



Islamabad POST

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UN Chief urges world to be prepared for future pandemics

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Vaccination exceeds 150 million mark

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Bilawal vows to launch anti-govt movement

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Briefs

Mini budget to bring destruction

ABID RAZA
LAHORE: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif said on Monday that the 'damage' done by the PTI govt during the last three years would be dwarfed by the havoc the mini budget to be presented by the government would wreak. "The mini budget is like stabbing the nation in its back," he said, and vowed to oppose it till the very end. Shehbaz further said he again appealed to what he called members of the PTI government with a 'conscience' not to vote in the favour of the budget since it was a bitter pill to swallow.

Siraj lauds Putin's stance

BUREAU REPORT
LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Sirajul Haq on Monday hailed Russian President Vladimir Putin's stance against blasphemy. In an open letter to Putin, he thanked him for drawing the world's attention to Muslims' feelings against offensive language or publication of blasphemous caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Last week, the Russian president said that insulting the Prophet (PBUH) is a violation of freedom of religion and a violation of the holy feelings of people who profess Islam.

Maryam pays tribute to Benazir Bhutto

DNA
LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz on Monday paid tribute to former prime minister Benazir Bhutto on the occasion of her 14th anniversary. The PML-N vice president took to the Twitter to pay tribute to Benazir Bhutto and said that "My prayers are with her on the death anniversary of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto."

Security policy approved Ever ready to meet any threat: PM

Imran Khan says security of Pakistan rests with security of citizens

SHUJAAT HAMZA
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first-ever National Security Policy (NSP) 2022-2026 was approved Monday, with Prime Minister Imran Khan terming it a "historic moment" for the country. The NSP was approved during the 36th meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC), which was chaired by the prime minister, according to a statement from the PM Office. The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Defence, Information and Broadcasting, Interior, Finance, Human Rights, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, all Services Chiefs, National Security Advisor, and senior civil and military officers, the statement said. National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yusuf, presenting the NSP for approval, highlighted that Pakistan was shifting to a "Comprehensive National Security Framework". Through the framework, the ultimate purpose of national security would be to ensure the safety, security, and dignity of the citizen of Pakistan, the NSA said. "To ensure this citizen-centric approach to security, the NSP put economic

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'Extremism in Afghanistan a threat'

KHAYAM ABBASI
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry said Monday the extremist elements in Afghanistan posed a threat to Pakistan. "Women are not allowed to travel alone in Afghanistan, and they cannot go to school as well," he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of a photo exhibition on the life of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah at the Pak-China centre. The federal minister's comments came a day after the Afghan Taliban said that women seeking to travel long distances should not be offered transport unless they are accompanied by a close male relative. Meanwhile, condemning the tragic

Continued on Page 06

Pak, Turkey vow to enhance military ties

Turkey's General Veli Tarakci acknowledged the professionalism of the Pak Armed Forces



NEWS DESK
RAWALPINDI: Chief of General Staff (CGS) Turkish Land Forces Lieutenant General Veli Tarakci met Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi Monday, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. According to the military's media wing,

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs a meeting of National Security Committee. - DNA

Govt, Opp. propose names for Chairman NAB

Opp. steering committee receives four names; govt proposes three names

MAHNOOR ANSAR
ISLAMABAD: The government and the opposition have started considering the names for the new chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The opposition has proposed four names while the government has proposed three names. According to sources, the opposition steering committee has received four names, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) has suggested the name of Justice (retd) Dost Muhammad Khan. The PML-N nominated Nasir Mahmood Khosa and Salman Siddique, while the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) nominated former diplomat Jalil Abbas Jilani. The steering committee of the opposition will suggest one of the four names and send it to the Leader of the Opposition Shahbaz Sharif and he will send the name to the government. On the other hand, the government also proposed three names for the new chairman NAB. The government has nominated Home Secretary Yousuf Naseem Khokhar, Secretary Religious Affairs Ijaz Jaffer and former DG FIA Ameesh Chaudhry for the post of Chairman NAB. Later in the day, the Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting rejected the reports claiming that the PTI government had proposed three names for the post of NAB chairman.

Pakistan condemns Hindutva calls for Muslim genocide

Pakistan urges India to ensure the safety, security of its minorities

STAFF REPORT
ISLAMABAD: The Indian Charge d' Affaires was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad and asked to convey the Government of Pakistan's serious concerns to the Government of India over the widely reported open calls by Hindutva proponents for carrying out genocide of Indian Muslims. These violent hate speeches were made during the "Dharma Sansad" held at Haridwar, Uttarakhand from 17-20 December 2021. It was impressed upon the Government of India that it was highly reprehensible that the Hindu Raksha Sena's Prabodhanand Giri and other Hindutva figures who called for ethnic cleansing have neither expressed any regret nor the Indian government has condemned or taken any action against them so far. It was conveyed to the Indian side that the reported hate speeches have been viewed with grave concern by civil society and cross-section of the people of Pakistan and around the world. Regrettably, the toxic narrative against minorities, particularly Muslims and their persecution understate patronage has become a norm under the current Hindutva-driven BJP-RSS combine government in India.

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Global outrage over Hindutva extremism

NEWS DESK
NEW DELHI: The call for genocide of Muslims by Hindutva monks in India has become a matter of international concern with noted global media outlets prominently reporting about the hate summit with graphic details. The Indian government, however, is maintaining a studied silence over the call for genocide of Muslims made by an assembly of Hindutva monks in Haridwar in Uttarakhand state. A massive outrage is brewing against the Uttarakhand government worldwide ever since video clips of Hindutva monks delivering venomous speeches against Muslim minority surfaced on social media. The event was reported a week after it sparked outcry on social media. Questions are being raised over the silence of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as Opposition leaders over the issue.

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Bilawal vows to launch anti-govt movement from Lahore

Addressing a ceremony on Benazir's 14th death anniversary, Bilawal says there is no freedom of speech, freedom of living, or even breathing



NAZIR SIYAL / DNA
LARKANA: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday announced that his party will launch a decisive movement against PTI-led government on January 5, 2022 with a rally in Lahore - the former bastion of PPP. "Time has come to initiate a war against the puppet regime," He said while addressing a public gathering organised to mark the 14th death anniversary of slain former premier Benazir Bhutto in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, a small town of Sindh's Larkana district. Democracy in Pakistan only exists on paper, PPP Chairman said. Highlighting the issues that the country is facing, Bilawal said that in Pakistan, there is no freedom of speech, freedom of living, or even breathing. "We had said that democracy is the best revenge and hence, we restored the system despite all the ill-practices," he said, adding that democracy was snatched from the people of Pakistan. "Pakistanis are bearing the burden of a puppet and

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UBG
ڈاکٹر نعمان ادریس بٹ
یونائیٹڈ بزنس گروپ
FPCCI کے صدر
انتخابات کے امیدوار

SCCI کی سیکورٹی شہر کے لیے قابل ذکر کامیابیوں کا حصول ڈاکٹر نعمان جیسے صاحب نظر صدر کی زیر قیادت ممکن ہوا

- سیکورٹی کی ادارت بہت
- سیکورٹی میں انقلابی آواز
- آج سبیل (نئی آواز)
- سڑکوں کی بنیاد پر سیکورٹی سروسز (2011-12)
- پانڈیٹ کے تحریک کیلئے پروگرام
- ایس ایس ڈی کے ادارتی ڈیپارٹمنٹ
- وہ منصوبہ ہیں کا کام ڈاکٹر نعمان کی زیر قیادت جاری ہے
- سیکورٹی ایجنسیوں کی بنیاد پر
- سیکورٹی ایجنسیوں کی

UBG کی طرف سے نامزد صدر، سیکرٹری نائیب صدر اور نائیب صدر کو ووٹ دیجئے۔

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Fawad Ch assures to solve masses' problems on priority

Says problems of electricity, water, gas, road and infrastructure will be resolved on priority basis

KAMRAN GUJJAR

JHELUM: The timely completion of public welfare projects is very important, for this purpose public representatives and government officials should work together with coordination. These views were expressed by federal information minister Fawad Chaudhry, while presiding over the meeting of district coordination committee Jhelum through video link. The meeting was attended by deputy commissioner Noman Hafeez, DPO Rana Tahir-ur-Rehman, heads of all departments including assistant commissioner Jhelum. The meeting reviewed the progress



made so far on the community development program, annual development program and local government schemes, the availability of staff and staff for the development of mega projects schools across the district, water

management, small DAMS, building of district jail, Lalla to Jhelum road, the progress of Dina- Mangla road, the situation of law and order, the annual development projects including restoration of company Bagh were also reviewed in detail.

Federal minister for information and broadcasting said that the speed of work should be accelerated, the projects in the pipeline should be completed on time. Providing public welfare and basic facilities to them is the top priority of the government, all departments work for public service under integrated strategy. Problems of electricity, water, gas, road and infrastructure will be resolved on priority basis, he added.

Traders asked to ensure vaccination

ABBOTTABAD: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Capt. (R) Assistant Commissioner Abbottabad Hassan Ehsan along with the health department Monday visited the main Bazaar and directed traders to ensure Coronavirus vaccination. During visit to Bazaar and markets in Abbottabad, AC Hassan Ehsan inspected various shops, on the occasion he said that bazaar, bus terminals, shopping malls, private clinics, medical stores will be checked on a daily basis and fines will be imposed on those who do not get Covid-19 vaccination and cases will also be registered against them.

He further said that during the checking in bus terminals without vaccination passengers would not be allowed to travel while the owners of the transport will also be examined for vaccination.

Hassan Ehsan stated that no concession will be given to the violators of NCOC orders. He also appealed to the people of Abbottabad who have not been vaccinated to complete the vaccination process as soon as possible and keep the NADRA certificate to avoid any untoward situation. The AC said that today we have issued strict warnings to the individuals for violations and also issued instructions to the people in order to implement the code of conduct and enforce Coronavirus SOPs. — APP

RTS addresses 92 percent complaints

PESHAWAR: Right to Public Services (RTS) received a total of 468269 applications from various departments in the year 2021 out of which 380,938 were provided services within specified timeframe.

This was informed during a high level meeting of Divisional Steering Committee for Right to Public Services Commission which was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud here on Monday. Commissioner-II to Right to Public Services Commission Hazrat Masood Mian, Data Analyst RTS Commission Shohab Khan, Deputy Commissioner Khyber, Mohmand, Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, District Monitoring Officers Tashfeen Israr, Saharina Wali, Eram Babli, ADMOs Ismail, Suleiman, Attullah and Ahmadullah and other officials attended the meeting.

District Monitoring Officer (DMO) Tashfeen Israr informed the meeting that the RTS Commission received a total of 468269 applications from various departments in the year 2021 out of which 380,938 services were provided within the time specified by the RTS Commission which amounted to about 81 percent. Similarly, the RTS Commission received 473 complaints in the year 2021 out of which 435 were resolved and this ratio becomes 92 percent. The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the comprehensive report of services provided by RTS Commission, non-compliance in services, awareness campaign and other measures. — APP

FBISE abolishes exams fee for disables, prisoners, orphans

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) on Monday decided to abolish the examination fees for persons with disabilities, prisoners and orphans. According to the spokesman of the Federal Board, the decisions were taken during an important meeting presided over by the Chairman FBISE Qaiser Alam. The meeting was attended by the heads of the departments of federal board. During the meeting, many important decisions were taken regarding the schedule and activities for the academic year 2022. It was decided to provide the mark sheet free of cost in case of its loss or non-receipt of postage. The decision has also been taken to computerize the annual examinations 2022 in the affiliated institutions abroad. In this regard, instructions have been issued to the concerned authorities to complete the preparations in time. The Federal Board has decided to provide environment friendly digital services for

students on window cell established in the FBISE to fill out forms for migration, verification, etc. Among other decisions, it has also been decided to consider 50 percent mark's of those students who secured 49.6 percent marks in the exams.

The Federal Board has directed the concerned authorities to complete timely preparations for conducting two annual examinations in the year 2022.

It was decided to receive matriculation examination forms of students for the first annual examination of 2022 from early February 2022. The Federal Board has also issued directions to authorities concerned to prepare a calendar of sports for children's physical development, curricula and extra curricula activities for the year 2022 and shared it with all affiliated institutions. The examination papers of SLO based scientific subjects have been published on the Board's website and it has been decided to publish the papers of other subjects soon. — APP

CM KP pays surprise visits to various localities

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan on Monday paid surprise visits to various places including Tehsildar, Registrar offices, police station and suspended two Patwaris on the complaints of people. Chief Minister who drove without any security protocol visited Tehsildar city office and inspected the service delivery center, Registrar's Office, and other offices to review facilities and other services. He expressed dissatisfaction over services being provided at the service delivery center. On this occasion, the Chief Minister met with clients and informed them about their issues and solution to their problems. He also sought a report from the Deputy Commissioner over the poor condition of

Tehsildar and Registrar offices. On the complaints of people, Chief Minister suspended two Patwaris for delay tactics in the transfer of lands and issuance of fards. He directed Deputy Commissioner to conduct an inquiry against the concerned registrar and submit a report in this regard. CM directed to open Bank of Khyber branches in all service delivery centers across the province to facilitate people. He directed to hold a special meeting of senior member Board of Revenue and the district administrations to further improve services and facilities at the service delivery centers. CM Mahmood also paid a surprise visit to Khan Raziq Shaheed Police Station, Qissa Khawani, and expressed displeasure over the cleanliness situation in police station. — APP



LALAMUSA: Chairman Municipal Committee Lalamusa Nadeem Asghar Kaira addressing a press conference. — DNA

PLPA to be made operational by Feb 2022

The meeting was briefed about the main purpose of PLPA and its role in trade facilitation

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Land Port Authority (PLPA) will be made functional in February next year after the approval of a draft bill by the Parliament in this regard. The PLPA aims to facilitate trade and resolve trading community issues through a well-integrated modern system it was informed by a delegation of Pakistan Land Port Authority (PLPA) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) during a meeting with Hasnain Khurshid Ahmad, President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here at the Chamber's House on Monday. The PLPA delegation headed by former member FBR Integrated Borders Management and Trade Facilitation expert, Syed Tanveer Ahmad, HR Specialist/Research and Data Analyst, Asian Development Bank Col (Retd) Muhammad Irfan and other.

SCCI Senior Vice President Imran Khan Mohmand, former president Faiz Muhammad Faizi, former senior vice president and PAJCCI Vice President Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, SC-PI's Standing Committee on Land Route Chairman, Imtiaz Ali, traders, importers and exporters were present in the meeting. Hasnain Khurshid while speaking on the occasion lauded the setting up Pakistan Land Port Authority, saying that the initiative would ensure facilities to traders under one window operation as well as accelerate the process of trade with Afghanistan and onward to Central Asian Republics. However, he emphasized that the steps should be taken to improve the border management system, re-launch of cargo train service from Peshawar, enhancing scanning machines at all major trade routes and simplifying procedures and

checking mechanism of goods consignments. The meeting was briefed about the main purpose of PLPA and its role in trade facilitation. A senior member of the delegation informed that a draft of the bill has been finalized, which is likely to be presented in the Parliament for its final approval and expressed the hope that PLPA would be made operational from February next year. Tanveer Ahmad said the PLPA main objective is to facilitate trade and provide service to traders on one-window operation through an integrated system of different relevant departments. For this purpose, he said a hefty amount is being spent for infrastructure improvement at Torkham, Kharlachi and Chaman trade routes. Head of the delegation emphasized the need of Public-Private Partner-

ship for bringing improvement and providing facilities to traders at the border region. Hasnain Khurshid praised the installation of modern gadgets at trade facilitation stations. However, he said that due to lack of proper facilities, the latest system is rapidly losing its importance, which has also caused many difficulties for the trading community. He called for taking serious steps to carry out smooth trade. The SCCI chief said despite the formal inauguration of Azakhel Dry port, the traders' community is facing numerous hardships non-operational dry port, so serious steps are needed to be taken to address all those issues. Khurshid, on the occasion, demanded the reactivation of cargo train service from Peshawar in order to resolve issues of traders at Karachi port. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser addressing the participants of "Paigham-e-Pakistan" International Conference on Peacemaking, National Integration, Social Cohesion and International Harmony". — APP

Chief Secy for action against illegal hunting

BAHAWALPUR: Chief Secretary Punjab Kamran Ali Afzal on Monday said that strict action should be taken against the illegal hunting of animals and birds.

While presiding over a meeting at Commissioner Office here today, he said that the protection of wildlife was our collective responsibility and no concession should be made to illegal hunters. He said that any delay in the completion of development projects would not be tolerated. He said that district administrations should ensure the elimination of corruption from the revenue system. He said that Deputy Commissioners should take legal actions against people found involved in corrupt practices. He said that the auction process at fruits and vegetable markets should be monitored properly.

He said "Coronavirus vaccination campaign is a national responsibility and the given targets should be achieved soon." — APP

No dengue case reported in Punjab

LAHORE: Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) Secretary Imran Sikandar Baloch Monday said that it was a good sign for the province that during the last 24 hours, no new case of dengue was reported. In a press statement issued here, he said that 26,246 confirmed cases of dengue had been reported across province so far, while 18,489 cases were reported in Lahore. A total of 39 patients are undergoing treatment across Punjab. — APP

DPO reviews crime situation in Jhelum, adjoining areas

OUR CORRESPONDENT

JHELUM: A Crime meeting was held at district police office Jhelum conference hall chaired by Rana Tahir Rehman khan district police officer Jhelum.

The meeting was attended by all DSPs district, SHO's DPO. District police officer Jhelum took serious cases from January 2021 to December 2021 in DSPs and SHO's district and checked the performance of officers and issued the instructions to dispose of the cases on merit. District police officer Jhelum also issued orders to consolidate the investigation cases as soon as possible, ensuring the arrest of criminals, judicial magistrates

and record-keepers. Under the national action plan, crackdown against the weapons, drugs, aerial firing etc has been intensified.

In the light of the orders of inspector general of police Punjab, district police officer Jhelum said that to control crime, modern scientific methods, community policing, police practical work, human resources and information technology should be adopted to root out crime so that the protection of the public should be ensured. District police officer Jhelum on the occasion of Christmas appreciated the police officers for maintaining law and order during the occasion. He said the police officers who performed well shall be awarded.



Govt striving to provide all basic amenities: MNA

BUREAU REPORT

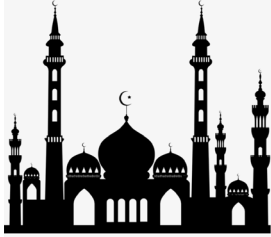
FAISALABAD: Member National Assembly (MNA) Chaudhry Muhammad Asim Nazir has said that the government is striving to provide all basic amenities at doorsteps of masses, in addition to solving their genuine problems on priority basis. He was addressing a public gathering while inaugurating various development projects in Chak No 72-RB Bahmani Wala here on Monday. He said that the government was utilising all available resources very judiciously to improve life standard of masses in all parts of the country and for the purpose, various development schemes of education, communication, gas and electricity were initiated and completed on war-footing across the country despite unfavorable economic situation due to corona pandemic.

He said the road construction and drainage projects were also completed in his constituency with an estimated cost of Rs10 million which would help in resolving long standing problems of people of the area. He said that his family was serving people through politics for a long time and he would not leave any stone unturned in addressing problems of his constituency. Rana Shah Nawaz, Rana Hameedullah, Mian Imtiaz Mian Anwar, Dr Nadeem, Mian Afzal, Ghulam Husain, Rana Rashid Sarwar, Mian Wasif and other notables of the area were also present.

Sunflower cultivation to start from January

FAISALABAD: The agriculture experts advised the farmers to prepare their lands to start cultivation of sunflower with the advent of January and complete it by February. A spokesman of the Agriculture Extension Department said Monday, the growers should brought maximum land under cultivation to get bumper yield. "Sunflower is an important edible oil producing crop which can help Pakistan to trim down its import bill of edible oil". He said that maturity of the crop was only 130 days with comparatively less cost and very high dividend. — APP

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:42 am
Zohr.....	12:09 pm
Asr.....	03:29 pm
Maghrib.....	05:07 pm
Isha.....	06:36 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

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



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CAA.....	9281092



Hospitals

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



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CDA.....	9221334-43
CDA.....	9208301-04
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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
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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhary Fawad Hussain cutting cake to mark birth anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah during "Digital & Photographic Exhibition" at Pak China Friendship Center. – APP

Spain provides potential for boosting exports to EU

Mirza Salman Baig says the business community should identify the bottlenecks in the way of improving trade and exports with Spain so that he could work with the government to address them

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Mirza Salman Babar Baig, Consul General-designate of Pakistan to Barcelona, Spain visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and assured the business community that he would fully cooperate with them for promoting Pakistan's trade with Spain as the two countries have good potential to take bilateral trade volume to higher levels. He said that the business community should identify the bottlenecks in the way of improving trade and exports with Spain so that he could work with the government to address them. He said that he would try to share the real time information with ICCI and trade bodies in Pakistan so that the private sector could capitalize on the potential opportunities of promoting exports with Spain. He said that Spain was an important member of the EU and offered good potential to Pakistan for further increasing exports to European countries under the GSP



Plus regime. He asserted that he would try to remain in touch with trade bodies in Pakistan to keep them in loop about demand for Pakistani products in the Spanish market so that the Pakistani exporters could take advantage of them. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Spain was not up to the real potential of both countries and there was a need to promote

strong business linkages between their private sectors to explore new avenues of enhancing trade relations. He said that the lack of awareness about Pakistani products in Spain was a major trade barrier, which should be addressed to get better penetration in the Spanish market. He said that Pakistan could export many products to Spain including marble & granite, fruits & vegetables, agro food, pharmaceuticals, sports goods, leather products, surgical instruments and IT goods. He stressed that the Pakistan Consulate General in Barcelona, Spain should conduct market research in the Spanish market about the demand of Pakistani products and share such reports with ICCI so that our members could capitalize on them. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan was an emerging market for business and investment and Spanish companies should be motivated to explore investment and JVs in various sectors of Pakistan's economy including CPEC project.

CDA opens bids for construction of parking plaza in Blue Area

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The management of the Capital Development Authority has decided to start construction of Parking Plaza in Blue Area to resolve parking problems particularly in business center and to provide quality facilities of parking to the residents of city.

Bids for the construction of a parking plaza have been opened on Monday. The lowest bid of Rs.1274.548 million was received from NLC. According to details, the car parking plaza will be constructed near Savor Foods along Jinnah Avenue in Blue Area Islamabad.

The parking plaza will have a capacity to park 1300 vehicles at a time. Shops will be constructed on the ground floor of this parking plaza which will also increase



the revenue of CDA. Similarly, vehicles parked in the car park will also be a source of income for the authority. Open-air restaurants will be established on the fifth floor of the parking plaza.

CDA to resolve issues of sectors I-12 and E-12

Dev works in other 2 sub sectors are already underway

ISLAMABAD: CDA stands committed to resolve the long awaited issue of non-development of Sectors E-12 and I-12. A review meeting of relevant formations was held on weekend and progress reviewed.

Engineering and Design Wing of CDA has finalized the designs and estimates for remaining sub-sectors of E-12 i.e. E-12/1 & E-12/4. Tenders for these two sub-sectors will be floated in a week period and work is likely to resume in last week of January, 2022.

Dev works in other 2 sub-sectors are already underway. Also, development of Sector I-12 is on priority list of the Authority. And estimation for various works in all sub-sectors of the sector is in process and tenders for this will also be floated in 10 days period thereafter works will be starting in first week of February 2022.

Development of these two sectors will enable the Authority to hand over possession of plots to those allottees who have waited since years to construct a house in Islamabad.

Cda is targeting to award development works in balance e-12 in January and float tenders for I-12 early January. These sectors are stuck for last several decades and now work is resuming. – DNA

Experts discuss future trajectory of Pak-US ties

Pakistan is strategically aligned with China, whereas its relationship with the US is tactical: Multidisciplinary experts assert

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A national conference titled "Ongoing Sino-US Contestation and Future Trajectory of US-Pak Relations" was organised under the banner of Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR), an Islamabad based think tank. The panellists included Mr Mushahid Hussain Syed, Senator PML(N); Prof. Dr Rifaat Hussain, Head Department of Government Policy and Public Administration at Pakistan's National University of Sciences and Technology; Ambassador (Retd) Syed Hasan Javed, Director, Chinese Studies Centre at the NUST School of Social Sciences & Humanities; Mr Faheem Sardar, Senior Pol-

icy Specialist, SPPC, NSD Pakistan; Mr Qamar Cheema, a faculty member at the Department of International Relations in the National University of Modern Languages Islamabad. Ms. Sahab Aslam, Executive Director IICR gave her opening remarks and welcomed guests and panellists whereas Senator Hussain moderated the working session. In his opening address Mr Mushahid Hussain, Senator PML (N), remarked that current trends indicate that China has the strength, skill, and ambition to exceed the United States in Artificial Intelligence within the next ten years. While citing Ash Center report on China published in July 2020, he said that 85 per cent of Chinese respondents were satisfied with

the system in place in China under the communist party of China (CPC). While discussing the dichotomy between the global political behaviour of both Washington and Beijing, he remarked that US foreign policy has been indulged

in waging war on terror whereas on the other hand, China avoided walking on the same path and steered its foreign policy towards economic excellence and mutual development. He further said that there is a need to develop a

broad-based relationship with China. "Pakistan must develop strategic clarity first and then draw clear red lines. The relation must be based on equality, reciprocity and protection of core interests," said Mushahid Hussain.



IGP continues open kutchery

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younus continued 'open kutchery' on Monday to provide relief to the federal capital residents. A large number people shared their problems and queries with IGP, a news release said.

IGP Islamabad after listening the problems of citizens directed the concerned officers for their immediate solution on the spot.

He asked the police officers to submit the report by taking legal action in the given time frame on marked applications. Ahsan Younus said "It is our prime responsibility to use all available resources to provide protection to the lives and property of the citizens and to resolve their problems on priority basis."

He said citizens, at Open Kutchery, should be treated in a respectful manner and their trust on police department to be won through resolving their issues. Holding the open court will also ensure self-accountability, he added.

IJP Road to be completed by April 2023

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Capital Development Authority Affairs Ali Nawaz Awan Monday said the work on IJP Road was in full swing and expected to be completed by its scheduled time in April 2023.

He made the remarks after a meeting on the progress of work on the reconstruction of IJP Road here.

Expressing satisfaction over the ongoing work at IGP Road, he said it would be a gift from the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to the citizens of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. He said that alternative routes should be provided to the people during the construction of the road. The meeting was attended by the officials of CDA, NLC, IESCO and SNGPL. – APP

Shaukat Tarin sworn in as finance minister

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday administered the oath of office to Shaukat Fayaz Ahmed Tarin who will be holding the portfolio of Minister for Finance. The swearing-in ceremony was held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr here.

After the oath, the president also extended felicitation to the newly-sworn in member of the federal cabinet.

Shaukat Tarin, who was earlier serving as Finance Advisor, was elected as senator last week in the by-election for a general seat of the Senate from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The seat was vacated after the resignation of PTI's Ayub Afridi. – APP

IHC's two judges take oath after regularization

ISLAMABAD: The two judges of Islamabad High Court (IHC) including Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri and Justice Babar Sattar on Monday took oath of their posts and started performing their regular duties. The notification for the regularization of the services of two judges was issued on December 24. Chief Justice IHC Justice Athar Minallah administered the oath of the said judges during a ceremony taken place at chief justice block IHC.

The ceremony was attended by the judges of IHC, judicial officers, Supreme Court's retired Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday and a large number of lawyers. The two judges started performing their duties after the formal oath taking ceremony. – APP

Briefs

Citizens urged to get vaccinated against Covid

RAWALPINDI: The citizens who are not still jabbed against the deadly disease, have been urged to get vaccinated at the earliest as vaccination is the only way to defeat the disease.

According to District Health Officer (DHO), Dr Ehsan Ghani, the second phase of the 'Red' Corona Vaccination Campaign was in full swing in the district, which would continue until December 31, adding 408 teams were visiting door to door to persuade the citizens for the vaccination.

He called on the people to get vaccinated as soon as possible as those who had received no vaccine were seven times more likely to contract the virus than those inoculated.

No case of the latest variant of the Coronavirus, Omicron, was reported so far in Rawalpindi district, but there was a need to continue observing corona Standard Operating Procedures to control the spread of this fatal disease, he added.

Dr Ehsan Ghani said that according to initial reports, the symptoms of Omicron was of flu, but it is to be noted that the virus badly affected the lungs.

The DHO stressed the need for the citizens to complete their doses who had contracted one dose.

Meanwhile, District Surveillance Officer Dr Waqar Ahmed said that the vaccine was mandatory for those above 12 years of age and safe for pregnant and other disease affected people. — APP

AIU's M.Phil, Ph.D exams commence from Jan 6

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) is commencing examinations of its different programmes including BS, M.Sc, M.Phil and Ph.D from January 6 from Autumn 2021 semester.

According to AIU, date sheet and roll number slips for these examinations have been uploaded on the university website (www.aiu.edu.pk), student portal and are also being dispatched to the students. Roll number slips downloaded from the university website will be treated valid for appearing in the examinations.

These examinations will be held at the main campus of the university. Students are advised to contact their respective departments.

It is pertinent to mention here that AIU has digitalized university's key academic, administrative and financial operations.

All the academic activities will take place as per academic calendar. Moreover, admissions for the first phase of spring semester 2022 will start from January 15 which will include Matric and FA, BS, M.Phil and Ph.D face to face programmes.

Pakistan values ties with Sudan: Sadiq Sanjrani

Sanjrani congratulated Mir Behrose Reki Baloch on his nomination as Ambassador. Chairman Senate expressed the hope that the Ambassador-designate would do his utmost to further strengthen the bilateral economic relations between Pakistan and Sudan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Sudan, Mir Behrose Reki Baloch called on Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at the Parliament House on Monday. Bilateral relations between Pakistan and Sudan were discussed during the meeting.

The Chairman Senate congratulated Mir Behrose Reki Baloch on his nomination as Ambassador. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani expressed the hope that the Ambassador-designate would do his utmost to further strengthen the bilateral economic relations between Pakistan and Sudan.



The Chairman Senate said that Pakistan values its relations with Sudan and expressed the need to further strengthen the relations between the two countries.

The Chairman Senate said that there is a need for high level visits, exchange of parliamentary delegations and ministerial contacts between the two countries.

The Chairman Senate urged the Ambassador-designate to take steps to enhance trade and economic relations between the two countries besides increasing exports of Pakistani manufactured products and medicines to Sudan.

He said that efforts should also be intensified to promote tourism in Pakistan and strengthen cultural ties with Sudan. Senators Naseebullah Bazai, Muhammad Akram, Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani, Lal Din and Secretary Senate Mohammad Qasim Samad Khan were also present in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administering the oath to Senator Shaukat Fayaz Ahmed Tarin as Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. — APP

Senate body stresses to increase coordination

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Narcotics Control was held on Monday at Parliament Lodges. The Committee stressed the need for greater coordination between the Federal Machinery and the Provincial agencies to check increase in narcotics proliferation in Pakistan.

Chaired by Senator Ejaz Chaudhary the meeting was attended by Senator Falak Naz, Senator Rana Maqbool, Senator Shahdat Awan, Senator Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen, Senator Atta-ur-Rehman, Senator Anwar

Lal Dean and senior officers from the Ministry of Narcotics Control, Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) along with all concerned. Dr. Maqsood, a member of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (AP-PNA) and other representatives of the organization were present as well.

The meeting commenced with a review of the compliance status of recommendations made by the Committee. Members took serious notice of the Ministry's inaction in certain matters and stressed the need for more coordinated efforts between Government Agencies. Taking provincial governments on board regarding

prevention of trafficking and peddling of drugs was emphasized. Mobilizing the Ulema to spread the message was recommended.

Dr. Maqsood, APPNA was of the view that it was imperative that the disease is diagnosed profoundly to find a cure. He said that to-date the US has spent USD 500 billion and yet grapples rigorously with this problem. Pakistan will need to focus completely on fighting the menace, with coordinated efforts of all federal and provincial units. The Committee recommended that AP-PNA share its insights with the Ministry of Narcotics Control and join hands to make Pakistan drugs free.

Muree administration issues advisory

KHAYAM ABBASI

MURREE: The administration of Murree Tehsil on Monday issued travel advisory advising the tourists to get weather updates and traffic-related information prior to travelling to Murree. According to Assistant Commissioner Murree, the new travel advisory had been issued for the tourists as snowfall brought a large number of tourists to Murree.

Barian to Nathiagali road was closed due to snowfall, he said adding, the tourists could contact control room on 051-9269016, Assistant Commissioner office on 0321-3219221 and Deputy Superintendent of Police, Murree on 0321-5615668 to get information. Traffic Police helpline 051-9269200 could also be used in emergency, he added.

The intermittent snowfall had attracted a large

number of tourists to the area and different areas of Murree had received nearly one feet snowfall till afternoon on Monday.

The town had a parking capacity of nearly 35,000 vehicles while over 60,500 vehicles had entered Murree so far. The local administration and traffic cops were presented in the field for assisting the tourists, he added.

The tourists had been advised to keep the air pressure in their vehicle's tyres low and always avoid stopping their cars in the middle of the road for capturing selfies and photos. He asked the citizens to follow traffic rules for maintaining the traffic flow.

He said enhanced number of traffic wardens under the supervision of inspectors were deployed at all important points to facilitate the tourists and regulate traffic flow. He said the administration and traffic police were striving to provide all possible facilities to the tourists.

PNCA starts registration for music classes

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has started registration process for music learning classes. The professional artists would impart training to participants for Guitar, Keyboard/Piano, & Rubab. Renowned music instructors Sherry Bakhshi (Guitar) Yawar Bakhshi (Keyboard) and Ijaz Ahmedp (Rubab) will conduct music learning classes, said a press release issued here.

PNCA believes in giving the musicians and artists the platform they need to grow and the inspiration they seek to realize their unique potential. — APP

PTCL launches cutting-edge cyber security services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has launched new cyber security services based on its cutting-edge Security Operations Center (SOC) to protect its corporate and financial customers against cyber-attacks. The SOC-based services will reinforce the digital security by building a safety wall against a range of cyber security threats to customers' data, digital assets and infrastructure. Being an industry first, PTCL's cyber security services are the latest edition to its portfolio and is based on the industry's highest performing 'integrated' cyber security platform with a rich ecosystem.

The system enables consistent and reliable security across the extended digital attack surfaces including applications, code, ports, servers and websites, as well as unauthorized system access points. To provide end-to-end protection, PTCL is offering seamless interoperability, complete visibility, and granular control for hybrid deployments including hardware, software, and X-as-a-Service across networks, endpoints, and Clouds. — DNA

NUML signs MoUs with SET, SMW

ISLAMABAD: National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Monday signed two Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs); one with Socio Engineering Technologies (SET) Pakistan and the other one signed with She Means Work (SMW).



National University of Modern Languages Pro Rector Resources/Director General Brig Syed Nadir Ali signed the agreements with SET CEO Sonia Saleem and SMW CEO Lubna Bhatay respectively. Pro Rector Research Dr Zubair Iqbal and Registrar Dr Atif Faraz also attended the signing ceremony.

SET has a multi-dimensional approach towards its areas of services and expertise and contributes significantly to strengthening civil society institutions in Pakistan. Especially in the EduTech Sector through international approved and recognized Skilled Certifications and Innovative Interactive Technology.

While SMW is a catalyst for uptake of women in Pakistan. Targeting the all-important "Mothers" and "fresh graduates" SMW provides avenues of both full time and part time employment and internships.

SET will provide linkages to the international organizations providing various certification programs acknowledged worldwide.

They will also provide all technical support related to student's admissions, conduct of trainings, relevant certification exams, software of certification programs and providing certificates through international organizations.

The SMW will facilitate the National University of Modern Languages students/ alumni by providing internships, placements and jobs in the industry and corporate sector.

The SMW will also provide capacity development opportunities to our students, particularly girls at various levels and will coordinate with NUML in organizing various events including job fairs/ seminars/ conferences/ symposia etc for developing strategic industry-academia linkages. — APP

SMEDA to organize training on December 28

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) will organize a one-day workshop on "Import Export Documentation and Web-based One Customs (WEBOC)" for profitable business growth on December 28 (Tuesday).

The session will be organized by SMEDA under National Business Development Program (NBDDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to sources in the authority informed on Monday.

The training program will provide information about introduction to international trade, importance, benefits, risks, barriers, complete procedure of establishing a sole-proprietor, import-export business in Pakistan, international trade terms (ICC Incoterm 2020) including a letter of credit (LC), significance, risks, flows, and documentation.

The workshop will also provide information of practical documentation on international payment terms, cargo insurance, complete import-export process flow from contract management to shipping documents negotiations, import and export customs clearance procedure, WEBOC registration guide, online demonstration of handling of WEBOC and Pakistan Single Window (PSW) (filing of EIF, EEF, Import GD and Export GD). The session would be attended by small business owners and their staff, emerging and existing entrepreneurs, professionals in import and export, supply chain, logistics, warehouse, and all those desirous of improving knowledge on the subject. — APP

Punjab govt introduces digitization in Mining Sector

RAWALPINDI: The Mines and Minerals department of the Punjab government, has taken unprecedented measures to digitize various processes to enhance efficiency, transparency and productivity.

Talking to APP, the Mining Department's official said the special measures were taken to digitize mining sector for its rapid growth, welfare and prosperity of the mine workers.

The measures included strengthening and digitization of working of inspectorate of mines, digitized royalty monitoring of minerals for district Chakwal and Jehlum.

It also included strengthening of directorate general mines and minerals, Punjab and integration of administrative department, mineral cadastral system for transparency and provision of mining concession information to the general public and implementation of e-filing and office automation system along with implementation of human resource management information system. Mines and Minerals department has resolved to digitize the health processes and its integration of mines labour welfare hospitals' services. — APP

RCCI delegation calls on DG NCOC



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) led by President Nadeem Rauf called on Director General National Command and Operations Center, (NCOC) Major General Asif Mehmood Goraya in Islamabad.

The delegation included group leader Sor-hail Altaf, former president Nasir Mirza, senior vice president Asim Malik and former Vice President Shah Reza Malik. Major General Asif Goraya appreciated the Rawalpindi Chamber's vaccination and awareness campaign against the

COVID-19 epidemic.

The meeting also discussed vaccination drive on COVID-19, health care and vaccination, awareness campaigns and other joint programs.

Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Nadeem Rauf briefed the DGNCO on the ongoing activities and future programs of the Chamber.

He assured all kinds of support and assistance to National Command and Operations Center in tackling the Corona epidemic and offered joint efforts to make vaccination campaigns effective.

The delegation lauded NCOC's effective drive and measures in controlling COVID-19 spread in Pakistan.

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Briefs

Ever ready to meet any threat: PM

FROM PAGE 01
security at the core. A stronger economy would create additional resources that would, in turn, be judiciously distributed to further bolster military and human security," the NSA said.

The NSA informed the participants that the NSP had been created through a "whole-of-government effort over the last seven years", and included extensive consultations among federal government institutions, with all provinces, and with the academia and private sector.

The NSA highlighted that a detailed implementation framework had been created through which the National Security Division would review progress in collaboration with relevant ministries and departments.

During the meeting, PM Imran Khan emphasised that the security of Pakistan rests in the security of its citizens and repose of confidence that Pakistan is well prepared to meet any internal and external threats.

Terming the NSP's formulation and approval a historic moment, the prime minister noted that the Policy must guide all organs of the government to ensure that their efforts are synchronized with the overall direction of the NSP.

The prime minister instructed the national security adviser to present an implementation progress report to the NSC every month.

Revitalization of the planning committee and the expansion of NSC's Advisory Board were also unanimously approved by the participants during the meeting. "The NSP will now be presented to the Cabinet before being officially adopted. A public version of the document will be released in due course," the statement added.

Extremism in Afghanistan a threat

FROM PAGE 01
incident of Sialkot, the minister said the entire nation was united after it. On the contrary, he said such incidents with Muslims "were a norm in India." He said today's New York Times carried a front-page article "exposing atrocities" being committed against the Christian community in India. The information minister said Narendra Modi and the ruling BJP had made the lives of all minorities miserable in India.

Talking about the vision of Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal, he said they wanted to establish an Islamic welfare state where Muslims and minorities could live freely and peacefully irrespective of their caste and creed.

The information minister opined that today the biggest challenge was to reclaim Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Pakistan, and Prime Minister Imran Khan wanted to transform the country into a state in line with the founding father's vision.

Chaudhry said Quaid-e-Azam made his vision clear of Pakistan in his three major speeches - one in the Constituent Assembly, his addresses to the Army officers, and the bureaucracy.

Pak, Turkey vow to enhance military ties

FROM PAGE 01
entrenched in our cultural and religious affinities." The COAS underscored the importance of peace and reconciliation initiatives in Afghanistan. He stressed the need for sincere international efforts to avert the humanitarian crisis in the war-torn country.

Both sides agreed to further optimize military to military ties particularly in training and counter-terrorism domains, said ISPR.

Turkey's General Veli Tarakci acknowledged the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and vowed to enhance cooperation in various fields.

The visiting dignitary also appreciated Pakistan's role in the Afghan situation.

Conference on fitness and sports nutrition concludes

"Eating right can help us reduce body fat, feel more confident, and reduce our risk of illness", they said, adding that frequent studies are indicating healthy food intake as the most important part of our fitness programs

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Two-day conference on fitness and sports nutrition of athletes in sports concluded here in Islamabad with aiming that link between good health and good nutrition should be established as nutrition plays an essential role and enhances sporting performance. The conference was organized by Get Pro Fitness Academy and was attended by more than 40 trainers from across the country. It was a comprehensive conference on sports and exercise nutrition for fitness enthusiasts, fitness trainers, personal trainers, sports coaches and athletes.

The key speakers IFPA master trainer and sports nutrition specialist Syed Muhammad, PhD scholars on Human Nutrition and Sports Sciences Syeda Sana



Shah, Muhammad Imran Khan, Consultant Dietitian Shaista Khan and other

experts give presentations about how to develop an understanding of the appro-

appropriate nutrition practices in relation to exercise or sport training to promote health,

energy and adaptations. During the conference the speakers stressed on ob-

taining optimal knowledge for coaches, trainers, and other sports and fitness enthusiasts. They were of the opinion that when healthy eating habits become a lifestyle healthier and happier. "Eating right can help us reduce body fat, feel more confident, and reduce our risk of illness", they said, adding that frequent studies are indicating healthy food intake as the most important part of our fitness programs.

Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) was the chief guest of concluding ceremony appreciated the efforts made for the awareness regarding sports nutrition and considered it a milestone in promotion of sports and enhancing sports performance through up-to-date knowledge in the relevant fields. He offered the services of Pakistan sports board for future endeavors.

Chelsea taking 'huge risks' with players, says Tuchel

LONDON: Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel said he was forced to give some players more minutes than he should have against Aston Villa on Sunday, with both Romelu Lukaku and Callum Hudson-Odoi returning to action after missing the last three games due to COVID-19. Chelsea secured a 3-1 win at Villa, with Lukaku coming on at half-time and Hudson-Odoi playing the full 90 minutes. "It is not so easy when you have a long injury, with a body like (Lukaku) and you catch COVID-19," Tuchel told reporters. "When you read the match sheet and read the names you might think, yes, everyone is there, 18 guys and it is a top squad. But if you look at the details, you see that we are struggling and taking some huge risks."

"Callum (Hudson-Odoi) was forced to play 90 minutes straight after COVID-19 because of injuries during the match and that's the way it is."

While pleased with the three points, Tuchel was concerned about the players he must pitch back into action over the busy holiday period.

"This is a big reaction and win. At the same time, I am always concerned in the last weeks, I'm concerned for the health and the safety of the players," Tuchel said.

"This is pretty challenging. It's not over just because the names are back on the team sheet. At the moment the situation is very demanding."

Third-placed Chelsea face Brighton & Hove Albion on Wednesday, before taking on Liverpool on Jan. 2. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Ali Muhammad Khan expresses condolences over the death of Shoaib Akhtar's mother and offered Fateha for the departed soul. - DNA

British HC hands over the Queen's Baton to POA

DNA

KARACHI: The Queen's Baton of Commonwealth Games has been officially handed over to Pakistan by the British High Commission. The Queen's Baton Relay of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games started on October 7 at Buckingham Palace. The Baton reached Karachi via Seychelles.

Deputy British High Commissioner Martin Dawson handed over the Baton to General Arif Hassan, the president of the Pakistan Olympic Association. Talking to Geo News, Arif Hassan said that it is a great pleasure to receive the Queen's Baton Relay in Pakistan. "This is a big day for sports in Pakistan," said Arif Hassan.

Pakistani athletes are eagerly awaiting the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Martin Dawson, Deputy High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, said he was happy on the arrival of Baton Relay in Pakistan and hoped that during the next two days, there would be good events for the Baton's Relay. After receiving the Queen's Baton of the Commonwealth Games, Arif Hassan handed the Baton

to Jahangir Khan. After Jahangir Khan, Hassan Sardar, Rasheed Al Hassan, Kulsoom Hazara, Mehrullah, Arshad Hussain, and Bahram Awari also held the Baton. Pakistan's special and para-athletes were also present at the event. The Baton will be present in Karachi for the next three days. The Queen's Baton Relay will be taken to Sindh Madrasa-ul-Islam tomorrow morning, after which it will be taken to Quaid-e-Azam's mausoleum in the afternoon.

Following a visit to a local school in Karachi on Wednesday, the Baton Relay will visit a park in Lyari.

Rublev tests positive for Covid-19

PARIS: Russian tennis star Andrey Rublev became the latest player to have played in an Abu Dhabi exhibition tournament earlier this month to test positive for Covid-19 just weeks away from the Australian Open. The 24-year-old world number five tweeted he was self-isolating which places in doubt his competing in the ATP Cup (Jan 1-9) in Australia. The Australian Open - where Rublev reached the quarter-finals this year - runs from January 17 to 30 in Melbourne. "I am currently in Barcelona and unfortunately I have tested positive for Covid-19," said Rublev on Twitter. "I have minimal symptoms. - APP

'Spider-Man' surpasses \$1B worldwide

LOS ANGELES: Peter Parker's good fortune continued over the holiday weekend as Hollywood prepares to close the books on a turbulent 2021. Even with some mighty competition from new Matrix and Sing movies, and rising concerns over the omicron variant, "Spider-Man: No Way Home" stayed in the No. 1 spot and netted a few more milestones too including crossing the \$1 billion mark globally. According to studio estimates Sunday "Spider-Man" added \$81.5 million over the three-day weekend, down 69% from its first weekend. The Sony and Marvel film has now grossed \$467 million from North American theaters, more than doubling the domestic grosses of 2021's previous No. 1 film, "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings." With \$587.1 million from 61 overseas markets, in just 12 days of release, "Spider-Man" has grossed \$1.05 billion globally. It's the first film of the pandemic to cross \$1 billion and is tied with "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" for being the third-fastest film ever to do so - and this without the benefit of its release in China.

Universal's "Sing 2" came in second place with an estimated \$23.8 million, while Warner Bros. "The Matrix Resurrections" grossed \$12 million to take third place. The animated musical "Sing 2" features high-profile celebrity talent including Matthew McConaughey, Scarlett Johansson, Reese Witherspoon and Bono, as well as a jukebox soundtrack full of well-known hits. Since its release Wednesday, it's made \$41 million (\$1.6 million of that came from Thanksgiving weekend showings) from North America and \$65 million worldwide. "We're extraordinarily pleased," said Jim Orr, Universal's president of domestic distribution. Orr said the stellar CinemaScore (A+) and audience scores suggest that the film will continue to perform well in the next few weeks, when many kids are still out of school for the holidays. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Players of Rising Stars Women Hockey Academy getting shirts from sponsors during a ceremony in Islamabad. - DNA

Pak continue their dominant run in U19 Asia Cup

UAE found themselves in all sorts of trouble as Kai was removed by Maaz Sadaqat and Soorya was sent back to the pavilion by Mehran Mumtaz, both proving to be two of the most economical bowlers. Skipper Alishan Sharafu scored a fighting 35 but Qasim Akram removed him as Abdul Bangalzai held on to his catch

SPORT DESK

LAHORE: After registering victories against India and Afghanistan earlier in the competition, Pakistan continued their dominant run by securing victory against UAE U19 by 21 runs on Monday. Pakistan opted to bat first against the host nation and managed to post a decent total of 219/8 on the board. Opener Abdul Wahid Bangalzai scored 28 off 48 balls while last match hero Muhammad Shehzad made 29 off 57 balls.

In the middle overs, skipper Qasim Akram batted with control and hit a fifty. He fell to Nilansh Keswani soon after reaching the landmark. He stroked five fours.

Wicketkeeper Haseebullah also contributed crucial 39 off 48 balls while Ahmad Khan smacked 21-ball 34*. For UAE, Aayan Afzal Khan took three for 44 while Kes-



wani bagged 2/32. In return, UAE did not get off to the best possible start as they

lost the wicket of Shival Bawa in the fourth over. The breakthrough was provided by

Mohammad Zeeshan, who also removed Aayan Afzal later in the game; ending up with figures of 2-34 after 9 overs.

Although some resistance was provided by Kai Smith (38) and Soorya Sathis (22), UAE lost quick wickets in succession which hurt their chances of salvaging the game very difficult.

UAE found themselves in all sorts of trouble as Kai was removed by Maaz Sadaqat and Soorya was sent back to the pavilion by Mehran Mumtaz, both proving to be two of the most economical bowlers. Skipper Alishan Sharafu scored a fighting 35 but Qasim Akram removed him as Abdul Bangalzai held on to his catch. Nilansh Keswani and Ali Naseer's wickets were also taken by Qasim Akram. Qasim Akram took three wickets whereas Maaz Sadaqat, Mehran Mumtaz, and Mohammad Zeeshan all took two wickets each.

Bilawal vows to launch anti-govt...

FROM PAGE 01
selected government," he added. Bilawal said that the only solution to the problems Pakistan was facing in present times was the fulfillment of former prime minister and slain PPP leader Benazir Bhutto's vision. "It has been 14 years [since Benazir's assassination], and we still remember Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. The people of Pakistan still remember Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto," he said. The PPP chief also criticised the government for "selling out the blood of our martyrs" by "striking deals with terrorists".

He said when the PPP was in government, it had valiantly fought terrorism in the country and established the writ of the state. "We, our soldiers and our people, defeated the same terrorists whom the entire world couldn't defeat in Afghanistan," Bilawal said, without naming any terrorist organisation.

"But the incumbent government is selling out the blood of our martyrs... the prime minister and the president have bowed down to them (terrorists), they are begging for a deal. But the terrorists have turned them away," he said. "But the jiyalas of the PPP and BB are still standing firm to fight those terrorists."

The PPP, he said, didn't believe in deals, and added that Benazir was being wrongly accused of entering a deal on the eve of her assassination. Apparently making a reference to reports of a power-sharing deal between Benazir and then-president Pervez Musharraf, Bilawal said that the PPP did not practice "non-democratic politics".

"We do not need a deal. Our deal is with the people of Pakistan." Referring to a slogan raised by the PPP with regards to punishing Benazir's killers, Bilawal recalled: "We said democracy is the best revenge."

Pakistan condemns Hindutva...

FROM PAGE 01
It was reminded to the Indian side that such incitement to violence by Hindutva figures including ruling party's elected members also preceded the anti-Muslim riots in New Delhi in February 2020. The continued grave violations of human rights of minorities, especially Muslims and their places of worship, anti-Muslim legislations by the Union Government of India and several BJP-ruled states, and continued incidents of violence against Muslims on flimsy pretexts by Hindutva groups with complete impunity and often under state patronage highlight the worsening trend of Islamophobia and present a grim picture about the fate of Muslims in India.

Pakistan calls on the international community including the United Nations, OIC and relevant human rights organizations to hold India accountable for its gross and systematic human rights violations against minorities, particularly Muslims and take immediate measures to save them from impending genocide.

Global outrage over Hindutva...

FROM PAGE 01
In its report captioned "Haridwar: Police case after outrage in India over anti-Muslim hate speech", the BBC noted the proximity of the hate speakers to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "Social media users, however, have identified many of the speakers in the videos who are important religious leaders often seen in the company of ministers and members from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)," said the report.

The report also highlighted the support given by the BJP leaders to the hate crimes against minorities. "Activists say the frequency of hate crimes against Muslims and other minorities has increased since 2014, when the BJP first came to power. Videos of hate speech or violence against Muslims regularly go viral in India. Critics allege this is because of the support - both open and tacit - that the perpetrators receive from ruling party leaders," said the report.

Briefs

Azerbaijan's
GDP
increased

DNA

BAKU: Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov has said that Azerbaijan's gross domestic product (GDP) has increased more than three times, over the past 18 years. He made the remarks at the event entitled "Ilham Aliyev and energy policy of independent Azerbaijan" held at the Energy Ministry on the occasion of the 60th birth anniversary of President Ilham Aliyev. The minister noted that the poverty rate has dropped from 49 to 6 percent and more than 2 million jobs have been created over the reported period. "Unemployment in the country is at the level of about 6 percent. Some \$280 billion have been invested in Azerbaijan's economy," he said. Shahbazov stressed that Azerbaijan turned into a reliable partner in global energy security. "The Azerbaijani model is more rational in its approach to energy security. This is the diversification of energy resources, energy supply, and supply markets. It is about choosing a balance between energy security and environmental safety," he said. He added that the "green energy" course opened a new page in Azerbaijan's development as an energy country in line with modern global trends.

Somali
president
suspends PM

WEB DESK

MOGADISHU: Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed on Monday suspended the country's prime minister over alleged corruption and misuse of public land. "Noting that the Prime Minister [Mohamed Hussein Roble] on 26 December 2021, appointed a new Minister of Defense without completing the ongoing investigation into interference in the ongoing investigation into the corruption of public lands owned by SNA, the work and powers of the Prime Minister have been suspended pending an investigation," a statement issued by Somali presidency said. Mohamed also ordered the suspension of the country's navy commander who previously accused the prime minister of land grabbing and misuse of public land. On Sunday, the prime minister and the president traded barbs as the political standoff in the country deepens. Mohamed accused his prime minister of failing to undertake his mandate to lead the country through the polls as he was tasked.

Sudan's
Hamdok
expected to
resign 'soon'

KHARTOUM: Sudan's transitional Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok is expected to resign soon, according to a source in his office on Monday. "Hamdok has ordered his office staff to hand over their trusts," the source told Anadolu Agency on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media. According to the source, Hamdok is preparing to submit his resignation soon, after he held a closed meeting with army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and his deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo Hemediti on the country's political crisis. "The staff working at Hamdok's office have begun to hand over their trusts as of Sunday evening," the source said. Last week, sources revealed to Anadolu Agency that the transitional premier was planning to resign. Sudan has been in turmoil since Oct. 25 when the Sudanese military dismissed Hamdok's transitional government and declared a state of emergency. Hamdok, however, was reinstated on Nov. 21 under an agreement with al-Burhan, in a move rejected by Sudanese political and civil forces as an "attempt to legitimize the coup." — Agencies

UN chief urges world to be prepared for new pandemics

"It also revealed our failure to learn the lessons of recent health emergencies like SARS, avian influenza, Zika, Ebola and others", he said

UNITED NATIONS: The present-day situation in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic will not be the last for humankind and the global society needs to be preparing for new challenges, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has stated. "COVID-19 will not be the last pandemic humanity will face," the UN chief said on his Twitter account. "As we respond to this health crisis, we need to prepare for the next one." "On this International Day of Epidemic Preparedness, let's give this issue the focus, attention, and investment it deserves," he added. COVID-19 continues to demonstrate how quickly "an infectious disease can sweep across the world", pushing health systems to the brink and upending daily life for all of humanity, Guterres said. "It also revealed our failure to learn the

lessons of recent health emergencies like SARS, avian influenza, Zika, Ebola and others", he said. "And it reminded us that the world remains woefully unprepared to stop localized outbreaks from spilling across borders, and spiraling into a global pandemic". Noting that infectious diseases remain "a clear and present danger to every country", Guterres maintained COVID-19 would not be the last pandemic for humanity. Even as the world responds to this health crisis, he spelled out the need to prepare for the next one. "This means scaling-up investments in better monitoring, early detection and rapid response plans in every country — especially the most vulnerable", he said. "It means strengthening primary health care at the local level to prevent collapse... ensuring equitable access to lifesaving in-

terventions, like vaccines for all people and...achieving Universal Health Coverage", The Secretary-General upheld that by building global solidarity, every country would have a fighting chance "to stop infectious diseases in their tracks". Earlier in the month, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, welcomed the decision of a special session of the World Health Assembly (WHA) — the UN agency's top decision-making body — to develop a new global accord on pandemic prevention and response. While acknowledging a long road ahead, he described the decision as "cause for celebration, and cause for hope". "There are still differences of opinion about what a new accord could or should contain", he said, but the consensus has proven that "differences can be overcome, and common

ground can be found", the WHO chief said. Meanwhile, as cases of the new Omicron variant continue to spread like wildfire, 70 per cent of COVID vaccines have been distributed to the world's ten largest economies, and the poorest countries have received just 0.8 per cent, according to the UN, calling it "not only unjust" but also a threat to the entire planet. To end this cycle, the Organization underscored that at least 70 per cent of the population in every country must be inoculated, which the UN vaccine strategy aims to achieve by mid-2022. Although this will require at least 11 billion vaccine doses, it is doable so long as sufficient resources are put into distribution. "An outbreak anywhere is a potential pandemic everywhere", the Secretary-General added. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi chaired a high level meeting on "economic diplomacy" at ministry of foreign affairs. — DNA

German hospitals
face staffing crisis
amid omicron threat

BERLIN: Germany's hospitals are facing staffing shortages and budget problems as the country braces for a massive fifth wave of coronavirus infections, a new report warned on Monday. Nearly four in five hospitals are confronting unprecedented staffing shortages, including specialist staff to work in intensive care units, according to the Hospital Barometer 2021 survey. Some 14,500 nursing vacancies and 8,000 critical care positions remain open, according to the study conducted by the German Hospital Institute. The representative survey found that nearly 60% of hospitals are also expecting financial problems due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic despite the government's support. Many hospitals have canceled non-urgent operations, while patient visits have also dropped, as people are avoiding hospital visits for fear of contracting COVID-19, according to the report. Germany on Monday passed the mark of 7 million confirmed coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic last year. The Robert Koch Institute reported 13,908 new daily infections and 69 coronavirus-related fatalities in the last 24 hours. While the country's fourth wave has stabilized in recent weeks, authorities have been alarmed by the rapid spread of the omicron variant in neighboring countries. German Health Minister Karl Lauterbach warned last week that the country should brace for a massive fifth wave of COVID-19 at the beginning of next month due to omicron. He called on citizens to strictly follow anti-coronavirus measures and get their COVID-19 booster jabs to protect themselves against the mutating variant. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and premiers of the federal states agreed on tougher restrictions last week to curb the spread of the novel variant. According to the new rules, large-scale sports events like football matches will take place without spectators. — Web Desk

FPCCI has lost its status
as the apex body of trade

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Tariq Haleem past Vice President FPCCI and present Chairman UBG Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs, Communications and Gwadar Development said: Presently Pakistan is standing at cross roads and under great financial pressure due to various reasons which also includes past mistakes and the impact of COVID on the economies of all the countries of the world including our great country Pakistan. Inflation is in double digits (11.5 per cent). Balance of trade deficit as of November 2021 was USD 20.75 Billion. 1.00 U.S. Dollar = Rs. 178.50 Consumer price index has reached all time high in November, 2021 : 158.18 points. Furthermore one of the major reasons for above problems in the country is also that the Business Men Panel (BMP) sitting in power in the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) is unable to play its role in coordinating with the government / suggesting ways and means to improve the economy up to implementation of suggestions on behalf of the Business Community of Pakistan. How can BMP protect the interests of the Business Community when they are busy in planning illegal ways to stay in power?

We would like to mention a few projects that we have worked on and are still working on (despite being out of power for the last 2 years in FPCCI), UBG always thinks out of the box. 1. Water Management, Floods, Transport & Aquatic Tourism Report: When I was the Vice President at FPCCI during 2018 we supported and published (in collaboration with Commander Naem Sarfraz) a very comprehensive report which also provide solutions. This report was widely circulated by us in the business circles and the corridors of power including the Prime Minister of Pakistan. After great efforts Ministry of Maritime Affairs has picked up responsibility for Inland Transport and engaged with World Bank who have now issued a report which supports our contentions. We are regularly chasing up this issue and are now also requesting the Federal Minister of Maritime Affairs Ali Zaidi to urgently form a Waterways Development Authority so that inland water management etc can be properly addressed and operations on the ground can commence at the very earliest. Pakistan has no shortage of water whatsoever. We have sufficient water for the next about 100 years. Pakistan receives about 140 - 145 million acres feet (MAF) of water per year. Out of this about 20 MAF goes

into the sea and about 40 MAF is lost due to mismanagement in the inland waterways, canals etc. The need of the hour is to develop inland waterways for transport of goods which will result in multiple benefits for the country including but not limited to water management, flood control, better output from the agriculture sector, aquatic tourism, creation of thousands of jobs etc., etc. if this is implemented hand in hand with improvements in rail transport, this will Inshaallah turn around the economy of Pakistan. 2. Transshipment / Transit Cargoes: We have already submitted concept paper to the Ministry of Maritime Affairs on "Transshipment / Transit Zone and Stock & Sale Zone". We believe that serious working is taking place on our suggestions and if our suggestions are properly adopted then we will Inshaallah also have extra cargoes moving from CIS States through initially from Karachi Port Trust and subsequently from Gwadar Port. We are confident that further roughly about 20 to 30 billion dollars worth of trade will pass through Pakistan by road, rail and sea. This would mean roughly about 2 million plus containers (TUES) moving through our sea ports both in and out. Presently 3.2 million TEUS both Export & Import are moving through KPT & PQA.

Turkish, Armenian
special envoys to
meet in Moscow

ANKARA: Moscow will host the first meeting between Turkish and Armenian special envoys to discuss steps for normalizing ties between the two countries, Turkey's foreign minister said on Monday. Speaking at a year-end evaluation of Turkey's foreign policy, Mevlut Cavusoglu said the special envoys of each country should first speak over the phone and decide on the date and place of a face-to-face meeting. "Our impression is that the first meeting will take place in Moscow, as Armenia desires. Aside from the first meeting, we also want communication to be held directly... We have mutually appointed special envoys to speak directly," Cavusoglu said. He said a roadmap towards normalizing ties needed to be set, adding that this would be on the first meeting's agenda. Noting that charter flights between Turkey and Armenia would soon begin, he reiterated that Turkey was pursuing its normalization discussions in consultation and coordination with Azerbaijan. Armenia's rhetoric has so far been positive, said the Turkish official, adding that Turkey wanted to act, as well. Citing the attempts in 2009 by Turkey and Armenia to normalize relations, Cavusoglu said that though this previous attempt had been conducted in "good faith", the new process was separate. — Agencies

Polish
president
vetoes media
law slammed
by US

WARSAW: Polish President Andrzej Duda on Monday vetoed a controversial media ownership law that critics said was aimed at silencing the US-owned news channel TVN24. "I am vetoing it," Duda said in a televised statement, following heavy criticism of the law from the European Union and the United States. The law, which was adopted by parliament this month, would have prevented companies from outside the European Economic Area from holding a controlling stake in Polish media companies. That would have forced US group Discovery to sell a majority stake in TVN, one of Poland's biggest private TV networks, and its news channel TVN24. The government had argued the law would protect Poland's media landscape from potentially hostile actors such as Russia. Duda said he agreed with this principle, but that it should not be made to apply to existing business arrangements and investment treaties. "People I've been talking to are concerned about the situation. They had different arguments. They spoke about peace and quiet... How we don't need another conflict, another problem. We have many problems already," he said. Duda is strongly supported by Poland's ruling populist Law and Justice (PiS) party but has shown some differences with the party leadership in the past. — APP

Bangladesh
arrests ferry
owner

NEWS DESK

DHAKA: Bangladesh police on Monday arrested the owner of an overcrowded ferry that caught fire and killed at least 39 people last week, after investigators blamed the toll on a disregard for safety. The blaze broke out in the middle of the night on Friday when many of the ferry's 700 passengers were sleeping near the southern district of Barguna. Survivors relayed harrowing stories of having to jump into the Sugandha river from the three-storey ferry, which was only designed to carry 420 people. Most of the victims burnt to death while others drowned in frigid waters while trying to escape. Ferry owner Hum Jalal Sheikh was arrested Monday, a police spokesman told reporters, a day after a court issued an arrest warrant for eight people including the captain and crew of the Ohhajaan-10. Marine police officer Mahbubur Rahman said the vessel did not have adequate fire extinguishers and buoys to face a major mid-river accident.

Gaza marks
anniversary
of 2008
Israeli war

GAZA CITY: The Hamas-run Interior Ministry in the Gaza Strip on Monday marked the 13th anniversary of the 2008 Israeli offensive on the Palestinian territory. The ministry organized a ceremony to mark the anniversary, during which a wreath was laid on a memorial erected in memory of those killed during the Israeli onslaught. More than 2,000 Palestinians were killed in Israel's three-week-long operation, including dozens of children and women. A total of 13 Israelis were also killed in attacks by Palestinian resistance factions. Nearly 200 Palestinians, mostly security personnel, were killed in the first day of the Israeli offensive on the seaside enclave. Ministry undersecretary Nasser Musleh said the Israeli occupation wanted to break Gaza's internal front and create divisions among security forces. We "will continue to maintain a state of security and stability," Musleh said, vowing not to "allow anyone to tamper with Gaza's security under any cover and in any form." He reiterated the ministry's commitment to protecting the resistance and pursuing those collaborating with Israel. — Agencies

Kazakh, Afghan ministers discuss ties

"Today we brought with us 1.5 tons of cargo (medicines). In addition, a humanitarian cargo with food and medicines in the amount of about 155 tons or \$ 1.9 million has departed from Kazakhstan and will arrive soon to Afghanistan," he said

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: Minister of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bakhyt Sultanov headed the Kazakh delegation on the trade and economic mission to Afghanistan. The delegation included officials of the Ministry and QazTrade, the national export promotion operator, as well as representatives of a number of Kazakh exporting companies. During the visit, Minister Sultanov held talks with representatives of the acting Afghan administration: Deputy Prime Minister Abdula Salam Hanafi, Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaki, Minister of Trade and Industry Nuriddin Azizi. At the meetings, Minister Sultanov assured the Afghan side that Kazakhstan has always adhered to and adheres to the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. "We traditionally stand for a peaceful, united, independent and prosperous Afghanistan, free from terrorism and drug-related crime. The Afghan people have the right



to determine their own future in search of lasting peace and development," said the Minister. He reminded that, as instructed by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev, the government had allocated humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in the form of 5,000 tons of flour. "Today we brought with us 1.5 tons of cargo (medicines). In ad-

dition, a humanitarian cargo with food and medicines in the amount of about 155 tons or \$ 1.9 million has departed from Kazakhstan and will arrive soon to Afghanistan," he said. Minister Sultanov also informed the representatives of the acting administration of Afghanistan that Kazakhstan fully supported and actively participated in the UN

efforts to tackle the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. According to him, the World Food Program recently purchased 20,000 tons of Kazakh flour. "Our country, like other international partners, expresses the hope that the active phase of the conflict is over and the time has come for the country's reconstruction in the post-conflict period,"

he added. The Kazakh delegation assured that their country was interested in maintaining and increasing the scope of bilateral trade, both in volumes and by expanding the range of goods within it. It was noted that Kazakhstan was traditionally a major supplier of flour and grain to Afghanistan. More than half of all exports of Kazakh flour and more than 10% of grain exports has been consumed lately by the Afghan market. In January-October 2021, trade between Kazakhstan and Afghanistan amounted to \$345.9 million, which is 27.5% lower than in the same period of the previous year (\$477.1 million). Exports from Kazakhstan to Afghanistan in January-October 2021 decreased by 28.1% and amounted to \$342.2 million. Imports in January-October 2021 tripled and amounted to \$3.7 million. Trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Afghanistan in 2020 amounted to \$622.6 million, which is 54.9% higher than in the same period of the previous year (\$401.8 million). In 2020, Kazakhstan's exports to Afghanistan increased by 55.6% and reached \$620.7 million.

Briefs

Swati case: US Embassy team visits CPO office

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: A team comprising investigation officers from US Embassy has paid a visit to the office of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi in connection with the Wajaha Swati murder case, citing sources. The US investigation experts have also visited the CPO Rawalpindi office along with the US Embassy officials. A senior police officer gave a briefing to the US Embassy team and progress on the probe into the Wajaha Swati murder case. The US team stressed further expediting and improving the investigation into the American citizen murder case. They also demanded to penalise the accused after completing the probe at the earliest, sources added. During their meeting with CPO Rawalpindi Sajid Kiani, they discussed the matters related to shifting Swati's body to the United States (US). Swati family had demanded to send the body to the US for its burial. The US officials sought assistance from the CPO in the compilation of her legal documents including the death certificate and first information report (FIR). Sources said that the process could take 48 hours to five days before the departure of Swati's body to the US. After receiving a briefing from the CPO Rawalpindi office, the US team departed for Regional Police Officer (RPO) to meet the officials. A Pakistani-origin US woman who has been missing for more than two months has been killed, the husband has confessed before the police in a major breakthrough in the case on Saturday.

China records 200 Covid cases

BEIJING: The Chinese mainland recorded 200 confirmed COVID-19 cases the other day with 162 linked to local transmissions and 38 from overseas, data from the National Health Commission showed on Monday. A total of 27 new asymptomatic cases were also recorded, and 495 asymptomatic patients remain under medical observation. Confirmed cases on the Chinese mainland now total 101,277, with the death toll remaining unchanged at 4,636 since January. The latest tally of confirmed cases in the special administrative regions i.e. Hong Kong remained at 12,589 with 213 death, Macao remained at 77 with no death and Taiwan region remained at 16,915 with 850 deaths respectively. Facing dual COVID-19 risks from a domestic flare-up and the raging Omicron variant overseas, Beijing, the capital of China has already tightened epidemic prevention and control measures and vowed to strictly adhere to a dynamic zero policy as Chinese New Year and the Beijing Winter Olympics approach. — APP

Heavy snowfall paralyzes life in Hazara

ABBOTTABAD: Two days long heavy snowfall and rain spell in all over Hazara division Monday continued and paralysed life in upper parts of the region. Due to snowfall and land sliding, traffic has been blocked on the Karakoram Highway (KHK) at several locations from Abbottabad to Mansehra, Battagram, and Kohistan, as well as on connection routes. In Galyat, Thandyani, Naran, Kaghan, Battagram and other snow hit areas electricity transmission lines have also been damaged. Power supply have also been suspended in some areas of Galyat, Kaghan and Naran since last day. Kaghan road was fully stopped for all types of transportation from Phuldran onward due to heavy snow and landsliding. — APP

Implementing agriculture transformation plan a priority

The Prime Minister was chairing a meeting on priority sectors to review progress on the implementation of Agricultural Transformation Plan and Special Economic Zones

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday said that the present government, for the very first time in country's history, had chalked out a comprehensive agricultural transformation plan and was implementing it on priority basis. Mechanization of agriculture sector, provision of quality seed, efficient water management system and assistance in livestock farming were transforming the agriculture sector into a high yielding economic entity, he added. The Prime Minister was chairing a meeting on priority sectors to review progress on the implementation of Agricultural Transformation Plan (ATP) and Special Economic Zones (SEZs). He said that with the introduction of Kissan card, subsidy on fertilizer and genetic improvement of livestock, the government was aiming to achieve even higher yields as compared to the record yield achieved last year. During the review-meeting on Agriculture Transformation Plan, it was informed that for dissemination of quality seed to increase the average yield and quality of the produce, relevant approvals have been made and fund release was in process.



For the genetic improvement of livestock, import of quality semen was proposed and the process was expedited and given high priority. Moreover in order to assist the livestock farmers, 9211 helpline has been revived in Punjab while it was near to completion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The meeting was also informed that the project for mechanization of farming was near to completion whereby distribution of machinery to the farmers will start soon. This will help not only to increase the yield, but will also help cut the farming costs.

In addition to the above, the development of a comprehensive and well managed Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system for agriculture sector, including extension services to assist farmers will also be launched in the first quarter of the coming year. During the meeting, a comprehensive update was also given about institutional reforms regarding research institutes whereby 65% of the proposed interventions have already been implemented with a special focus on cotton research institute. Centers of Excellence regarding agricultural research were soon

being launched in Punjab and other provinces with a focused approach on high yielding crops and the crops that will substantially reduce dependence on imports. The meeting was given a detailed brief on olive cultivation and was informed that import of high yielding plants for 20,000 acres has already been commenced. Regarding shrimp farming, the meeting was given an update about hatcheries that have been established and are soon to be operationalized in Punjab and Balochistan. The meeting was also apprised of the fertilizer situation in the coun-

try, consumption of Urea, DAP and operation against hoarders. The meeting was informed about the progress on collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Research whereby transfer of knowledge with the aim to introduce innovative agriculture techniques will improve yield and diversity. The Prime Minister directed to take strict action against hoarders and profiteers and those involved in smuggling of Urea Fertilizer. The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Makhdoon Khuroo Bakhtiyar, Syed Fakhar Imam, Special Assistants to PM Dr. Shehbaz Gill, Jamsheed Iqbal Cheema and Chief Secretaries of all provinces and relevant senior officers. During the meeting on Special Economic Zones (SEZs), the Prime Minister said that his government's focus was to increase investment in SEZs for the establishment of export oriented industries. He said that the government's business friendly policies and focus on ease of doing business had started rendering positive results. The Prime Minister said that increased investment of Overseas Pakistanis and foreign investors was the result of the trust which the government had earned by its effective policy measures.

Pak receives 15 mln ADB vaccines in December

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has received 15 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As per details, 15 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine dispatched by the ADB have been received in Islamabad. The doses have been sent to help Islamabad in its fight against the pandemic. It is to be noted that so far 148,265,690 people have received at least one dose of the COVID vaccine in Pakistan, while 65,149,948 people have received two doses of the vaccine. Meanwhile, the coronavirus has claimed two more lives in Pakistan over the past 24 hours, lifting the overall death toll to 28,909. According to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), 301 more people were infected with the coronavirus. A total of 44,129 samples were tested in the past 24 hours, out of which 301 turned out to be positive, showing an infection rate of 0.68%.

Vaccination exceeds 150 mln mark

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar on Monday said that total vaccinations carried out now exceed 150 crores in the country. Asad Umar, who also heads NCOC, said that Punjab leads the way in provinces with 68% of eligible population having received at least one dose. KP follows with 57%, Sindh at 51% and Balochistan at just 38%. Asad Umar further said that everyone has done a great job in December and sharply increased vaccination rate. On the other hand, Pakistan has received 15 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). 15 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine funded by the ADB have been by Islamabad. The doses are meant to help Pakistan in its fight against the pandemic. Earlier today, Pakistan reported 2 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 1,293,715. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 28,909 on Monday. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) 301 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Punjab remains the worst-hit province in terms of deaths followed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. — APP

India refuses to renew funding to charity

NEW DELHI: The Indian government on Monday "refused" to renew a permission that is vital for Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity (MoC) to be able to secure foreign funds, cutting off a key source the charity has depended on to run its programs for the impoverished. Nobel-laureate Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic nun who died in 1997, founded the MoC in 1950. The charity has more than 3,000 nuns worldwide who run hospices, community kitchens, schools, leper colonies and homes for abandoned children. The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi refused permission to the charity under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) on Saturday after it received some "adverse inputs", a government statement said. "While considering the MoC's renewal application, some adverse inputs were noticed," the home ministry said, without providing details. The ministry also rejected an earlier allegation of the West Bengal state chief minister Mamata Banerjee that the bank accounts of the charity were frozen. — Agencies

India denounced for killing innocent Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD: Hurriyat leaders and organizations have condemned the Modi-led Indian regime for killing innocent Kashmiri youth in fake encounters. In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Political Party Chairman Muhammad Yousuf Naqash in a statement said that killing, intimidation and imprisonment would not hinder Kashmiris from pursuing their basic right to self-determination. He expressed deep sorrow over the recent killings and massacres of underage and innocent youth in fake encounters by Indian forces. "The eternal sacrifices of our martyrs are our precious asset and we will not allow this asset to be wasted at any cost." Jammu and Kashmir Freedom Front (KFF) spokesman in a statement said the way reign of terror has been unleashed in Kashmir indicate that India has waged a war against the unarmed people of Kashmir. He paid tributes to the martyred youth and said it is high time for the world conscience to break the criminal silence and pressurize India to stop rights violations in Kashmir. Denouncing in strong terms the fresh killing spree in the occupied territory, Jammu and Kashmir National Front said ruthless killing campaign was part of India's deep-rooted conspiracy to change demographic complexion of the Muslim majority territory. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Munir Akram calls on President Dr. Arif Alvi. — DNA

Pakistan's GDP growing at 5%

ISLAMABAD: The average monthly economic indicator (MEI) for the first five months of current fiscal year (2021-22) indicates that average economic (GDP) growth of Pakistan during the period could be estimated at around 5%, said a monthly report issued by the ministry of finance and revenue on Monday. So far in the current fiscal year, Pakistan remains on a higher growth trajectory, accelerating from the GDP growth rate observed in FY2021, the "Monthly Economic Update & Outlook, December 2021" said. However it said the inflation may ease out in the coming months due to the declining commodity prices in the global market. In addition, relief may also come from continuous Government efforts to soften food prices in the local markets by following appropriate fiscal and monetary policies. While these developments and policies may keep the monthly price dynamics in check, the current stress on the trade balance is expected to soften, easing exchange rate pressure and subsequently stabilizing the month on month (MoM) inflation. The Monthly Economic Indicator (MEI) is based on combining monthly data of indicators that are correlated with GDP at constant prices. — DNA

FM asks Pak diplomats to promote economic diplomacy

Qureshi also stressed to work for promoting tourism including religious tourism. On this occasion, Pakistan's diplomatic missions apprised the FM about their efforts for promoting economic diplomacy

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi says under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan's focus is shifting from geopolitics to geo-economics. Chairing a high-level meeting on economic diplomacy in Islamabad today, he urged Pakistan's diplomatic missions in different states to play their proactive role for promotion of economic diplomacy. The Minister said in this regard Af-

rica is of great importance and to benefit from its economic potential, Pakistan has expanded its diplomatic presence by opening five missions in Africa. He said due to such efforts, Pakistan improved 39 points in ease of doing business. In Roshan Digital Account, 2.9 billion dollars were deposited by people from 175 countries while two billion dollars were invested in Naya Pakistan Certificates. The Minister said scope of eco-

nomic diplomacy is not limited to imports and exports but it can help increasing investment, promotion of tourism, finding employment opportunities in different countries and playing proactive role for artificial intelligence, electric vehicles and information technology. The Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi also stressed to work for promoting tourism including religious tourism. On this occasion, Pakistan's diplomatic missions apprised the Foreign Minister about their efforts for promoting economic diplomacy.

Hundreds of flights canceled as Omicron spreads

Hong Kong is banning all South Korea's Korean Air flights for two weeks, after positive cases among some arrivals. In all, more than 8,000 flights have been grounded over the long Christmas weekend that began on Friday

NEWS DESK

LONDON: There have been more Covid-related flight cancellations globally as the week starts, capping off a miserable festive period for thousands of people. More than 2,200 flights have been scrapped on Monday, with Chinese and US destinations being the worst hit, the FlightAware data tracking website says. US airlines say the disruption is due to crews testing positive or isolating. Hong Kong is banning all South Korea's Korean Air flights for two weeks, after positive cases among some arrivals. In all, more than 8,000 flights have been grounded over the long Christmas weekend that began on Friday. Although the number of cancellations is a small percentage of the total, it is higher than normal and comes at a time of year when many are travelling to spend time with family and friends. In a separate development, US authorities are monitoring dozens of cruise ships hit by

Australia sees first omicron death

SYDNEY: New South Wales has reported its first omicron fatality with the death of an elderly man. Hong Kong authorities have suspended Korean Air flights. In Australia, the most populous state of New South Wales has confirmed the country's first death from the omicron variant of the coronavirus on Monday. The death was of a man in his 80s who contracted the virus at a care home in western Sydney. He was fully inoculated but had other health issues. On Monday, the state saw 6,324 new cases of COVID-19 infection, a dip from the record number of cases a day before. Fresh restrictions went into force in New South Wales on Monday, including a cap of one person per 2 square meters (about 21 square feet) in bars and restaurants and mandatory "check-ins" with QR codes in all hospitality venues. China reported 162 new infections with confirmed symptoms, against 158 a day earlier. Meanwhile, Hong Kong has suspended Korean Air flights for two weeks, the company said on Monday. — Agencies

Covid cases while sailing in the country's waters, with several of them reportedly denied port in the Caribbean, AFP news agency reports. Recorded Covid cases are rising sharply around the world, largely driven by the Omicron variant.

Despite early findings that Omicron is milder than other coronavirus variants, scientists are concerned by the sheer number of infections being recorded. The majority of the flights cancelled on Monday are those by Chinese companies, according to FlightAware. They include Chi-

na Eastern, which cancelled more than 420 flights, and Air China, with more than 190 cancellations. Airports in Beijing and Shanghai appear to be the worst affected, with nearly 300 cancellations combined. The Chinese authorities have not commented on the issue. The airport in the northern Chinese city of Xi'an is also on the list. More than 13 million people in the city have been recently ordered to stay at home as authorities attempt to tackle a Covid outbreak there. Meanwhile, the hardest-hit US companies are United and JetBlue. And Seattle-Tacoma is one of the worst-affected airports. United warned last week that a spike in Omicron cases had "had a direct impact on our flight crews and the people who run our operation", with many employees required to self-isolate after coming into contact with those infected. Omicron now is the dominant variant in the US. But severe weather is also a factor. A blanket of snow delayed flights and disrupted roads in the western state of Washington on Sunday, adding to the travel chaos.