital currency. The president of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry was of the view that the government should legalize the cryptocurrency in the country as Pakistan comes on No 3 in the list of countries doing business in digital money. - DNA

Gut bacteria can reduce Covid severity

ISLAMABAD: Scientists in the UAE have found that some bacteria in the gut may reduce the severity of Covid-19 in infected people. The study carried out by scientists at the University of Sharjah, Khalifa University of Science and Technology in Abu Dhabi, and other institutions, said the make-up of the gut microbiome may influence the severity of the disease and the body's immune response. The work is among the latest of many studies of the relationship between the gut microbiome and Covid-19, some of which have analysed how diet influences a person's ability to fend off the coronavirus, The National reported. You don't have to go vegan, but getting more diverse plants on your plate is a great way to boost the health of your gut microbiome, improve your immunity and overall health, and potentially reduce your risk from Covid-19, said Prof Tim Spector, King's College London. - APP

Experts suggest pension reforms to reduce burden

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the first province, which has digitized the pension payment system. Mr. Safer Ahmed, Special Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in a meeting on 'Reform of Pensions: Lessons from Successful Examples in Pakistan and Beyond,' said, the provincial government, with the help of digitalization, has been able to remove tiers of the pension claimants, which were not genuine. The meeting was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), in collaboration with Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) and UKAid's FCDO. Dr. Omer Mukhtar, Team Leader, SEED, informed the participants on the

occasion that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has 170,000 pensioners, which is equivalent to 25% of their active workforce. The provincial government has allocated more than 90 billion for pension expenditures for the current fiscal year. The most worrisome aspect of it is that these expenditures are growing at alarming rate of 14% annually, while provincial receipts are growing at the rate of 8%, annually. Keeping this growth trajectory in view, the government will have very little resources to meet other expenses in the coming years. Member Federal Pay and Pension Commission, Ms Rukhsana Asghar, at the occasion said, the real challenge for the government was to figure out the long-term solutions and enable a strong legal framework to address the pension liabilities' issue. Therefore, a dialogue is

required with all the stakeholders to get them on board for implementing the pension reforms. Dr. Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, SDPI, highlighted that the rapidly increasing pension liabilities are becoming a fiscal burden on the country. This trend is bound to squeeze the space available for development spending. "The SEED and SDPI's effort are aimed at supporting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government in this reform process by helping in reviewing successful examples of contributory pension schemes and transition from a defined benefits scheme to more fiscally sustainable models, Dr Ahmed added. Usama Bakhtiar, Technical Advisor, SEED explained that with the current growth rates, pension and salaries payments will surpass total provincial receipts, as early as in 2027.

CDA hosts Christmas cake cutting ceremony

CDA Chairman Amer Ali Ahmed after attending the meeting at the presidency also joined the ceremony

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The event was organized to express harmony with Christian employees celebrate Christmas and acknowledge their contribution while serving in different formations of the Authority. Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed was the chief guest on the occasion. CDA Chairman Amer Ali Ahmed after attending the meeting at the presidency also joined the ceremony. Addressing the gathering, the minister reiterated his commitment to build a Christian colony and instructed that all the Christian employees must be paid salaries before 25th of December. He also announced two days leave for Christian employees on December 25 and 26.



ISLAMABAD: Christmas cake cutting ceremony was held here at CDA headquarters on Thursday. - DNA

The CDA Chairman explained to the participants for slight delay in turning up at the ceremony as he was attending a meeting at the Presidency House. Chairman thanked the Christian employees for their outstanding work in maintenance of the capital. He expressed the hope that the zeal and zest shown in last two years in carrying out duties will continue. He made a special mention of the efforts by CDA employees and improvement witnessed in the city. Moreover, instructions were issued to keep the decoration lights till the end of the year keeping in the view of season of lights. Also directions were issued to decorate all the churches of the city in collaboration with the community. In the end chairman wished and thanked the participants for their participation.

Briefs

'Noor Jehan' remembered on 21st death anniversary

ISLAMABAD: Cultural icon and one of the most legendary voices of Pakistan Noor Jehan was remembered on Thursday on her 21st death anniversary.

The melody queen who was awarded the title of 'Malika-e-Tarannum' was paid homage for her unforgettable singing career in lollywood industry.

For more than 35 years, she ruled the film industry and sang approximately six thousand songs for Urdu, Punjabi and Sindhi films.

The real name of the legendary artist was Allah Wasai who was born on September 21, 1926 in a musicians family of Kasur, Punjab, electronic channels reported. After partition, she moved to Lahore from Bombay and started her career in films as actress, singer and the first Pakistani film director, with Chann Wey in 1951. She recorded about 10,000 songs in various languages including Urdu Punjabi and Sindhi. She also exhibited her talent as an actor in films including Chan Way, Dopatta, Mirza Ghali, Qaidi, Baaji and Khandaan. — APP

SPO to organize climate conference

ISLAMABAD: Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) would organize National Climate Change Conference on December 29. Theme of the conference is 'Climate Action & Adaptation: Way Forward for an Ecologically Sustainable Pakistan' to advance the climate change adaptation agenda at the national level, said a statement issued here. The first thematic panel will engage key experts from government and development sectors to present an overview of the global discourse on climate change and Pakistan's stance and commitments in mitigating climatic risks in the light of the COP26 meeting.

The panel will also discuss the financing and budgetary challenges for implementing Pakistan's National Climate Change Policy and explore gaps in its implementation.

The discussion will revolve around the overview of the linkages between climate change with Food Security & Agriculture, DR, Water Management and Cultural and Eco-Friendly and Responsible Tourism and the impact of climate change on Women, Transgender, Persons with Disabilities & other vulnerable groups. The last panel of the conference will discuss recommendations and a way forward strategy, prioritizing Food Security & Agriculture, Water Management, Disaster Risk Reduction and promotion of green initiatives through eco-tourism. — APP

Miniature painting exhibition starts

ISLAMABAD: A two-week long miniature painting exhibition titled "Ibtehda" on Thursday started here at National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa). It was inaugurated by Iranian Cultural Councilor at Lok Virsa Art Gallery.

According to Lok Virsa, the artwork of emerging artists including Khushal Khan, Farheen Abid, Saima Rafique, Idreesul Mulik, Sheeza Ali, Isra Yasir, Usman Sadiq, Bisma Abbasi, Faiza Abbasi, Mahnoor Khalid, Safa Hameed and Safa Rasheed were displayed at the exhibition.

Executive Director Lok Virsa, Talha Ali highly praised the artwork of emerging artists. He said that such exhibition would encourage young artists. Lok Virsa would continue its efforts to provide opportunities to the new artists, he added.

The young artist thanked Lok Virsa for providing this opportunity to display their artwork in the exhibition. They expressed the hope that more people would visit and observe their artwork. COVID-19 SOPs was strictly followed at the inauguration ceremony. — APP

NOVA Group, ARCHEA join hands for technology transfer

The luxurious skyscraper is being designed by Professor Dr. Marco CASAMONTI, who is famous for his exclusive designs around the globe

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned real estate developers Pakistan Nova Group join hands with Italian architect firm ARCHEA for technology transfer and knowledge sharing. A formal agreement has been signed between the two parties for economical construction of high rise buildings in Pakistan. The agreement was mutually endorsed by Italian ambassador Andreas Ferrarese and Pakistani ambassador to Italy Jauhar Saleem.

Italian Ambassador in Islamabad Mr. H.E Andreas Ferrarese, Pakistan ambassador in Rome H.E. Jauhar Saleem, Secretary Board of Investment Ms. Farena, Chief Executive Lahore Central Business District Mr. Imran Ameen also addressed the audience and appreciated the efforts undertaken by NOVA Group for industry growth and innovation.

Besides that president chamber of commerce and industry Mr. Shaheel was present at the occasion along with US regional attaché Mr. Michael Moe. A great number of people from different walks of life were present and appreciated the initiative taken by the group. Nova Group Mr. Junaid Afzal Chaudhri highlighted the key features of this outstanding project.



Nova Group along with MAKSONS have taken the initiative for knowledge and construction technology transfer among Italy and Pakistan to minimize the construction price, especially keeping the inflation factor in view.

The luxurious skyscraper is being designed by Professor Dr. Marco CASAMONTI, who is famous for his exclusive designs around the globe. It's been more than three decades now and the Professor is still leaving the

world in amazement with his creative mind and flawless skills. While commenting on the agreement, Chairman Junaid Afzal Chaudhry stated that Nova Group is striving to make the socioeconomic conditions of

Pakistan better and the aforementioned MOU is proof that our company is achieving its set goals one after the other to reach its destination. We believe in Innovation and affordability in real estate, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan High Commissioner-designate to Sri Lanka, Major General (R) Umar Farooq paid a courtesy call on the High Commissioner, Vice Admiral Mohan Wijewickrama. — DNA

TMUC holds summit on global entrepreneurship

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: In lieu of Millennium Global Entrepreneurship Week (MGEW) 2021, the millennium universal college (TMUC) Rawalpindi & Islamabad hosted a riveting talk on this year's theme "Ecosystem, Education and Inclusion." According to a press release issued on Thursday, MGEW is a massive campaign that is celebrated across the globe to empower entrepreneurs in every country and community. Each November millions of people participate in thousands of activities planned to inspire, guide and nurture young entrepreneurs. TMUC Bahria Springs Rawalpindi's Young Entrepreneurs Summit had prominent names and industry practitioners as its panelists and guests that included Mr. Bilal Janjua Executive Director Amreeli Steels, Ahmed Hashmi-Digital Marketer, Taimoor Hamid Owner Secret Sky, Sehrish Raza to name a few. Chaudry Abdur Rauf- Ex President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Group Captain Saeed Nawaz Khan were among honorable guests. The event was chaired by Senator Mr. Waleed Iqbal as chief guest who in his address connected Iqbal's philosophy with modern themes of self-actualization, liberty of thoughts and actions and how today's youth can benefit from Iqbal's teachings to achieve their objectives in life.

The talk proved to be a platform enriched with knowledge, intellect and action plan for those in attendance, that they can rely upon to achieve their goals in a more sustainable and equitable post-pandemic world.

HEC launches ISF grant to promote entrepreneurship

15 innovative startups will be supported every year with holistic business development trainings as well as funding of up to \$35,000 for each

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: "Promoting entrepreneurship is a key initiative in growth of any country's economy. Often the young graduates have excellent innovative ideas but don't know how to transcend these into sustainable businesses. To accelerate the economic development and entrepreneurship in Pakistan, HEC is launching a unique grant called Innovation Seed Fund (ISF). ISF is a key component of the Higher Education Development in Pakistan Project (HEDP) and is launched for the very first time," said HEC in a statement issued here on Thursday. HEDP will be holistically supporting development of entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem, hence will play a key role in transforming Pakistan into knowledge economy. HEDP is assisting HEC in its various

key higher education initiatives. It is a five-year project (2019/20 - 2023/24) being implemented by HEC with support from the World Bank. It aims to support research excellence in strategic sectors of the economy, improve teaching and learning, and strengthen governance in higher education. ISF grant will provide a package of support and seed funding to early-stage startups through HEC-recognized Business Incubation Centers (BICs) at Public sector universities nationwide. The grant winners will receive up to \$35,000 in seed funding in addition to support through BICs in the form of entrepreneurial training, legal support, financial education, business development service provision, and investment readiness training. The successful start-ups will be connected to a range of funding sources that can help them meet their capital needs during the scale-up phase post program. Initially

15 promising early-stage start-ups will be funded and provided the training and incubation services required to transform them into investable ventures via ISF every year. As part of the strategic aims of the project, a significant proportion of the grants will be awarded to startups with female founders. The project has already identified key strategic areas for Pakistan economy aligned with Pakistan's Government Vision 2025. These include Agriculture, Food Resources and Agri Tech; Housing, Construction and Manufacturing; Banking, Microfinance and FinTech; Health Care and Health Tech; Transportation and Logistics; Education and EdTech; E-commerce and Smart Retail; Sustainable Development, Climate and Energy; Emerging Technologies; Creative, Digital Media, Arts and Culture; Metallurgy and related subjects; and other sectors that have potential for growth and impact.

ICCI to work with CDA for resolving key issues

The meeting passed a resolution calling on MCI Administrator Hamza Shafiq to resolve the issue of trade license and board tax and withdraw their notices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shaheel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that he would try to take Chairman CDA to all markets for better solution of issues of traders. He assured that the ICCI would also work with market associations to address the key issues of traders so as to facilitate them in promoting the trade activities. He said this while addressing a meeting of the Traders Welfare Committee of ICCI. Senior Vice President Jamshed Akhtar Sheikh, Vice President Muhammad Fahim Khan, President of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajira and Traders Action Committee Islamabad Ajmal Baloch, Convener ICCI Traders Welfare Committee Khalid Chaudhry, Chairman F-10 Markaz Tahir Abbasi and President Ahmed Khan, Supermarket President Shehzad Shabbir Abbasi, Secretary General Aabpara Market Akhtar Abbasi, President Sitara Market Syed



Altaf Hussain Shah, President of G-10 Markaz Abid Abbasi and Secretary General Azhar Amin, Secretary General Jinnah Supermarket Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Safdar Abbasi and Waleed Khalid from I-9 Markaz, Acting President of I&T Center G-8/1 Nasir Chaudhry, Aftab Gujjar President of G-11 Markaz, Tahir Mehmood Khokhar from Blue Area, Shahid Abbasi Vice President Karachi Company, Chaudhry Zafar Iqbal President of I&T Center G-10/4, Steel Market President Chaudhry Irfan and others attended the meeting.

The meeting passed a resolution calling on MCI Administrator Hamza Shafiq to resolve the issue of trade license and board tax and withdraw their notices. Another resolution was passed calling upon the CDA to take notice of the magistrate's violation of his powers. The pushcarts from G-10 Markaz and G-11 Markaz should be shifted to the ground and DMA should conduct an inquiry against a self-made contractor for renting out the Wagon Adda of G-10/4. Addressing the meeting, Ajmal Baloch, President, All Pakistan

Anjuman-e-Tajira and Traders Action Committee Islamabad, said that the CDA Magistrate has no authority to issue challans of MCI. He said that according to the notification of the District Magistrate, he has the power to hear only the challans of the CDA whereas according to the law, the CDA Magistrate has only the power to impose a fine of up to Rs.500 during brief hearing. He demanded that the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad should take notice of the violation of his powers by the Magistrate.

Khalid Chaudhry, Convener, ICCI Traders Welfare Committee and Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Senior Vice President ICCI said that trade license is required only for those who trade in food items across Pakistan but DMA in Islamabad has issued trade license notices for all types of businesses in violation of the Prime Minister's orders as instead of abolishing the license fee it has been unilaterally increased manifold, which has no legal status.

ICCI Vice President Muhammad Faheem Khan, Traders Welfare Association F-10 Markaz President Ahmed Khan and Chairman Tahir Abbasi said that DMA has illegally allotted open space and thus increased encroachments which should be taken notice of. Other participants in the meeting demanded that the Chairman CDA should visit all the markets including Karachi Company, G-10 and G-11 and take all necessary steps to resolve the key issues of traders as due to inattention, markets do not seem to be part of Islamabad.

Solo exhibition 'Assorted Tales' begins

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A solo exhibition of senior artist Atif Khan titled 'Assorted Tales' Thursday opened at Satrang Gallery the main objective to highlight the talent of skillful artist.

Atif is a printmaker and teaches at the Department of Fine Arts at prestigious National College of Arts, Lahore.

Atif Khan expands the time zone of his works using mythical and historical references which beautifully bring together the past, present, and future, said a press release issued here.

Atif Khan exhibited at the very first exhibition at Satrang Gallery, ten years back in January 2012 and now presenting his new works in a fantastic solo exhibition after a decade.

Using his own life and surroundings as references, and embellishing through history and visual symbols, his artworks create glimpses of alternative realms with elements of the familiar.

Atif's work invites the viewer to join the artist within his artworks as he traverses the surrounding landscape, and engages in various activities deep within these 'Assorted Tales.'

Muhammad Atif Khan graduated with Distinction in 1997 in Fine Art from the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. An illustrious career spanning 24 years has seen a plethora of international awards, residencies, and workshops.

In 1998, he was awarded the 'UNESCO-ASHBURG Bursary for Artists' and was appointed Artist in Residence at the Darat-Al-Funun in Amman, Jordan. He received the 'Commonwealth Arts & Crafts Award' in 2007.

IRSA releases 61862 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 61862 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 36246 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1428.72 feet, which was 36.72 feet higher than its dead level 1392 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 19800 and 35000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1119.65 feet, which was 69.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded a 7584 and 18000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 33752, 36799 and 22775 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 3100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 5762 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. — APP

Exports increase by 29.53% in 5 months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country in rupee term witnessed an increase of 29.53 per cent during the first five months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

According to PBS provisional figures, the exports from the country during July-November (2021-22) were recorded at Rs.2,072,512 million as against the exports of Rs. 1,599,976 million during July-November 2020-21. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 45.35 in November compared to the exports of November, 2020. The exports during November, 2021 mounted to Rs.502,376 million against the exports of Rs. 345,640 million during November, 2020.

On month on month basis, the exports increased by 18.75% when compared to the exports of Rs.423,063 million in October 2021.

Clean energy

THE Geneva-based World Economic Forum's Energy Transition Index reflects Pakistan's poor performance when it comes to the transition from fossil fuels to clean, secure and renewable energy. It seems as though we are falling behind our promises to develop green energy by the year 2030 and reduce our massive carbon footprint owing to the reliance on thermal energy for the generation of electricity in Pakistan. The report takes into account the use of renewable energy within the spectrum of electricity generation, the development of electrification within the country as well as the initiatives taken to improve energy storage. These are considered to be the key factors that contribute towards a successful transition to green energy. With Pakistan ranking 104 out of 115 nations in total, our level of preparedness has been exposed to be one of the worst in the world.

Throughout the course of years, we have embarked upon various projects that have emphasised the importance of developing low-carbon energy. The Pakistan Programme for Affordable and Clean Energy (PACE) was one such project that was to enhance the financial viability of developing clean energy in Pakistan but, not much progress has been reported on that front. Similarly, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also channelled millions of dollars into Pakistan to foster the energy transition process by targeting coal-based, diesel and furnace oil-based power plants in the country and instead promoting solar, hydro and wind energy. Countless other initiatives have been taken but still, we remain where we stood a few years ago with our carbon footprint as enormous as ever, reliance on depleting fossil fuels still remaining, environment deterioration at alarming levels and circular debt rising at a faster rate. Developed countries have a bigger responsibility to counter the climate emergency, but given the threat we face, we must make adjustments as soon as possible.

Petroleum is one of our largest and most expensive imports that has driven up debt steadily, especially in light of global surges in prices. Clearly our reliance on polluting, non-renewable and expensive fossil fuels is not sustainable for the longer term. We must reflect on the ways in which we have been lagging behind the rest of the world and work to make up for the gap created.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 194

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Education that changes the world

MOHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

EVERY country needs the education to broaden the mental horizon of its youth. It needs to impart vocational training among its adults so they can learn a skill and become breadwinners for their families. In Pakistan, the concerned authorities need to restructure the way education is disseminated. With changing times, strategies need to be reevaluated. Instead of pursuing the age-old syllabus, the course content needs to be restructured. Industry experts, academicians, and entrepreneurs should become a part of the committee that decides the course content for the syllabus. Topics and subjects pertaining to the 21st century should be included.

It is indeed true that school / college students should know about Pakistan's provinces and rivers, but they should also know about topics related to finance, accounting, communication, marketing, etc. They should know about current affairs and international relations. The era of rote learning and re-writing the answers in exams is over. Students must think on global terms. They should understand economics and trade, commerce and business. They must know about cryptocurrency, e-commerce, and digital media. While the world is moving forward, our education system seems to be stagnant.

Special measures must be taken to guide and train school and college teachers of the government sector to enhance their learning. They must remain at par with the changing trends so they may impart the same knowledge and information among their students. The time to act is now because we – as a nation – are already lagging behind the region and the world. The government's focus should not remain on increasing the literacy rate but to create awareness among the common man – especially among the population of the less-privileged sector. A holistic approach must be adapted to create inclusivity – to impart the same awareness and education among all.

Voiceless no more: The Russell Tribunal on Kashmir

Tarek Cherkaoui



The Russell Tribunal on Kashmir was organised jointly with leading human rights organizations and academics from Kashmir, Bosnia, and Italy. The tribunal involved 15 international judges, including renowned American Islamic scholar Omar Suleiman. Also among the judges was Jonathan A. C. Brown...

A RECENT tribunal on genocide and war crimes in Kashmir is a model on wrestling narratives from the paralysed international community. Amidst the international community's apathy and the ineptitude of international courts to take on genocide and war crimes, how can victims seek justice in a transparent public trial and get their voices heard? The answer to this question can sometimes take an unexpected, but effective, path.

On 17-19 December 2021, the Russell Tribunal on Kashmir took place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. This grassroots initiative is designed to shed light on war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by India in Kashmir.

The choice of Sarajevo was not fortuitous, as it was the scene of genocide in the 1990s.

The Russell Tribunal is a concept of grassroots justice conceptualised by British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970). The latter decided to hold the US government to account for the exactions and war crimes committed during the Vietnam War. Russell managed to convince other leading intellectuals, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Leilo Basso, to organise a people's tribunal in 1966 to spread awareness and mobilise global opinion against war crimes and other blatant violations of international law.

The International War Crimes Tribunal on Vietnam indeed lacked substantive legal authority, and the US administration ignored its findings. However, this initiative was ground-breaking from a non-judiciary vantage point. It managed to seize the narrative from American warmongers, empowering voiceless Vietnamese victims and bringing their suffering to the fore. The counter-narrative brought forward by the Russell Tribunal was so powerful that this model was emulated by other victims of war crimes in Palestine, Bosnia, Iraq, and Latin America.

The Russell tribunal works in a way comparable to a truth commission. A panel of judges, chosen for their academic pedigree and personal integrity, listen to witnesses and experts who outline personal experiences and draw on facts and figures. The series of testimonies and expert presentations produce at the end sufficient evidence for the panel to consider.

The Russell Tribunal on Kashmir was organised jointly with leading human rights organizations and academics from Kashmir, Bosnia, and Italy. The tribunal involved 15 international judges, including renowned American Islamic scholar Omar Suleiman. Also among the judges was Jonathan A. C. Brown, associate professor at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, as well as Dalia Mujahid, director of research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding in Washington, DC. Concurrently, David Hearst, managing editor of Middle East Eye and former chief writer of the Guardian, participated in the proceedings, as did Bosnian author Hasan Nuhanovic, a survivor of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.

The sessions focused on four themes: genocide, decolonisation, settler colonialism, and crimes against humanity. Several witnesses from Kash-

mir participated in the event. At the same time, experts cited reports by international human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, dwelling on previously conducted interviews with survivors on the ground.

In this event, an extremely gloomy picture emerged. Indian occupation has waged a military, political, economic, social, cultural, and moral war against the Kashmiris over the past 70 years. The Hindutva-inspired Indian settler-colonial actions in Kashmir have repeatedly breached international law on numerous accounts.

Mass murder, excessive use of force, mass displacement, demographic re-engineering, forced disappearances, torture, mass rape, dispossession, home demolition, destruction of cultural heritage, restriction on all freedoms were all committed within a general climate of impunity. Many experts believe this situation has reached the threshold of genocide amidst the total defencelessness of the victims.

In the meantime, the Narendra Modi government in India manoeuvres to sweep the Kashmir tragedy under the carpet, using various PR smoke-screen tactics to deflect attention from the dire situation there. Among the most common stratagems in this context are depicting human rights criticism as pro-Pakistani conspiracy and concealing the atrocities under the mantra of counterterrorism. Moreover, the Modi government imposes a total blackout on the situation, blocking foreign journalists and international human rights experts from even visiting Jammu and Kashmir.

Russell's Tribunal on Kashmir helped expose the genocide in Kashmir and publicly pulled the rug out from the old myths constructing India as the world's biggest democracy. The testimonies and large body of evidence delivered during the tribunal's proceedings reveal an increasingly rogue behaviour that totally breaches international law and basic principles of public morality.

As Bertrand Russell declared in 1966, "may this Tribunal prevent the crime of silence." Civil society initiatives, such as Russell's tribunal on Kashmir, enable human rights defenders and free societies to step up to the plate, hold criminal perpetrators to account even when international courts and organisations are paralysed. Staying silent only emboldens extremist-led governments, which benefit from the general apathy to produce even more horrific acts of violence.

— Courtesy: TRT World

Biden is paving the way for a dangerous ideology

Dalia Al-Aqidi

Americans need to comprehend that Islamists are the oppressors in their own homeland and are willing to do whatever it takes to manipulate the good nature of the average American who respects freedom of religion and expects others to do so. The 212 Republican representatives who voted against this legislation are not "Islamophobes." On the contrary, they took this brave action to defend Muslims such as myself who believe in the US Constitution and are being targeted by American Islamists for doing so

DEMOCRATIC members of the US House of Representatives passed legislation last week to create a special envoy to combat Islamophobia worldwide. The bill was sponsored by Muslim Rep. Ilhan Omar, a Democrat from Minnesota, and her Jewish colleague Rep. Jan Schakowsky, a Democrat from Illinois.

At first glance, the creation of this position seems noble as it reassures Muslim minorities around the globe who are being persecuted or facing racism that the leader of the free world is ready to acknowledge their suffering and defend them if necessary. But the reality is the opposite. As an American Muslim, I stand against this bill along with many similar-minded Muslims who know firsthand what political Islamism is all about and are willing to fight these efforts. The term "Islamophobia" itself is questionable, especially since it is nothing but an invention of political Islamists who wanted to silence even Muslim voices who question their motives and object to their totalitarian ideology in the name of freedom of religion.

The bill that was proudly supported by the Democratic party failed to define Islamophobia. Does describing Hamas as a terrorist group fall into this category? What about condemning suicide bombings by Islamist jihadists? And, most importantly, would standing against the Muslim Brotherhood and its defenders make you an "Islamophobe" who deserves to be canceled?

No one has the answers, except the Islamists themselves who are trying to infiltrate the Western political system and modify it to suit their political agenda, which has nothing to do with the Muslim faith. Otherwise, why did Omar, who claims to fight

for human rights around the globe, refuse to support a resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide if not for the benefit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who met her in a closed meeting in New York during the 72nd UN General Assembly before her US Congressional bid?

If we look at the organizations that contributed to the grooming and presentation of US politicians such as Omar and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, along with a significant number of Islamist candidates who ran for public office around the US, we notice that all go back to a single source, which explains the unified narrative and shared vocabulary.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, which describes itself as the largest Muslim civil liberties organization, and its executive director, Nihad Awad, who does not hide his admiration for the Turkish regime and his close ties to Erdogan, is the sole source behind the recent Islamist political wave in the US.

Awad called on the congressional leadership and the Biden-Harris administration to support the legislation and make this special envoy position a reality. "While global Islamophobia, anti-Muslim state policies, and hate incidents have increased for the past two decades, the American Muslim community has consistently called for the creation of a special envoy position to monitor and combat this rising tide of hate," he wrote.

This month CAIR gave Omar the Muslim-American public servant of the year award for "her activism in the US House of Representatives in light of her recent feud with Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-Colorado), who made Islamophobic remarks about her fellow congresswoman." This is exactly how Islamists operate – by victimizing themselves, then glorifying their actions in the name of "Islamophobia," while President Joe Biden paves the road for the most dangerous ideology in our modern history. "The administration looks forward to working with Congress to ensure the Secretary of State has the necessary flexibility and permissive authority to designate such an office and special envoy and to provide for an annual report monitoring concerning acts of Islamophobia in foreign countries," the White House said.

Americans need to comprehend that Islamists are the oppressors in their own homeland and are willing to do whatever it takes to manipulate the good nature of the average American who respects freedom of religion and expects others to do so. The 212 Republican representatives who voted against this legislation are not "Islamophobes." On the contrary, they took this brave action to defend Muslims such as myself who believe in the US Constitution and are being targeted by American Islamists for doing so. They did it to protect the Constitution's First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of expression by prohibiting Congress from restricting the press or the rights of individuals to speak freely. However, the fight is not over yet. Next year, the bill will be presented to the US Senate, where it is expected to stall – as it should – while senators such as Ted Cruz should focus on designating the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group before it is too late.

— Courtesy: Arab News

Cooperation only way US can ease supply crisis

Yang Shuiqing

The previous US administration promoted reshoring (the process of returning the production and manufacturing of goods back to a company's country of origin) and the localization of industry. However, the measures to localize industry have not been able...

THE COVID-19 pandemic drastically reduced global production and disrupted the supply chains. As a result, the supply chains were overstretched when demand boomed with the normalization of economic activities. The pandemic overshadowed global supply and production, and the US can hardly solve the global supply problem without global cooperation. What has complicated the US' problems is the supply chain bottleneck caused by the US' inadequate domestic policies and measures.

First, the US did not timely respond to the supply shortage, as its economic system is more rigid than expected. Such was the supply logjam that at Long Beach, one of the busiest ports in the US, the stacks of containers increased from two to four in October. This prompted the Joe Biden administra-

tion to ask the ports of Los Angeles, another of the US' busiest ports, and Long Beach to operate 24/7 in October and then negotiated with retail and logistics companies such as Walmart and FedEx to work longer and faster to clear the merchandise from the ports. Still, the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports operated only 16 hours a day while most ports in Asia are operating 24 hours a day.

No wonder congestion at US ports remains a problem, although smaller in scale, due to the shortage of truck drivers, and rising warehouse and logistics costs. Also, production is falling behind schedule because spares and accessories are stuck outside the US because of the supply chain crisis. Second, the US administration's interference has undermined the efficiency of the global supply chains. The US is highly dependent on economic globalization and has a key role to play in the international division of labor; it is also the world's largest final consumption market.

The previous US administration promoted reshoring (the process of returning the production and manufacturing of goods back to a company's country of origin) and the localization of industry. However, the measures to localize industry have not been able to proportionally stimulate productivity. Costs have increased, and according to the Institute for Supply Management, US manufacturers had to wait up to 92 days in September for parts and raw materials due to supply congestion. Third, US protectionism has hindered not only the global trade system but also the interests of the US. In particular, the former Donald Trump administration raised tariffs on Chinese goods several times and imposed strict export controls on Chinese goods and services.

Developed economies, for example, especially the US, have benefited from efficient and low-labor-cost production bases overseas that produce a wide range of inexpensive but quality products. Such production bases have also helped the US

to keep inflation under control and increase consumption.

The supply chain crisis, including the congestion at ports, since the end of last year has delayed the delivery of raw materials and finished products. This has led to a shortage of finished products in the market, forcing goods prices to rise sharply, which has affected ordinary people's lives. Rising inflation has also made festival celebrations such as Thanksgiving costlier. It is also likely to make Christmas celebrations much expensive.

The US can overcome the supply chain crisis by deepening cooperation with other countries. And if it is sincere about restoring the global supply chains to their normal state and boosting economic recovery as it claims, it should strengthen cooperation with global suppliers.

Especially, the US should abandon its decoupling efforts, and take the path of fair cooperation and mutual respect, because what it is encountering are the inevitable outcomes of the international division of labor, not the effects of other countries' economic success, especially China's success. US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said on Oct 4: "We need to take a new, holistic, and pragmatic approach in our relationship with China that can actually further our strategic and economic objectives for the near-term and the long-term." If she means what she says, the US needs to engage in self-reflection and reconsider its position in the global supply chains and China-US trade, and strike a balance between economic resilience and efficiency. The US should also realize that one single country cannot localize supply of goods and services, because it will lead to lower economic efficiency and inefficient resource allocation, so it should follow the theory of comparative advantage and continue cooperating with other countries, in order to maintain its competitiveness in the global market.

— Courtesy: China Daily

Briefs

Berlin warns of 'worst' Afghan crisis

FROM PAGE 01
"We cannot allow hundreds of thousands of children to die because we don't want to take action," Baerbock said. Berlin would "seek ways with our international partners so that humanitarian aid arrives in the country and bring those particularly in need of protection out of the country". Baerbock said such efforts were also aimed at "preventing further destabilisation on the ground". Some 15,000 people who Germany had agreed to take in at the end of its two-decade long military engagement were still in Afghanistan awaiting evacuation, she said, adding that helping them leave was of the "highest priority" for Berlin. This would include redoubling efforts to assure safe passage via neighbouring countries.

Pakistan welcomes UNSC, US...

FROM PAGE 01
provide aid to Afghanistan, supporting basic needs. In another development, he said the United States has exempted US and UN officials doing permitted business with Taliban from US sanctions to help ease aid flow. "Surely, this is a major breakthrough. I want to congratulate the Afghan people. Alhamdulillah, OIC's session of the foreign ministers starts coming to fruition," the foreign minister told media. The Security Council resolution, passed unanimously Wednesday, said, "This resolution provides an exemption from the UN Security Council assets freeze against listed members of the Taliban and associated entities solely for the provision of humanitarian assistance and other activities that support basic human needs in Afghanistan, which the council will review in one year. He also mentioned the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's tweet wherein he appreciated Pakistan's stance and also Saudi Arabia for convening the extraordinary meeting which would have positive outcomes. "Following OIC session in Pakistan, welcome two important developments in support of Afghan people: UNSC resolution to provide aid to Afghanistan, supporting basic needs and the US exemption on US/UN officials doing permitted business with Taliban from US sanctions. The foreign minister said the OIC session also succeeded in evolving consensus among the participants for appointing a special OIC envoy on Afghanistan humanitarian assistance, establishing a Trust Fund which also started receiving funds and launching a food security program. Qureshi said he would also talk to the member countries to consider the option of establishing an air corridor or others to ensure an urgent supply of food.

Asif Zardari to launch campaign...

FROM PAGE 01
PTI government by staying in Islamabad and Lahore. Zardari said the PPP-led Sindh government and the federation had some thorny issues that would persist in the future. He further said that they will continue to serve the masses under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Aseefa Bhutto. Referring to the death of one of his cousins, former president said today he was in great pain because he had lost one of his child playmates. Earlier, PPP Co-Chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari reached Tando Allah Yar to meet his close aide and friend. Asif Zardari who stayed overnight in Nawabshah city reached Tando Allah Yar today to visit the house of his friend Gulam Qadir Marri at village Darya Khan Marri. He will stay in Tando Allah Yar for three days. The local administration made preparations like installing banflaxes and nearby buildings have been beautified with light bulbs, setting up a temporary helipad and cleaning the area for welcoming the former president.

Pakistan stun Afghanistan in U-19 Asia Cup opener

In their opening match of the tournament, Pakistan faced an uphill battle against Afghanistan. After winning the toss, Afghanistan elected to bat first which turned out to be a bad decision after all



SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The Pakistan U-19 team has registered their first-ever win against Afghanistan U-19 in the Asia Cup after they dismantled the opposition for only 52 runs inside 24 overs. In their opening match of the tournament, Pakistan faced an uphill battle against Afghanistan. After winning the toss, Afghanistan elected to bat first which turned out to be a bad decision after all. Ahmad Khan took 3 for 21 whereas ZeeshanZameer and Awais Ali both picked up two wickets each and gave away only 12 and 9 runs respectively. The bowlers' efforts were rewarded and Pakistan managed to tumble Afghanistan

over for only 52 runs. Pakistan, however, failed to cruise through the game as they also lost six wickets while chasing the low total. Abdul Bangalzai was removed after making 9 runs whereas Muhammad Shahzad and QasimAkram both fell without disturbing the score. Haseebullah, Irfan Khan, and RizwanMehmood collectively only added 17 runs before departing. The opener MaazSadaqat remained unbeaten on 14 runs as Pakistan completed the chase in 16.4 overs. Quedta Gladiators' Noor Ahmed was the pick of the bowlers for Afghanistan as he took 3-20 from the five overs he bowled. Pakistan will take on arch-rivals India in their second match of the event on Saturday, December 25.

Open dialogue better than boycott, says Coe

SHENZHEN: World Athletics President Sebastian Coe said he is "philosophically opposed" to boycotts and prefers dialogue as a means to work through issues after the Diamond League announced the addition of a second event in China next year. The Diamond League said on Tuesday Shenzhen would host the 2022 season's second meet in China on Aug 6, after the July 30 event in Shanghai. The United States, Britain and Australia are among countries that have announced a diplomatic boycott of the Feb 4-20 Beijing Winter Games over China's human rights record, a stand that China dismissed as "political posturing". Sport in China is also under the microscope after tennis player PengShuai alleged that a former Chinese vice premier had sexually assaulted her in the past. The Women's Tennis Association said it would suspend tournaments in China due to concerns over her safety. Peng, who was absent from public view from nearly three weeks, said on Sunday that she had never accused anyone of sexually assaulting her. Speaking after the decision to add another event in China, Coe said: "We are concerned for the welfare of all athletes. I believe all athletes should be free to voice their concerns and sports should never flinch from making those points. "But it is still better to have open dialogue and sporting relationships than pulling up the drawbridge." - DNA

Ramos sent off in PSG draw

PARIS: Sergio Ramos was sent off as Paris Saint-Germain salvaged a 1-1 draw away at Ligue 1 strugglers Lorient thanks to Mauro Icardi's injury-time equaliser on Wednesday. In their final outing of 2021, PSG trailed in Brittany to Thomas Monconduit's thunderous first-half strike for Lorient until Icardi rescued a point with a header in the 91st minute. Ramos had come off the bench at the start of the second half for just his third appearance since moving to France from Real Madrid in the close season, but he was dismissed four minutes from time after receiving a second yellow card. PSG, with top scorer KylianMbappe and playmaker Marco Verratti both missing due to suspension and Neymar still out injured, produced another worryingly sub-standard performance that will put the focus on coach Mauricio Pochettino. The Argentine, approaching the first anniversary of his appointment, has struggled to get the very best out of PSG's array of superstar players, although they sit a huge 13 points clear of their nearest challengers Nice and Marseille at the French season's halfway stage. "In terms of results we are still in all competitions, so in that regard we are doing fine," Pochettino said. - Agencies

Liverpool fight back to beat Leicester in League Cup

WEB DESK

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool came from two goals down to beat Leicester on penalties after a pulsating League Cup quarter-final ended 3-3 at Anfield as Tottenham and Chelsea also made the semi-finals. Spurs were 2-1 winners over West Ham and will face Chelsea in the last four after they needed two late goals to see off Brentford 2-0. Liverpool will take on Arsenal in the semi-finals over two legs in January. All three matches went ahead in front of full crowds despite the worrying rise of coronavirus case numbers that had seen last weekend's Premier League schedule decimated by call offs. Leicester's previous two fixtures had been called off due

to a combination of a coronavirus outbreak in the squad and a mounting injury list. However, Brendan Rodgers was able to name a close to full strength side on his return to Anfield and it showed early on against a much-changed Liverpool. Jamie Vardy struck twice inside the first 13 minutes as he angled a drive across Caoimhin Kelleher and then tapped in PatsonDaka's pass from close range. JurgenKlopp had made 10 changes from the side that drew 2-2 at Tottenham on Sunday with Liverpool also depleted by four positive Covid cases. However, it was one of their more experienced starters who got them back in the game as Alex Oxalade-Chamberlain smashed home from the edge of the

area. Leicester restored their two-goal cushion before half-time thanks to James Maddison's piledriver from 30 yards that flew past Kelleher. Klopp introduced three first-team regulars at half-time and one of them, Diogo Jota, gave Liverpool life again 22 minutes from time. Kasper Schmeichel then needed to produce a stunning save to deny the Portuguese a second, but Leicester still could not hold out as Takumi Minamoto sent the game to penalties in the fifth minute of stoppage time. Minamoto then missed with the chance to win the tie from the spot in the shootout, but Kelleher saved from Luke Thomas and Ryan Bertrand before Jota fired home the winning penalty. Tottenham boss Antonio

Conte showed his determination to end the club's 13-year trophy drought as soon as possible as he named Harry Kane among a strong starting line-up. But it was the other two of Spurs' front three who were on target in north London. Steven Bergwijn scored his first goal of the season after two clever one-twos with Pierre Emile Højbjerg. Tottenham's lead lasted just three minutes as West Ham seized upon Eric Dier's slack pass and Jarrod Bowen fired low past Hugo Lloris. Two minutes later it was 2-1 as Bergwijn this time turned provider for Moura to prod home from close range. "In England it's very difficult to win something," said Conte, who will come up against his old club in the last four.



Hong Kong's Tiananmen Square statue removed

HONG KONG: A famous statue at the University of Hong Kong marking the Tiananmen Square massacre was removed late on Wednesday. The statue showed piled-up corpses to commemorate the hundreds - possibly thousands - of pro-democracy protesters killed by Chinese authorities in 1989. It was one of the few remaining public memorials in Hong Kong commemorating the incident. Its removal comes as Beijing has increasingly been cracking down on political dissent in Hong Kong. The city used to be one of few places in China that allowed public commemoration of the Tiananmen Square protests - a highly sensitive topic in the country. In 1989, Beijing's Tiananmen Square became the focus for demonstrations calling for greater political freedoms. Thousands of people camped for weeks in the square, but in June the military moved in and troops opened fire. The Chinese government says 200 civilians and several dozen security personnel died. Other estimates have ranged from hundreds to as many as 10,000. The "Pillar of Shame", seen here at the University of Hong Kong in October "The decision on the aged statue was based on external legal advice and risk assessment for the best interest of the university," it said in a statement on Thursday. "The university is also very concerned about the potential safety issues resulting from the previously cited safety or public health concerns as reasons for preventing events such as vigils taking place on anniversaries of the Tiananmen Square massacre. The first sign the statue was being taken down came late on Wednesday, when university officials fenced off the area with plastic sheeting. Construction workers worked overnight behind plastic barriers to dismantle the 8m (26ft) copper statue. Security guards blocked reporters from approaching and tried to stop them from filming. - Agencies



Sydney Sixers sign Shadab Khan

SYDNEY: Pakistan star all-rounder Shadab Khan has been signed by Sydney Sixers for the ongoing 11th season of the Big Bash League (BBL). Shadab has now become the fifth Pakistani player to be signed by a BBL franchise as HarrisRauf, Ahmed Danyal, and Syed Fardious have all been signed by Melbourne Stars whereas Mohammad Hasnain will wear Sydney Thunder colors. Previously, the all-rounder featured in the BBL back in the competition's seventh edition for Brisbane Heat, where he played three matches and picked up six wickets. He also made some handy contributions with the bat as well. The Sydney Sixers are on track to extend their winning run in the tournament as they have already registered four out of five wins, and they have identified Shadab as the key factor to help them with it. Shadab will return to Pakistan ahead of the Pakistan Super League's seventh edition and this stint during the BBL will help him prepare for the tournament. In addition to that, this will also allow him to get accustomed to the conditions ahead of Pakistan's tour to Australia in 2023. - DNA



Asif Zardari to launch campaign...

FROM PAGE 01
PTI government by staying in Islamabad and Lahore. Zardari said the PPP-led Sindh government and the federation had some thorny issues that would persist in the future. He further said that they will continue to serve the masses under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Aseefa Bhutto. Referring to the death of one of his cousins, former president said today he was in great pain because he had lost one of his child playmates. Earlier, PPP Co-Chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari reached Tando Allah Yar to meet his close aide and friend. Asif Zardari who stayed overnight in Nawabshah city reached Tando Allah Yar today to visit the house of his friend Gulam Qadir Marri at village Darya Khan Marri. He will stay in Tando Allah Yar for three days. The local administration made preparations like installing banflaxes and nearby buildings have been beautified with light bulbs, setting up a temporary helipad and cleaning the area for welcoming the former president.

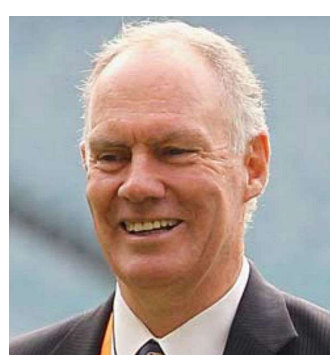
Referring to the death of one of his cousins, former president said today he was in great pain because he had lost one of his child playmates. Earlier, PPP Co-Chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari reached Tando Allah Yar to meet his close aide and friend. Asif Zardari who stayed overnight in Nawabshah city reached Tando Allah Yar today to visit the house of his friend Gulam Qadir Marri at village Darya Khan Marri. He will stay in Tando Allah Yar for three days. The local administration made preparations like installing banflaxes and nearby buildings have been beautified with light bulbs, setting up a temporary helipad and cleaning the area for welcoming the former president.

World cricket needs a strong Pak team: Chappell

"I do hope that Australia will not cry off from the nation's first cricketing tour of Pakistan in over two decades. Pakistan, in particular, deserves to host a full-strength Australian team, having had to play almost all of their cricket in the UAE for the past decade," wrote Greg

SYDNEY: Former Australian captain Greg Chappell has spoken at length about Test cricket and how Australia can lead from the front and bring more excitement to the format. While penning his thoughts for Sydney Morning Herald, Greg Chappell in his article "Test cricket is not dead, but Australia can improve its health by again touring Pakistan," wrote that Australia has to help Pakistan through this tough phase. "I do hope that Australia will not cry off from the nation's first cricketing tour of Pakistan in over two decades. Pakistan, in particular, deserves to host a full-strength Australian team, having had to

play almost all of their cricket in the UAE for the past decade," wrote Greg. Greg praised Imran Khan as one of the world's best all-rounders and claimed that having him lead the charge is a huge positive for Pakistan cricket. "Imran Khan was one of the world's greatest all-rounders. A charismatic and natural leader immensely proud of his nation, it should give the cricketing world confidence that he is helming his country now as Pakistan's Prime Minister and determined to oversee the return of international cricket. I am confident that no stone will be left unturned in that quest," Greg further elaborated.



The former Australian captain complimented Pakistani people and labelled them as "friendly and respectful" and praised the likes of Babar, Rizwan, and Shaheen as one of

the best in world cricket right now. "The stadiums are excellent, as are the five-star hotels and other facilities for tourists. Language is not an issue. The people are extremely friendly and respectful. They are very passionate and knowledgeable about their cricket and of course their national side always has some amazing talent, which has not always been harnessed. Babar Azam, Mohammed Rizwan and Shaheen Afridi are world-class cricketers who would easily walk into other top international teams," he wrote in his article. Greg further explained that everyone must understand how important this tour is for the future of the game, especially Australia and

Pakistan. "It is critical that CA and the ACA make it clear to the players how important this tour is to the long-term future of the game. Each generation has a responsibility to ensure that the game that they pass on to future generations is in robust health," he wrote. He concluded by adding that world cricket needs a strong Pakistan Test side to compete against the top three. "World cricket, and Test cricket, in particular, needs a strong Pakistan team to compete with the big three. Their brand of cricket is always a drawcard - skillful fast bowlers, exciting spinners, and dashing batsmen," concluded Greg. - Agencies

PML-N, PPP suffered defeat in KP: Fawad

FROM PAGE 01

the candidates to contest elections in Punjab due to Asif Ali Zardari's policies, which made the party unpopular in the country. He said that such political parties were alive only because of the media coverage and programmes at private TV channels. He said as these parties would eliminate the day the media would stop giving them coverage. Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said that the sole purpose of such political parties was to hatch negative propaganda over the issue of inflation, adding that those who were ruling Sindh for the last 30 years have now claimed to make a plan for Sindh. These political leaders could not even go to Larkana and Nawab Shah due to their unpopularity, what to talk of becoming a power in Islamabad and Lahore, he added. Nawab Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari would have to spend their lives now in foreign countries, he said.

Palestine urges World to halt...

FROM PAGE 01

It maintains this intransigent position and acts with impunity because it continues to be rewarded for its crimes. It is past time for the international community to act, collectively and concretely, to implement UNSC 2334 and its recommendation and bring this unlawful situation to an end. The global community has an obligation to implement effective measures that ensure non-recognition of colonial settlements and deprives Israel of the financial plunders this enterprise has thus far yielded. Continued Israeli failure to comply with international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions, including 2334, must be met with decisive international action, including sanctions. Finally, the State of Palestine calls on the United Nations to assume its decisive role and convene an international conference under the auspices of the Quartet to ensure the realization of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including to self-determination and the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Int'l community must take...

FROM PAGE 01

own words and its own laws seriously," said Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. "Without decisive international intervention to impose accountability upon an unaccountable occupation, there is no hope that the Palestinian right to self-determination and an end to the conflict will be realized anytime in the foreseeable future," Lynk said. Resolution 2334, adopted by the Security Council on 23 December 2016, stated that Israeli settlements constitute "a flagrant violation under international law" and said that all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, must "immediately and completely cease."

PTI govt has fully...

FROM PAGE 01

He said that government bought gas at exorbitant price and committed corruption of billions. Nobody cared to launch a probe into mega scandals of rice, gas, medicines and Malam Jabba. "I have told three years ago about the NAB-Niazi nexus. Now is the time to end this nexus," he added. The PML-N president said that politics is the name to provide facilities to people and control inflation but the Imran Khan government has wrecked economy. He said it was the most unfortunate day when Imran became prime minister of this country. While addressing the function, the former defence minister and PML-N leader Khawaja Asif said that the series (of defeat) which has started from the KP will go as far as Karachi.

Briefs

Madagascar:
Death toll
rises to 85

AGENCIES

ANTANANARIVO: A boat disaster off the coast of Madagascar this week has claimed 85 lives, maritime officials said Thursday, after retrieving 21 more bodies a day earlier.

A total of 138 people had been aboard the 12-metre-long (39-feet) wooden vessel, which sank off the island's northeastern coast on Monday, they said.

Fifty people have been rescued, most of whom had been on the bridge of the vessel when it foundered, while three others remain missing, they said.

"The toll stands at 85 dead, with 21 bodies recovered" on Wednesday, police general Zafisambatra Ravoavy told AFP. The dead include five children.

The vessel - a cargo boat not authorised to carry passengers - had set off from the village of Antseraka for Soanierana-Ivongo, about 100 kilometres (60 miles) to the south, say investigators. After suffering an apparent engine failure, the boat was driven by waves onto a reef, where it took on water, according to Adrien Fabrice Ratsimbazafy of the River and Maritime Port Agency (APMF). Alban Menavolo, the mayor of Soanierana-Ivongo, said personal belongings, identity cards and money had been recovered by rescue teams.

Lithuania
extends
migrant
detention
limit

VILNIUS: Migrants who cross into Lithuania from Belarus can be detained for up to a year, the Lithuanian parliament decided on Thursday, increasing an initial six-month detention limit.

Eighty-one lawmakers backed the lengthening of the six-month detention period, which was introduced in July as part of plans to hold large numbers of migrants in camps near the border and deter others from trying to cross into the country. Fourteen lawmakers opposed the extension, while 15 abstained.

"We have to send a message to migrants and Europe," Interior Minister Agne Bilotaite told parliament. "Migrants haven't flooded Europe, and Europe is grateful to us."

About 4,300 migrants have entered Lithuania from Belarus this year, with Iraqi citizens accounting for two-thirds of the total, according to Lithuanian interior ministry data. More than 3,000 people are currently held in migrant camps, the ministry said. Since early August, Lithuania has pushed more than 7,000 people back over the border, which runs along sparsely populated woods and marshes. The number of migrants trying to cross from Belarus has decreased in recent weeks, but Lithuania has said it could soon be facing a new wave. - APP

Germany
records first
death from
omicron

NEWS DESK

BERLIN: Germany recorded its first death from the omicron variant of the coronavirus on Thursday, the Berlin-based Robert Koch Institute (RKI) health agency announced.

The RKI said the person was between the ages of 60 and 79.

So far, 3198 omicron cases have been detected in Germany - with an increase in cases of 25% from Wednesday to Thursday. Of these 3198 cases, 48 people were treated in the hospital.

The announcement comes after German Health Minister Karl Lauterbach said he expects a surge in cases from the variant around the New Year.

Germany will now enact new restrictions starting December 28 to curb the spread of infection. These measures include limiting private gatherings to a maximum of 10 people and the closure of nightclubs and discos.

Putin urges west to offer
security guarantees quickly

Speaking during a marathon annual news conference, the Russian leader welcomed talks with the U.S. that are set to start in Geneva next month, but sternly warned that Moscow expects the discussion to produce quick results

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin urged the West on Thursday to move quickly to meet Russia's demand for security guarantees precluding NATO's expansion to Ukraine and the deployment of the military alliance's weapons there.

Speaking during a marathon annual news conference, the Russian leader welcomed talks with the U.S. that are set to start in Geneva next month, but sternly warned that Moscow expects the discussion to produce quick results.

"We have clearly and precisely let them know that any further NATO expansion eastward is unacceptable," Putin said.

Last week, Moscow submitted draft security documents demanding that NATO deny membership to Ukraine and other former Soviet countries and roll back the alliance's military deployments in Central and Eastern Europe. A key principle of the NATO alliance is that membership is open to any

qualifying country.

"Is it us who are putting missiles near the U.S. borders?" Putin said. "No, it's the U.S. who came to our home with their missiles. They are already on the threshold of our home. Is it some excessive demand not to place any offensive systems near our home?"

Moscow presented its demand amid tensions over a Russian troop buildup near Ukraine that has stoked fears of a possible invasion. U.S. President Joe Biden warned Putin in a conference call earlier this month that Russia will face "severe consequences" if it attacks Ukraine. Putin previously denied having plans to launch an attack but has described a NATO expansion and weapons deployment in Ukraine as a "red line."

Asked Thursday if he could provide a guarantee that Russia will not invade Ukraine, Putin snapped in response: "It's you who must give us guarantees and give them immediately, now, and not have idle talk about it for decades." "How the Americans would respond if we put our missiles on



the U.S. borders with Canada or Mexico?" he exclaimed.

The U.S. and its allies have said they won't give Russia the kind of guarantee on Ukraine that Putin wants. American officials are conferring with European allies in advance of the Geneva talks.

The Russian leader charged during his news conference that the West had "cheated, blatantly swindled" Moscow by offering verbal pledges in the 1990s not to expand NATO's presence east and then enlarging to incorporate former Soviet bloc countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the

ex-Soviet republics in the Baltics. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999, followed in 2004 by Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the former Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In subsequent years, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro and North Macedonia also joined, bringing NATO's membership to 30 nations.

"It's not us who threaten anyone," Putin said. "Is it us who came to the U.S. or British borders? No, they have come to us, and they now say that Ukraine will be in NATO." He accused the West of trying to make Ukraine "anti-Russia, constantly beefed up with modern weapons and brainwashing the population."

Russia can't keep living in anticipation of looming security threats posed by possible deployment of Western weapons in Ukraine, Putin said. "Should Russia live constantly looking back at what's going on and what new weapon systems are put there?" he exclaimed. "We need to think about ensuring our

security." He argued that Western weapons could encourage hawkish forces in Ukraine to attempt to regain control over Russia-backed separatist regions by force and even try to reclaim Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. The Russian leader claimed that Western expressions of concern about an alleged Russian invasion could be a prelude to a possible attempt by Ukraine to launch an offensive against the rebels in the east following two botched attempts in the past.

"There is an impression that they are preparing a third military operation and warning us not to meddle," he said. Ukrainian officials have denied an intention to launch an offensive against the separatists.

Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and shortly after cast its support behind a separatist rebellion in the country's east. The fighting, which started more than seven years ago, has killed over 14,000 people and devastated Ukraine's industrial heartland, known as the Donbas.

US Navy
seizes arms
from Iran

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: The US Navy has said it seized a large cache of assault rifles and ammunition being smuggled by a fishing ship from Iran likely bound for war-ravaged Yemen. US Navy patrol ships discovered the weapons aboard what the Navy described as a stateless fishing vessel in an operation that began on Monday in the northern reaches of the Arabian Sea off Oman and Pakistan. Sailors boarded the vessel and found 1,400 Kalashnikov-style rifles and 226,600 rounds of ammunition, as well five Yemeni crew members.

It's just the latest interdiction amid the grinding war in Yemen that pits Iran-backed Houthi rebels against a Saudi-led military coalition.

Western nations and UN experts have repeatedly accused Iran of smuggling illicit weapons and technology into Yemen over the years, fueling the civil war and enabling the Houthis to fire missiles and drones into neighboring Saudi Arabia. Iran denies arming the Houthis despite evidence to the contrary.

In an unusually pointed move, a statement late Wednesday from the Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet blamed Iran for sending the weapons, saying the boat was sailing along a route "historically used to traffic weapons unlawfully to the Houthis in Yemen."

"The direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of weapons to the Houthis violates UN Security Council Resolutions and US sanctions," the statement added.

China puts
Xi'an in
lockdown

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China plunged a city of 13 million people into lockdown on Thursday to stamp out an increase in coronavirus infections, as the country doubles down on its "zero tolerance" policy just weeks before it is set to host the Winter Olympics.

The restrictions in the northeastern city of Xi'an took effect at midnight Wednesday, with no word on when they might be lifted. They are some of the harshest since China imposed a strict lockdown last year on more than 11 million people in and around the city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first detected in late 2019.

One person from each household will be allowed out every two days to buy household necessities, a government order said. Other family members were required to stay at home, although the rule was not being rigorously enforced, according to social media posts. People who happened to be staying in hotels became stuck.

There was no word on whether the new cases were of the recently identified omicron variant that appears more contagious and is driving surges in many parts of the world - or the previous version, delta. China has reported just seven omicron cases so far, but none in Xi'an.

Greece
cancels
Christmas
events

ATHENS: Christmas concerts and other events have been canceled in Greece under new restrictions announced Thursday that include a general mask mandate for outdoors and all public areas.

Incoming travelers will also be required to have follow-up tests for COVID-19 on the second and fourth days after their arrival. The restrictions will take effect Friday as the country braces for the expected impact of the omicron variant of the coronavirus, with the public health service already under pressure and intensive care space at more than 90% capacity.

"Due to the large amount of Christmas activity and crowded conditions that it creates, the mandatory use of masks is fully justified," Health Minister Thanos Plevris said during a live-streamed presentation of the measures, which will remain in effect at least through Jan. 3. - Agencies



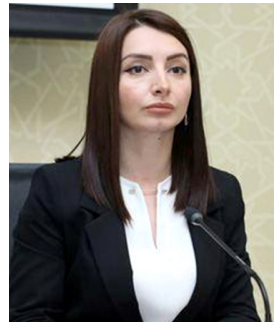
ISLAMABAD: Wife of Austrian Ambassador to Pakistan Ursula Kiesling explain about her paintings to diplomat woman during her painting exhibition entitled "Commixture" at Khaas Gallery in Islamabad. - DNA

Google notified
of Azeri lands'
distorted names

DNA

BAKU: Baku has sent a letter to Google over the distorted names of Azerbaijani territories liberated from the Armenian occupation displayed on Google Maps. Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Leyla Abdullayeva made the remarks in an interview with local media. She stressed that the issue was raised before Google through diplomatic channels that the geographical maps in the Google Maps app contain distorted names in Armenian along with the official names in Azerbaijani of the territories of Azerbaijan's Karabakh region.

"A letter was sent to the management of the company about the distortion of the toponyms of Azerbaijan



territories. The list of official geographic names of the corresponding territories of Azerbaijan was sent to the opposite side," she said. Abdullayeva recalled that in May 2021, at the annual session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry presented a national report, prepared jointly with the Ecology and Natural Resources Ministry.

Supporting Iraq's stability
Iran's principled policy

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi says the Islamic Republic has always supported the establishment of a strong and powerful parliament and government in Iraq. In a meeting with visiting Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein in Tehran on Thursday, Raisi hailed recent peaceful and secure parliamentary elections in Iraq.

Iran's president added that the Islamic Republic regards any form of insecurity in Iraq as its own, stressing, "Fomenting insecurity and threatening stability in Iraq are not acceptable, and the principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to support the stability of Iraq and authority of its government."

Pointing to the withdrawal of the US military forces from Iraq, the Iranian president stated, "This achievement is the outcome of resistance of the Iraqi nation and officials, because the Americans have never left any place where they have been militarily present, ex-

cept in cases where they faced resistance of nations."

The US-Iraq agreement to pull out all American combat troops from the country by the end of this year was devised back in July following persisting demands by Iraqi lawmakers and community leaders for withdrawal of US forces after their terrorist drone assassination near Baghdad airport of visiting Iran's Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani along with other senior Iraqi and Iranian military officials early last year.

US President Joe Biden and Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi declared that the US mission in Iraq will transition from combat to an "advisory" role by the end of the year.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Raisi commended efforts by the Iraqi government to help repatriate the late Iranian ambassador to Sana'a, Hassan Irlo, who passed away of COVID-19 complications after Saudi aggressors dragged their foot over allowing his medical evacuation for treatment.



Baku, Sarajevo to co-op in mine clearance

Bosnia and Herzegovina Foreign Minister Bisera Turkovic noted at the conference that it is gratifying that Karabakh has turned from a battlefield into a territory of great construction and restoration

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov has said that Baku and Sarajevo will cooperate in demining territories liberated from Armenia's occupation in the 44-day war late last year.

He made the remarks at a joint press conference with his counterpart from Bosnia and Herzegovina Bisera Turkovic in Baku on December 23.

The Azerbaijani Mine Action Agency and the relevant structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina have established contacts and will cooperate in mine clearance, Bayramov said.

Bosnia and Herzegovina Foreign Minister Bisera Turkovic noted at the conference that it is gratifying that Karabakh has turned from a battlefield into a territory of great construction and restoration. Bayramov also noted that Bosnia and Herzegovina is ready to support the work being carried out in Azerbaijan's Karabakh region.

"I thank the minister for this. I informed my colleague of the current situation, the steps taken

by our country in the post-conflict period, the meetings held in Brussels and Sochi in recent weeks and their results. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country that has experienced the pain of war in its experience. Therefore, they understand this sensitivity. The country's parliament has adopted a resolution on Khojaly and strongly condemned the genocide," he said. The mutual opening of the em-

bassies of Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina will contribute to the development of ties, Turkovic said.

"The state of economic ties does not satisfy us, the physical distance between the countries should not be an obstacle to expanding ties," added Turkovic. Bayramov emphasised the development of political dialogue between the two countries at a high level. "In the near future, we will

begin to operate our embassies, which will further expand the existing ties. At the same time, these ties will acquire a more intensive character," he added. Bayramov stated that cooperation in the Balkan Peninsula and the South Caucasus was discussed at the meeting. It was also agreed to start political consultations between the two countries foreign ministers. "Relations between Azerbaijan

and Bosnia and Herzegovina and political dialogue are developing at a high level, at the same time inter-parliamentary relations are at a disposal", he added.

Bayramov expressed confidence in strengthening ties between the two countries in education, culture, tourism and other spheres during the post-pandemic period. According to Bayramov, the economic aspect took an important place in the discussions with his colleague. New agreements are expected to be signed between the sides.

The minister noted that at present, cooperation between Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the economic sphere does not satisfy the parties, and appropriate work will be done in this direction. "The agreements existing between the two countries were also considered today. I believe that in the future we will witness important agreements," Bayramov added.

Before the conference, a bilateral meeting between the sides with the participation of delegations was held, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry press service reported.



Briefs

Iran nuclear talks to resume on Dec 27

NEWS DESK

VIENNA: Negotiations to revive a 2015 nuclear deal signed between Iran and world powers will resume on Monday in Austria's capital, officials have said. The announcement came on Thursday amid warnings of the landmark agreement would become obsolete within weeks if Iran continued to step up its nuclear activities as it has been doing since 2019, a year after the United States unilaterally withdrew from it and reimposed sanctions against Iran. "Vienna talks to resume on Monday 27 December. The JCPOA Joint Commission will meet to discuss and define the way ahead." European Union diplomat Enrique Mora wrote on Twitter, referring to the acronym of the deal's formal name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. "Important to pick up the pace on key outstanding issues and move forward, working closely with the US. Welcome to the 8th round." Negotiations restarted in November after a five-month hiatus to try to restore the deal, which was to offer Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme. The seventh round concluded last week, where some modest gains were reported.

Germany: Anti-lockdown protest turns violent

WEB DESK

MUNICH: Thousands of people demonstrated against coronavirus measures in the southern German city of Munich on Wednesday, with police reporting that many participants displayed aggressive behavior toward officers. Altogether 11 people were arrested, and 14 criminal incidents were reported, including the display of insignia from unconstitutional organizations and violent resistance. At least one officer was badly injured. The demonstration in Munich came after multiple similar rallies across Germany turned violent, with several police officers injured in clashes with protesters. The atmosphere was perceived as hostile by officers. Police said they had sometimes used pepper spray and batons to fend off attacks from protesters. According to a police statement, many protesters, some of whom had brought children with them, behaved disrespectfully and insulted officers. The police said that a journalist had been attacked and that the suspected perpetrator had been arrested.

US FDA approves Merck COVID drug

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The US health regulator has approved the second at-home treatment for the coronavirus. A similar treatment from Pfizer was approved a day earlier. The US Food and Drug Administrator approved Merck's COVID-19 treatment on Thursday. It will be the second at-home treatment available to US citizens. It comes after it gave the go-ahead for a similar treatment from Pfizer Inc. a day earlier. Merck's drug molnupiravir, developed with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, inserts tiny errors into the virus's genetic code to stop it from reducing. This has sparked concerns that the drug could spur the virus to mutate into more virulent strains. The drug targets part of the virus known as RNA polymerase, which has not changed much in the omicron variant. The molnupiravir drug is already authorized for use in the UK. It is still under review in the European Union.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia vow to strengthen bilateral ties

The Chairman Shura Council of Saudi Arabia Dr. Abdullah Mohammad Bin Sheikh, who along with members of his delegation called on President Dr Arif Alvi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have reiterated their desire to take the existing relations into new heights in all areas of mutual interest. This was discussed at a meeting between the Chairman Shura Council of Saudi Arabia Dr. Abdullah Mohammad Bin Sheikh, who along with members of his delegation called on President Dr Arif Alvi in Islamabad Thursday. Welcoming the delegation, the President said that Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enjoyed deep historical ties and tremendous cooperation which needed to be further promoted for the mutual benefit of the two sides. He appreciated the Kingdom's historical and continued support, and financial assistance to Pakistan in difficult times. He congratulated the Saudi lead-



ership for its timely initiative to convene the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. President Alvi lauded the role played by the Kingdom for mobi-

lizing the international community as well as announcing financial help, during the recently held OIC session of Foreign Ministers for the people of Afghanistan. He expressed satisfaction that the Organization of Islamic Coopera-

tion (OIC) countries had given a strong message of hope, solidarity, and unity to the people of Afghanistan during this challenging time. He emphasized that the Muslim world should work together to address the challenge of Is-

lamophobia. The atrocities being committed by India against the innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir were also highlighted by the president during the meeting. He urged the international community to put pressure on India to stop committing human rights violations and grant Kashmiris their right to self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions. Dr Abdullah Mohammad Bin Sheikh said that he considered Pakistan as his second home and emphasized the need to take practical steps to further improve bilateral ties. He conveyed greetings to the president from King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman. He also congratulated the president on successfully holding the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC on Afghanistan.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the building of Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shadhili Research Centre on Sufism, Science & Technology (ARCS). - APP

PM inaugurates GCU Research Center on Sufism

LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday inaugurated the Sheikh Abul Hassan Al-Shadhili Research Center on Sufism, Science and Technology here at Government College University. He also laid foundation stone of the research center building, to be constructed at a cost of Rs. 140 million, which would be utilized for research on bringing about improvement in practical life in the light of Sufism. The institution was aimed at promoting societal reform; mutual harmony; respect of diversity; research on Sufism, science and technology; providing one platform to local and international researchers; and disbursing educational scholarships to students for research in this faculty. Besides, the center will also promote research and education about Sufism in existing faculties like history, Islamic teachings, political science, literature etc. The Research Center, which is providing education courses on Sufism at BS and M. Phil levels, will also offer Postdoctoral and Research Fellowship. Besides, the Center will also provide scholarships for PhD to promote research on Sufism. - DNA

ECP reserves verdict in Vawda case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has reserved its verdict on a disqualification petition filed against PTI leader Faisal Vawda, reported media on Thursday. A three-member bench headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja heard the petition filed against Vawda in Islamabad pertaining to his dual citizenship. During the hearing, the Chief Election Commissioner, while talking to PPP leader Qadir Khan Mandokhel who petitioned the case, said: "You had said that the final arguments had been presented. Do you want to present more arguments or documents?" Qadir Mandokhel said that this is the 30th hearing. He said the commission has been giving a warning for the last one and a half years, adding that the questions already asked to the commission should be answered first and that he did not have additional arguments. Sikandar Sultan Raja asked that whether the questions had been answered or not. "It is the job of the commission to have the final word. This is the last time," he said.

Stage set for presentation of 'mini-budget' in NA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government is all set to present a 'mini-budget' in the National Assembly. A spokesman for advisor to the PM on finance has said that the sixth review will be presented at the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Executive Board meeting on January 12. Sources in the Ministry of Finance have told media that Pakistan will meet the preconditions set by the international money lending organisation before the presentation of the mini-budget. Sources further said the government planned to present the 'mini budget' in the shape of a finance bill. They disclosed that there was a proposal to withdraw sales tax exemptions of Rs350 billion in the budget. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government's decision to present a 'mini budget' is the consequence of taking dictation from the IMF. Speaking at the parliament, she accused the government of mortgaging the entire country with the Fund in order to repay the loans. She was of the view that the government had no clue as how to put the country's economy back on the track.

Hindutva leaders call for killing Muslims at conclave

A report by The Quint said that the "hate speech conclave" was organised by Hindutva leader Yati Narsinghanand from December 17 to 19 in Uttarakhand's pilgrimage city of Haridwar

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Leaders from several far-right groups in India have issued calls for the ethnic cleansing of minorities in the country, especially targeting its 200 million-strong at a recent three-day gathering, according to several Indian media reports. A report by The Quint said that the "hate speech conclave" was organised by Hindutva leader Yati Narsinghanand from December 17 to 19 in Uttarakhand's pilgrimage city of Haridwar, where multiple calls to kill minorities and attack their religious spaces were made. "Economic boycott won't work. Hindu groups need to update themselves. Swords look good on stage only. This battle will be won by

Musician calls out Modi over arrest of rights activist

LONDON: Roger Waters, British musician and founding member of former rock band Pink Floyd, on Thursday called out Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the arrest of rights activist Khurram Parvez in occupied Kashmir. "Hey Modi, leave Khurram alone!" the musician said. His statement was in response to a tweet by an account demanding the release of the activist. This is not the first time Waters has called out the Indian regime. In a video shared by Prime Minister Imran Khan in Feb 2020, the musician spoke out against the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act introduced by the Indian government at a London protest demanding the release of Julian Assange. Parvez, 42, is the programme coordinator for a widely respected rights group in the occupied territory, the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, and chairperson of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances. - Agencies

those with better weapons," the report quoted Narsinghanand as saying.

According to an October report in The Print, Narsinghanand has been accused of inciting communal ten-

sion against the Muslim community on several occasions. "Like Myanmar, our police, our politicians, our army and every Hindu must pick up weapons and conduct a safayi abhiyan (clean-up). There is no other option left," Swami Prabodhanand Giri, president of the Hindu Raksha Sena, was quoted as saying by NDTV. Sadhvi Annapurna, the general secretary of the political party Hindu Mahasabha, also gave a call to arms and incitement to genocide. "Nothing is possible without weapons. If you want to eliminate their population, then kill them. Be ready to kill and be ready to go to jail. Even if 100 of us are ready to kill 20 lakhs of them (Muslims), then we will be victorious, and go to jail," The Wire quoted her as saying.

Two dead after blast in Indian court building

NEW DELHI: Two people were killed and two others injured after a powerful explosion ripped through an Indian court building on Thursday, police said. Footage showed police officers carrying the injured out of the building and asking others to leave the premises after the explosion near a restroom of the judicial complex in Ludhiana, north of the capital New Delhi. "There's been a blast but we can not confirm the cause," a police officer at the scene said. "We can confirm that four people are injured and out of four, two are dead," he added. The blast damaged the walls of the bathroom and shattered glass in other rooms, broadcaster NDTV reported. - Web Desk

Armenia seeks normal ties with Pakistan: President

"I don't come from the concept that if somebody supports my competitor or the enemy I shouldn't talk to him"

NEWS DESK

YEREVAN: Armenian President Armen Sarkissian says Yerevan has no diplomatic relations with Pakistan - "I'm trying to build them, because I don't come from the concept that if somebody supports my competitor or the enemy I shouldn't talk to him." "Pakistan is not a country we can ignore. We are not in a position of going to war with Pakistan, that's complete nonsense. We should try to have a dialogue and see where it takes us, and again I don't see any again contradiction between hav-

ing a dialogue with Pakistan and our deep and good relations with India." He was talking to Arab News. "By constitution, an Armenian from abroad cannot become a minister unless he lives four years, the last four years, in Armenia, and carries only an Armenian passport, which I consider complete nonsense in this new world," he tells Arab News in his first interview with a Saudi media outlet. "It should be the other way around. You have to bring people that are so successful worldwide. There are hundreds of thousands of experienced people and we're not using them. I mean, imagine a Gulf state that decided not to use oil."

DECEMBER 2021

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:
www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pl
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad / @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165

MEMBER ALL PAKISTAN NEWSPAPERS SOCIETY (APNS)

CENTRELINE
Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

YERZHAN KISTAFIN
Diversifying ties with Pakistan my priority

The Road to Shusha
Page 102

Egyptian Defence Attaché interview
Page 103

Spanish music show in Islamabad
Page 104

LARGEST CIRCULATED DIPLOMATIC MAGAZINE

RS 500