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The EU repeatedly challenged by power politics in 2021

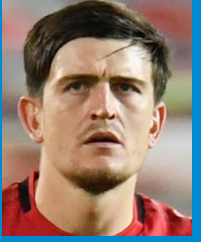
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Pakistan highly values its ties with the US

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Lengthy Covid break did Man Utd no favours

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Briefs

Bilawal hosted by UAE minister

DNA

GHOTKI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Tuesday arrived in the desert area of Khanpur in Ghotki district on the lunch invitation of UAE Minister Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al-Nahyan. During the luncheon meeting, both the leaders also discussed issues of mutual interest. PPP MNA Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mehar also accompanied the party chairman to the lunch. Earlier, Bilawal visited mausoleums of 'Martyrs of Democracy' in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. He also paid his respects at the grave of her mother, Mohitama Benazir Bhutto and offered dua.

Hamza slams govt over food shortage

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz member and Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly Hamza Shahbaz on Tuesday has criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government over shortage of food in the country. In a statement, Hamza Shahbaz said that Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan's ineffective policies have badly affected the farmers. After gas shortage, now government is preparing for food crisis in the country, he added.

Sufficient Urea stock available

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Khushro Bakhtiar says sufficient stock of Urea is available in the country for the Rabi season. Addressing a news briefing, he said due to punitive measures in Punjab, uninterrupted supply of Urea is being maintained under tracking policy of the government. The Minister said the actual production of Urea last Rabi was 3017, but the current production estimate is 3255, which is eight percent more than last year.

Army ready to play its part in NSP

Pak Army terms Security Policy an 'important milestone'; Cabinet approves National Security Policy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army on Tuesday termed the country's first-ever National Security Policy (NSP) an "important milestone" in meeting emerging challenges in evolving global environment. "NSP is an important milestone in strengthening National Security of Pakistan. The comprehensive framework, recognises inter linkages between various strands of national security, imperative to meet emerging challenges in evolving global environment through a whole of government effort," DG ISPR Major General Babar Iftikhar said in a tweet. The statement of the chief military spokesperson comes hours after the federal cabinet approved the Pakistan's first-ever NSP 2022-2026, which aims at bolstering the country's economic security and tackling external as well as internal challenges. The Pakistan's armed forces will play their due part in achieving the vision laid out in the policy, he added. Briefing media about the decisions taken by the federal cabinet,

JIT to probe Nazim Jokhiyo murder case



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said the cabinet meeting approved constitution of a Joint Investigation Team to probe the murder case of Nazim Jokhiyo.

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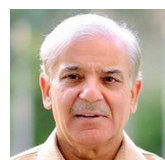
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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Maliki calls on Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. - DNA

Shehbaz fears more inflation in year 2022

Opposition Leader Shehbaz Sharif says govt wants to use parliament as rubber stamp in order to meet conditions of IMF



ABID RAZA

LAHORE: President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Mian Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that New Year will be a worst year for public in terms of inflation if mini-budget approved. Opposition Leader of National Assembly, while criticizing the government, said that government wants to use parliament as

'No taxes on consumer goods'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Finance Spokesperson Muzammil Aslam on Tuesday said the government would not impose any taxes in the upcoming mini-budget on items used by the common man. Speaking on a private news channel, Aslam said that rising prices in

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RAWALPINDI: Andreas Papastavrou, Greek Ambassador to Pakistan paid a farewell call to General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at GHQ. - DNA

Pakistan committed to Afghan stability: COAS

Outgoing Greek envoy Andreas Papastavrou pays farewell call to General Qamar Javed Bajwa

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to cooperate with its international partners for peace in the region and ensuring a stable and prosperous future for Afghan people. The army chief made these remarks in a meeting with Andreas Papastavrou, Greek Ambassador to Pakistan who paid a farewell call to Gen Qamar at GHQ, according to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation especially current situation in Afghanistan and cooperation in various fields were discussed, the military's media wing added. The army chief once again stressed upon the need for global convergence on Afghanistan and sincere efforts to

Education crucial for healthy social order: CJCSC

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee said that education inculcates refinement and civilized behaviour in humankind that forms the edifice of a healthy social order. He was addressing at Degrees Award Ceremony of Graduates of Faculty of Contemporary Studies held at National Defence University Islamabad. Chairman JCSC also conferred degrees, medals & merit certificates among the

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avert a looming humanitarian catastrophe. "[The] COAS thanked the visiting dignitary for his services in Pakistan and acknowledged his contributions for fostering strong ties between the two countries," according to the ISPR. The outgoing Greek envoy appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation, special efforts for border management, role in regional stability and pledged to keep working for better relations between the two countries. Earlier this month, US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West called on General Qamar and discussed the current security situation in Afghanistan, besides opportunities of bilateral cooperation and matters of mutual interest. ISPP had quoted the army chief as saying that the "world and the region could not afford an unstable Afghanistan", as he stressed the need for global convergence to avert a looming humanitarian catastrophe.

China slams US over space station scare

Zhao Lijian called on the US to act responsibly in space

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: The Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that the United States had ignored obligations under outer space treaties, putting astronauts at risk. Chinese space station Tiangong had to maneuver to avoid colliding with a Starlink satellite - produced by a division of Elon Musk's SpaceX - according to a note submitted by China to the United Nations space agency earlier this month. The Chinese station was forced to move two times, once in July and another time in October. The note said the incidents "constituted dangers to the life or health of astronauts aboard the China Space Station." Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian called on the US to act responsibly in space. "The US... ignores its obligations under international treaties, posing a serious threat to the lives and safety of astronauts," Lijian said during a press conference.



Turkey, Qatar await green light to run airports

Turkish FM Mevlut Cavusoglu said that a "MOU" had been inked last month

DNA

ISTANBUL: Private Turkish and Qatari companies have agreed to jointly operate five airports in Afghanistan, although they are still waiting to reach a final deal with the Taliban, officials said Tuesday. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Monday that a "memorandum of understanding" had been inked in Doha earlier this month, covering Kabul and four other airports in the war-ravaged country. Cavusoglu said the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which operated the civilian part of Kabul airport before the Taliban stormed back to power in August after two decades of war, had also expressed an interest in joining the Turkish and Qatari companies. He said the issue was discussed during Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed's visit to the Turkish capital Ankara in late November. "They said 'maybe we can run work trilaterally' but there was never any concrete proposal," said Cavusoglu. "We haven't presented any proposal to them either. But operating the airport briefly appeared on the agenda." Turkish and

Afghan women protest against target killings

NEWS DESK

KABUL: A crowd of women marched through the Afghan capital on Tuesday, accusing Taliban authorities of covertly killing soldiers who served the former US-backed regime. Around 30 women gathered near a mosque in the centre of Kabul and marched a few hundred metres chanting "justice, justice" before they were stopped by Taliban forces, an AFP correspondent saw. The Taliban also tried to prevent journalists from covering the march, organised against the "mysterious murders of young people, particularly the country's former soldiers", according to social media invitations. Taliban fighters briefly detained a group of reporters and confiscated equipment from some photographers, deleting images from their cameras before returning them.

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Desmond Tutu: World has lost a moral beacon - Page 05

Australia retain Ashes after crushing humiliated England - Page 06

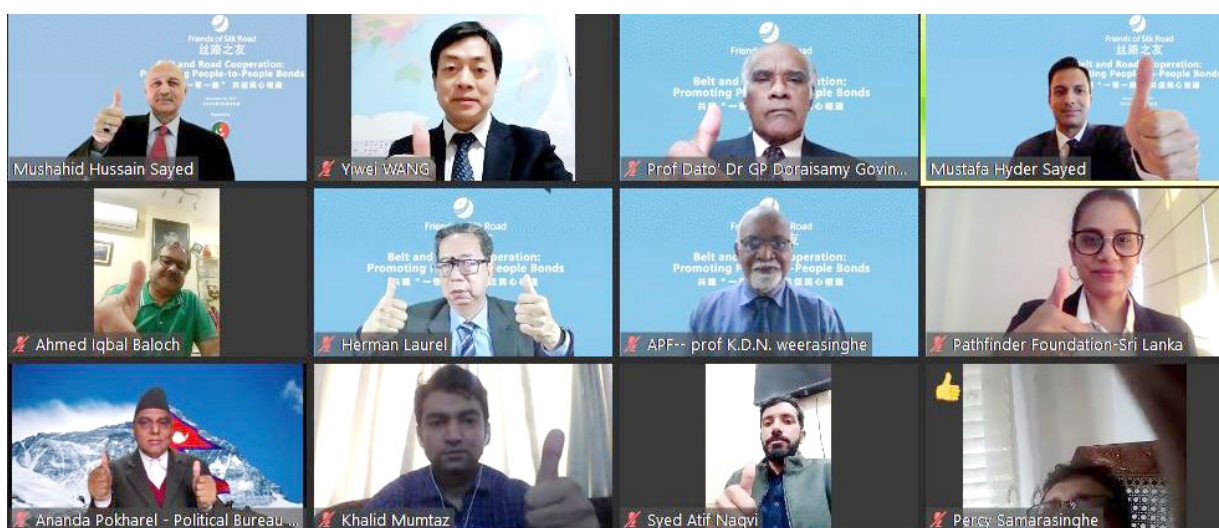
EU repeatedly challenged by power politics in 2021 - Page 07

IHC to indict Rana Shamim, others after affidavit opened - Page 08

Nine Asian countries see benefits in BRI project

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) hosted an extraordinary 9-Nation Conference on Regional Economic connectivity themed on "Belt and Road Cooperation: Promoting People-to-People Bond". The Webinar was attended by the representatives from "Friends of Silk Road" organizations of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand plus representatives of think-tanks from Indonesia, Philippines and China. Saying the 'Asian Century' needs BRI to progress, the speakers, representing various walks of life called for strengthening multilateral cooperation, promoting Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as it represents shared interests of Asian countries. They also put forth suggestions for high quality development of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through exchanges and consultations. The 9 countries agreed to institutionalize their interaction, counter disinforma-



tion and fake news, and rejected any notion of a 'New Cold War'. The webinar was moderated by Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director of PCI. He said that "Friends of Silk Road

Pakistan" since its launch in 2019, has provided both a better understanding and information about benefits and numerous opportunities arising out of the BRI through CPEC. BRI, he said, has

provided an alternate development model to developing countries for promoting human development, which, before BRI, were dependent on the West and its institutions. He also termed BRI a consensus

oriented initiative based on people-centered development. Moreover, he lauded Communist Party of China for passing an historic resolution during its 6th plenum last month which provided a clear vision for the future. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman Senate Defence Committee & Pakistan-China Institute said that BRI, through CPEC benefits the people. He said that BRI is not directed against any country and termed it as a win-win model of cooperation, since it is inclusive and aims to promote connectivity. The year 2021, he remarked, was an important year in the history of Communist Party of China since it marked the centenary of CPC and the year when China eliminated absolute poverty. He also lauded China's successful containment of the COVID-19 pandemic and its vaccine help to other countries which saved millions of lives plus China's leadership on Climate Change.

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Pakistani overseas' role vital in country's development

Governor Sindh Imran Ismail expressed this while talking to a 11-member delegation of Overseas Pakistanis from USA here at Governor's House on Tuesday

NAZIR H SIYAL

KARACHI: Overseas Pakistanis are playing a pivotal role in the development of the country and presenting the positive image of Pakistan in true sense of words. Governor Sindh Imran Ismail expressed this while talking to a 11-member delegation of Overseas Pakistanis from USA here at Governor's House on Tuesday.



He also appreciated the role of overseas Pakistanis in the country's socio-economic development. He observed that for the first time in Pakistan, institutional reforms were underway in real true spirit. "The govern-

ment has fulfilled its promise of giving the voting right to overseas Pakistanis owing to the fact that the Overseas Pakistanis have a key role in Pakistan's economic strength", he added. He told the delegation that Overseas Pakistanis commissions and counters had been set up in the country to assist and ensure protection of the properties of Pakistanis working abroad with a strong system of countering illegal possession so that they feel secure about the future of their families back home. Members of the delegation commended the government's endeavours and expressed their gratitude to the PM Imran Khan for his keen interest in the solution of their problems.

Awards with cash prizes given to poets, writers

Parveen Shakir Urdu Festival features eminent poets, writers, holds thought-provoking literary sessions

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Eminent poets and writers of the country and a large number of literati of the twin cities attended the one-day Parveen Shakir Urdu Literature Festival organized by the Parveen Shakir Trust (PST) on Tuesday at a local hotel and listened to their favourite poets and writers and attended a number of debates on different literary subjects. The event featured stars of literary galaxy Amjad Islam Amjad, Asghar Nadeem Sayid, Mustansar Hussain Tarar, Prof. Fateh Muhammad Malik, Dr. Tahira Iqbal, Dr. Najeeba Arif, Asim Butt, Mehboob Zafar and many others who had come from different parts and cities of the country to attend and experience the warmth of literature in the chilly weather of Islamabad. A number of awards along with cash prize of Rs850,000 (total) were also announced and given on the occasion. In this way PST has become the first and the only organization in the private sector to not only promote the books and writings of the poets and the writers but also support them financially to encourage them in their endeavours.

In the opening ceremony Chairperson of the PST Parveen Qadir Agha expressed her pleasure and satisfaction on the fact that the trust set in memory of the late poet Parveen Shakir to promote and preserve her literary works and to take care of her son, has now become a well-established forum for patronizing and supporting the emerging writers and poets.

It gives us, the members of the PST, a great sense of fulfillment and pride that we have been recognizing the poets and the writers' efforts in our own humble way for the last 26 years without fail, she said.

She also paid rich compliments to the lifetime member of the PST Mazharul Islam, an acclaimed short story writer of the country for creatively organizing the event, designing the awards and inspiring the team to continue to work for this cause.

On the occasion, Husn-e-Funn Award (along with Rs 100,000 cash prize) was given to Amjad Islam Amjad for his lifetime work in different genres of literature, namely poetry, play writing and travelogues.

Mian Atta Rabbani Sada Bahaar Award (along with Rs 100,000) was given to Mustansar Hussain Tarar for his novel Khas-o-Khashak-e-Zamanay.

Nayyir Adbi Award (Rs 100,000) was given to the Turkish writer Dr Davut Sahbaz.

Younas Sethi Wafa Award (along with Rs 50,000) was given to Asghar Nadeem Sayid for his novel "Tooti Hui Tanab," while Sheikh Abdul Qadir Award (Rs 50,000) was given to Shaheen Abbas for his book "Galyon Galyon."



397 recruits complete training course at PNS Akram

QUETTA: The first passing out parade of Pakistan Marines in Gwadar was organized on Tuesday at PNS Akram Base, Pakistan Navy Gwadar.

Governor Balochistan Syed Zahir Ahmed Agha was the special guest on the occasion.

Some, 397 recruits from all over the country including Balochistan completed 8 months training course and joined Pak Marine.

The Navy band tied the knot with military tunes and the youth performed a spectacular parade.

Governor Balochistan Syed Zahir Agha inspected the passing out parade of Pak Marines and took salute.

The passing out parade was held for the first time at PNS Akram Base, Pakistan Navy Gwadar.

The event was attended by Pakistan Coast Navy's Low Coast Vice Admiral Iqbal Javed, Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Capt. Jamil Ahmed Baloch, DG, GDA Mujeeb Qamrani, Chairman Gwadar Port Naseer Kashani and former caretaker Minister Mir Naveed Kalmati and a large number of officers. - APP

Women block road to protest gas shortage

PESHAWAR: A number of women took to streets at Lakki Marwat on Tuesday to protest against the gas loadshedding and low pressure of gas. They blocked a road in the Lakki city and as a result of which long queues of vehicles were witnessed. They were holding placards inscribed with slogans against the local authorities of SNGPL and demanded that prompt measures should be taken for providing them relief by resolving the issue at the earliest. They said different localities in the district faced issues of low gas pressure with the advent of winter season despite the fact that their district had abundant hydrocarbon resources. They regretted that the gas supply was suspended from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. routinely, adding to woes for every household as sometimes they had to send their children to school without breakfast, they added. - APP

FAFEN calls for proactive measures against Omicron virus variant

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) has observed gaps in the public behaviour and government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and reiterated the need to focus on health sector priorities to tackle threats posed by the outbreaks and pandemics. Despite the decrease in the number of COVID-19 positive and death rates since the Fourth Wave, Pakistan's healthcare system is poised to undergo significant stress due to the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant 'Omicron' and the simultaneous outbreak of the Dengue epidemic. At the time of this release, two positive cases have been reported

in Karachi and Islamabad, while 12 new suspected cases have been reported from Balochistan.

The system has remained under the additional burden of the reported 48,906 infections with 183 deaths between January and September 2021 from the Dengue outbreak. The government is urged to adopt a comprehensive and proactive response to maintain control and safeguard the population against the threat posed by the Omicron variant.

FAFEN collected data from 64 districts across four provinces of Pakistan to generate a monitoring report on the COVID-19 Governance for a period between October 1 and December 15, 2021. The data is based on the interviews with key

stakeholders as well as direct observations conducted by independent observers deployed in the districts. The monitoring report, whilst recognizing the strides made in the vaccine uptake process, states that a significant proportion of the total population is yet to be inoculated and still requires utmost attention as the only way to prevent and secure the population from falling prey to the Omicron or any other new variant. The report underscores the need for extending the vaccination process to far-flung areas of the country having no access to the vaccination facilities to ensure inclusivity of the process. The report highlights challenges in the vaccination process. The mis-

information and rumors reported about the efficacy of the vaccine circulating among some healthcare workers and the general population is slowing down the vaccination process. The government needs to proactively expand the outreach of its awareness campaign to counter the misinformation and rumor to educate the general public and healthcare workers regarding the efficacy and importance of getting vaccinated. The monitoring report also reflects the declining and worrisome trends of compliance with SOPs at public spaces and offices. Field monitoring of the public spaces shows that the majority of people were not complying with the observation of COVID-19 SOPs.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah presenting souvenir to the Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yezhan Kistafin. Liason Officer of National Security Committee of Republic of Kazakhstan, Col. Berik Jannassayev is also present. - DNA

UAF VC stresses to promote soybean cultivation

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: It is a matter of grave concern that the country is spending as many as \$5000 million on the import of edible oil and poultry feed. It can be saved by promoting the soybean cultivation at national level under intercropping system.

It was stated by University of Agriculture Faisalabad Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan while presiding over a meeting on soybean cultivation. Islamia University of Bahawalpur Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Athar Mehboob was the guest of honor on the occasion. The meeting was attended by Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr. Anas Sarwar Qureshi, deans, and directors while UAF Soybean Cell In-charge Dr. Zaheer Ahmed, and National Research Center for Intercropping Technology Islamia University Bahawalpur Director Dr. Muhammad Ali Raza gave a briefings over the UAF-IUB ongoing joint soybean projects.

Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that soybean is one of the famous crops in the world but unfortunately we are far lagging behind in its cultivation. He said that a huge amount of \$1000 million is being spent for poultry feed industry while import of \$3,000 million was made for edible oil.

He said that if soybean cultivation was ensured with the help of intercropping system technology along with maize, sugarcane and other crops, it would not only help meet the demands of the country but also provide opportunities to earn billions of rupees by export-

ing. He said that it was essential for the intercropping system to develop mechanization. He hoped that joint soybean research projects by UAF and IUB would prove a milestone in the promotion.

Dr. Athar Mehboob said that work on three UAF & IUB joint soybean projects is in full swing while three more projects are likely to be launched in the coming days. He said that adoption of modern trends in the field of agriculture would not only help achieve the goal of food security but would also alleviate poverty. He said that we have to develop a strategy to address the issues of the country by using the developed countries models and tangible research works. It will open up new avenues of development. He said that different projects worth Rs. 12 billion were underway in IUB which would move the university to new heights of the progress. He said that out of Rs. 12 billion, Rs. 4 billion has been secured

under public-private partnership. Dr. Zaheer Ahmed said that 30 percent of vegetable oil is obtained from soybean worldwide while it is being used in more than 400 food industries. He said that soybean cultivation at the national level was negligible and its promotion under intercropping system was the need of the hour. He said that both institutions were making all out efforts to promote soybean cultivation on scientific basis. He said that there was a need to create public awareness for enhancing the usage of soybean as part of food in addition to edible oil. Soybeans contain 40% protein and 20% oil, he said.

Dr. Muhammad Ali Raza said that the National Center for Intercropping Technology has been set up at IUB in collaboration with Sichuan Agriculture University, China that would bring the benefits of intercropping system to the farmers. They also visited the different laboratories.



FBR Dera zone recovers Rs 48 mln tax arrears

Taxpayers were given many opportunities but they did not follow the legal orders

PESHAWAR: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) DI Khan Zone, in a major operation, attached the bank accounts of several tax evaders and withdrew tax arrears amounting to Rs 48 million from them.

These tax evaders include individuals, associations and government agencies. In the last few weeks, about Rs 48 million have been withdrawn from bank accounts and deposited in the national treasury through the FBR's Dera zone operation.

On the special instructions of RTO Peshawar Chief Commissioner Khurshid Ahmed Marwat, tax recovery efforts have been intensified in the entire region, which has resulted in record recovery. Speaking to media persons on the occasion, Dera Zone Commissioner Inland Revenue Irfan Aziz said that these funds were withdrawn from banks under Section

140 of the Income Tax Ordinance 2001.

He said the money was owed for a long time. Taxpayers were given many opportunities but they did not follow the legal orders. As a result, the department was forced to attach their bank accounts and deposit the funds in the national treasury.

According to official data, in the last few weeks, Dera Zone has deposited Rs 48 million in the national kitty through bank account attachments. Malik Asfandyar Khan, Assistant Commissioner, Unit 37, Dera Ismail Khan, deposited Rs 17 million through bank account attachment. Wasimullah Khattak, Assistant Commissioner, Unit 38 Tank and Suburbs, deposited Rs 2.7 million through bank account attachment.

Iqbal Noor Khattak, Assistant Commissioner, Unit 45, Kohat, deposited Rs26 million through bank account

attachment. Javed Iqbal, Inland Revenue Officer, Unit 46, Hangu, deposited Rs7.9 million through bank account attachment. Additional Commissioner Inland Revenue Sultan Muhammad Nawaz Nasir while talking to media persons said that legal action could be taken against the defaulters in various ways including attachment of bank account, auction of defaulters' assets and non-payment of defaulters' detention. - APP

Over 5.55m people vaccinated in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD: Over 5.55 million (5,559,248) people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district.

District Health Officer Dr. Ataul Mun'im said on Tuesday 3,491,215 citizens were injected first dose while 1,999,686 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He said that 38,463 health workers were also given first dose while 29,884 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. - APP

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Briefs

Movement Park to replace trees removed along Expressway

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority has removed a plethora of overgrown paper mulberry trees around the flag monument leaving the greenbelt denuded.

The removed tree cover would be replaced by a "Movement Park" and massive plantation aimed at highlighting the struggle of the nation's creation and the world's largest human migration in recorded history. Director Environment CDA Irfan Niazi told APP that the paper mulberry trees being cut would be replaced by some 10,000 saplings of native and fast-growing species of plants.

He said there would be murals highlighting the historic migration made during the partition of the sub-continent in 1947.

The purpose of developing such an artistic monument was to attract the Pakistani youth to understand their history of creation as the separate Muslim state of the sub-continent, he added. Responding to a question, he said the massive plantation of some 10,000 saplings would make the entire flag monument spot fully green and thriving with nature and would also satiate the demands of environmentalists calling to revive the removed trees. Replying to another query, he said there were only paper mulberry trees that were felled as they created massive pollen leading to respiratory diseases and health complications for the local people.

Huma Qureshi, a climate activist was of the view that removing massive trees in the name of invasive paper mulberry trees was deplorable as only a few trees were being planted in lieu of those being chopped down by the CDA. - APP

PAL, PACP to unveil new book on Jan 6

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in collaboration with Performing Arts Circle Pakistan (PACP) would organize a new book launching ceremony titled "Zinda Lamhaat" (A Soldier's Memories) on January 6.

A statement said that the book was written by Brigadier (r) Nauman Ul Haque Farrukh's. Minister for Science and Technology Senator Shibli Faraz is likely to preside over the launching ceremony. Eminent scholars Director General National Language Promotion Department Prof. Dr. Rauf Parek and Chairman PAL Dr. Yousaf Khushk would also be present as guests of honor. The event would be held at the Conference Hall of Academy. The book titled "Zinda Lamhaat - A Soldier's Memories", is a collection of light-hearted memories & incidents from Brigadier (r) Nauman Ul Haque Farrukh's career of over 40 years with the Pakistan army. Prof. Munir Fayaz, Ayesha Masood Malak, Hameed Qaiser, and Dr. Fakhra Nasreen will speak on various aspects of the book.

Schools timing adjusted to ensure smooth traffic

ISLAMABAD: District Administration Islamabad has approved the recommendation of the Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) and adjusted the schools' timing to ensure smooth traffic flow in the city especially during peak hours. According to an official notification, the traffic congestion on roads has increased manifold due to ongoing construction work on roads at various points in ICT causing a nuisance, frequent accidents and road blockage.

In order to reduce peak hour traffic congestion and facilitate smooth flow of traffic following blocks have been made sector-wise to streamline the traffic accordingly as per the recommendation of the Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Rai Mazhar Iqbal. - APP

Govt to support ICCI for new industrial estate: Saleh

The government should cooperate in materialization of this important project that would create multiple benefits for the economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saleh Muhammad Khan Swati, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources assured that the government would try to cooperate with ICCI for the establishment of a new industrial estate in the Islamabad region as it would boost industrialization & investment, create more jobs and improve the regional exports. He said this while interacting with the business community during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Saleh Muhammad Khan Swati agreed with the ICCI proposal for tax at single point and low tax rates that would help in broadening the tax base and improving the tax revenue.

He also briefed the business community about the initiatives of the Ministry of Water Resources for water conservation and making Pakistan a water-efficient nation. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry highlighted the importance of a new industrial estate in the federal capital and briefed him about the efforts of ICCI to realize this project.



He said that the government should cooperate in materialization of this important project that would create multiple benefits for the economy. He said that high inflation was putting great burden on the common man and squeezing the purchasing power of consumers leading to further slow-

down in the business activities. He urged that the government should take urgent measures to control inflation. He said that SBP should also rationalize policy interest rate as high interest rate has made credit cost more expensive due to which expanding existing businesses and making

new investment has become more difficult.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI said that taxes at multiple stages were discouraging business and investment activities and urged that the government should in-

troduce a single tax regime to improve tax revenue and facilitate the growth of business activities. Ch. Muhammad Ali, Azhar ul Islam, Javed Iqbal, Hafiz Bilal Munir, Omais Khattak and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas to address the key issues of the economy.



ISLAMABAD: Women parliamentarians and members of civil society discussing early child marriages. - DNA

Regional conflicts termed an impediment to climate co-op

Poverty and lack of coping capacity to address the aforementioned issues resiliently were the key factors

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: "The conflict-ridden trajectory of the relationship between the two largest countries of the region is the biggest impediment in making meaningful progress on addressing the issue of climate change in South Asia," said Ambassador Shafiq Kakakhel. The former diplomat who is currently Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) was speaking at an event on the subject of regional cooperation on climate issues organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Tuesday.

Ambassador Kakakhel argued that India's reluctance to meaningfully engage with other South Asian countries had hindered regional cooperation on issues of mutual concern. Climate change and its impacts in the region were of critical significance because South Asia qualified as one of the most environmentally vulnerable regions, according to him. He further stated that while India and Pakistan gained

independence as two separate states, it was impossible to divide natural resources, therefore, every phenomenon related to natural resources turned into a shared consequence for the people inhabiting the whole region.

Ambassador Kakakhel was of the view that the impacts of climate change such as rising sea levels, aridity due to low precipitation, water shortages, glacial droughts, floods, heatwaves, and altered levels of monsoons, etc., had to be considered twice as damaging for South Asia because most of the economies in the region were driven by agriculture as a major source of income.

He maintained that climate change had the most severe impacts on water resource management—a sector which was inconvertibly linked with all the other sectors and was integral to ensure basic human sustenance.

Ambassador Kakakhel argued that India and Pakistan had fragile mountain ecosystems, vulnerable river basins, and long coastlines, making them both susceptible to the impacts of climate change at various levels. He added

that rising populations and rampant poverty in both countries made large segments of the population in the two countries vulnerable to the impacts of climatic changes.

Hence, according to him, poverty and lack of coping capacity to address the aforementioned issues resiliently were the key factors.

Ambassador Kakakhel said that for South Asian countries to effectively deal with the challenge, all of them needed to come up not only with viable policies but to coordinate them with regional countries to evolve a coherent regional policy on climate change. He emphasized close engagement with established regional organizations, most notably the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was doing some commendable work in the field of climate change. Ambassador Kakakhel argued that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) needed some major reconfigurations to its functional framework if it was to regain its status as a regional organization representing the interests of South Asian countries.

Zhongtong Bus to boost Pakistan's transportation

ISLAMABAD: Zhongtong Bus, the Green Line Bus Rapid Transit Service (BRTS) will boost Pakistan's green and intelligent transportation, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. The BRTS, the Karachi's first modern public transport project, began trial operation last Saturday.

Zhongtong Bus, one of the biggest and earliest listed bus manufacturers in China, has provided 80 18-meter hybrid buses for the Green Line, which can handle 135,000 passenger trips per day.

In an interview, Jeffery, Zhongtong's National Representative of Pakistan, told Gwadar Pro that with great responsibility, Zhongtong is truly grateful for the trust of the Pakistani government. The company will continue to strengthen technological innovation to boost the development of global green and intelligent transportation. Regarding public transport as one of the main driving force of reforms, Pakistan adopts Zhongtong new N-series for its first batch of new energy public transport in the country's largest city, which will undoubtedly bring epoch-making significance to the upgrading of local public transport system. - DNA

ANF seizes 2.226 tons drugs in 39 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan has seized 2.226 tons drugs and 450 liters prohibited chemical valuing US \$ 944.66 million internationally, arrested 47 culprits including two women, two Nigerians and one Afghan National. ANF also impounded 10 vehicles while conducting 39 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country. According to an ANF spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 982.155 Kg Heroin, 434.372 Kg Hashish, 135.7 Kg Opium, 65.29 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice), 605.5 Kg Morphine, 0.635 Kg Cocaine, 2.8 Kg Amphetamine, 450 Liters Acetic Anhydride and 110 Intoxicated Tablets. ANF Balochistan recovered 966.3 Kg drugs, 450 Liters Prohibited Chemical and 110 Intoxicated Tablets in five operations while arrested five accused and seized two vehicles. The seized drugs comprised of 340 Kg Heroin, 20.8 Kg Hashish, 605.5 Kg Morphine, 450 Liters Acetic Anhydride and 110 Intoxicated Tablets.

ANF Punjab recovered 61.879 Kg drugs in seven operations while arrested five accused including one Nigerian National. The seized drugs comprised of 37.331 Kg Heroin, 0.513 Kg Hashish, 23.400 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice) , 0.635 Kg Cocaine and a Pistol 30 Bore with 11 Rounds.

ANF KPK recovered 148.9 Kg drugs in nine operations while arrested six accused including an Afghan National and seized two vehicles. The seized drugs comprised of 32.1 Kg Heroin, 77.9 Kg Hashish, 36.1 Kg Opium and 2.800 Kg Amphetamine. ANF Sindh recovered 938.614 Kg drugs in eight operations while arrested 13 accused and seized two vehicles. - DNA

UBG intensifies campaign for FPCCI election

ISLAMABAD: The United Business Group (UBG), the largest alliance of chambers and associations in the country, on Tuesday launched aggressive final round of campaign to muster up support of voters in the forthcoming annual election of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

UBG Chairman and veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik while chairing the core committee meeting to review the progress of election campaign said 90 percent voters from Punjab, Sindh and Kyber Pakhtoonkwa have announced publicly their full pledged support to our panel. He said as a result of two successful rounds of nationwide campaign one of UBG candidate Mohsin Maqbool Sh eleted unopposed as Vice President from Sindh which speaks of the overwhelming popularity of the group.

Presidential candidate Dr Nouman Idris Butt said UBG would sweep election as major chunk of chambers and affiliated associations had reposed full confidence in prudent policies of UBG under the leadership of patron in chief SM Muneer and Iftikhar Ali Malik across the country. He said if voted to power he would take all stakeholders into confidence while framing proposals and recommendations for submission to government.

He announced that after coming into power, he would hold two convention of all chambers and affiliated associations to address their problems mainly aimed at boosting economic activities.

All other candidates for Vice President seats also briefed the meeting about the outcome of their individual efforts and personal campaign.

Iftikhar Ali Malik while concluding expressed his utter satisfaction over the pace of successful campaign and vowed to continue to serve business community for accelerating the economic activities in the country. - APP

IRSA releases 32758 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Tuesday released 32758 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 32562 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1429.83 feet, which was 50.83 feet higher than its dead level 1392 feet.

Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17300 and 10000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1119.35 feet, which was 69.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded a 5714 and 4000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 12255 , 27592 and 22175 cusecs respectively.

Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 3800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 5944 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP

Bazeecha workshop to start next week

ISLAMABAD: Four-day kids winter Bazeecha workshop will be held at Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts from January 3-6.

Amina Shah, director of Hunerkada, said Bazeecha workshop was made a permanent feature and continue throughout the year given the interest and enthusiasm of children and parents.

She said that most of the teachers were below the age of 20.

"Hunerkada is one of the oldest art institute that offers degree and short-term courses in Fine Arts and Design, and it has produced over 300 graduates in last decade, she said."

It has also trained more than 3,000 young enthusiasts in its short courses, she added. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs meeting of the Federal Cabinet. - DNA

The year ahead for Europe

THE recent barrage of threats from Vladimir Putin is no longer solely to do with Ukraine. Russia's president has steadily broadened the scope of his demands to encompass defence and security arrangements in Europe as a whole. Even if current tensions on Ukraine's borders do not ultimately result in open conflict, this deliberate escalation bodes ill for 2022. What Putin wants, in effect, is to turn the clock back to the 1990s, before former Warsaw Pact countries such as Poland and ex-Soviet republics such as Estonia joined Nato. If he had his way, he would probably reconstitute the Soviet Union, whose demise he mourns. This bitter old KGB spy never accepted cold war defeat. Yet by deploying an estimated 100,000 troops to Ukraine's frontiers and maintaining a verbal bombardment, Putin has made clear he will not quickly relax the pressure on Europe's leaders. For Washington, this is a geopolitical puzzle. For Europeans, a hostile, angry Russia is an immediate, menacing danger lurking on their doorstep. Sensing US weakness, eastern European countries in particular are alarmed by President Joe Biden's statement that the US is ready to address "Russia's concerns relative to Nato" – and by Putin's aggressive demand last week for "immediate" concessions. The broader worry for 2022 is that, following the chaotic Afghanistan withdrawal, US security guarantees cannot be trusted. Having followed Biden in abandoning Afghanistan, European Nato members can hardly complain if, as aid agencies predict, they face a big new wave of Afghan refugees this winter. This would again highlight the EU's collective failure to agree a comprehensive, humane migration policy – and will be exploited by the French far right. Another failure, the extraordinary absence of a coordinated European response to the Omicron variant as countries impose different, contradictory and often deeply unpopular, draconian restrictions, could help tip how France votes. As with Boris Johnson, the Covid bug, not the machinations of Russia, China and the US, may yet be Macron's and Europe's undoing.

A personal tribute to Germany

Irfan Shahzad Takalvi



Recent developments indicate that Germany remains one of the most prominent development partners for Pakistan. Be it technical cooperation or assistance for health and education – particularly that of girls and women – Germany is visible among top players. Good to see that Climate Change and its wide-ranging impacts are becoming an important area of cooperation between the two sides. Being attached with policy research and academics, I must mention constructive contribution that German political foundations are rendering for academic discourses and raising awareness on critical issues confronting Pakistan, internally and externally

AS the year coming to close is also marking the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Germany, I feel it as my duty to express my personal gratitude to Germany. This gratitude has a personal touch, because I am a direct beneficiary of German Development Cooperation with Pakistan. A decade and a half ago, back in early to mid 2007, I was among a group of young Asian and African journalists selected for and successfully completing a professional training course in Berlin. This wonderful period of less than three months' stay in the German capital has been, and would always remain, an unforgettable part of my life.

The training was on 'Economic and Financial Reporting.' Although my career in the years that followed was oriented more towards policy and academic research, it was this very course that broadened my horizons and prepared me for contributions in my chosen field. The fact that tutors came from world's renowned institutions and news outlets made it once-in-a-lifetime learning and grooming opportunity.

While the resident course was for a short period of less than three months, a continuation of it was online six month course on 'Financial Journalism', and it also involved a trip to New York as well as a short course at prestigious Columbia University – moreover, above all, close interaction with world famous Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz. Of course many other Pakistani and international young journalists / media contributors have benefitted from this opportunity that the Germany offered to them, but I consider it particularly a life-transforming gift for me.

Among many other explorations, visits to the European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt and the headquarters of Transparency International would always stand as noted accomplishments of my professional career so far. For months and perhaps years after my return, I have been imagining myself taking a stroll in the Tier Garten, driving along the mighty Rhine or just snapping a click from atop Reichstag's glass dome. And yes, who can forget that Germany has a Lore-Lei of its own – just as Pakistan has one in Balochistan.

It indeed was educative to come across hardworking, dedicated, professional Germans. However, in terms of people-to-people interactions the great lesson to learn for respect for diversity. Many of my long-standing friendships with people of Middle Eastern, Central Asian and East Asian origin were initiated in Germany. The Deutschland was my first win-

dow to Africa as well. And it all was not without a big regret, too, I failed to learn German. That entirely was my failure.

In nutshell, the opportunity that Germany provided me in very initial years of my career as a media contributor and policy researcher provided me with much needed base, and transformed my personal landscape for better, in a big way.

While writing this piece, I have just had a look at some of the latest figures and data. Pak-German trade has been around \$ 2.5 to \$ 3 billion per annum in recent years, which makes Germany one of the largest trading partners for Pakistan. A more important dimension to note is that remittances of overseas Pakistanis living and working in Germany have increased significantly in Past two to three years, having crossed \$400 million mark in the fiscal year 2020-21.

Recent developments indicate that Germany remains one of the most prominent development partners for Pakistan. Be it technical cooperation or assistance for health and education – particularly that of girls and women – Germany is visible among top players. Good to see that Climate Change and its wide-ranging impacts are becoming an important area of cooperation between the two sides. Being attached with policy research and academics, I must mention constructive contribution that German political foundations are rendering for academic discourses and raising awareness on critical issues confronting Pakistan, internally and externally.

Some events have been held to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Pak-German ties, but I do feel that the occasion did not get the attention it deserved. Part of it may be attributed to COVID-19 restrictions. Particularly on the Pakistani side, this one of the most important international partnerships for my country – must have been highlighted rather more.

German envoys including the current one are seemingly and reportedly quite active in Islamabad. I tried to arrange a talk with German ambassador on the 70th anniversary from the platform of my new institution but it somehow did not get through, perhaps due to weaknesses on communication on my side. Let us hope that Pak-German ties grow from strength to strength, for a win-win outcome, for the two states and the two people.

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A troublesome thorn in the Taliban's side

Luke Coffey

The NRF is also aware how important Tajikistan is to advance its cause. A political office of the NRF has been opened in Dushanbe. Although it has not been confirmed publicly, a limited and unofficial helicopter air bridge is believed to have been established between Tajikistan and Panjshir

THE Taliban are quickly learning that it is easier to fight an insurgency than it is to govern a country. There are plenty of examples – the complete breakdown in the Afghan healthcare system, Daesh's continued attacks against innocent civilians, and the food shortages being felt by millions are only a few. However, the Taliban have recently showed another example of incompetence by mistakenly transferring \$800,000 to the Afghan Embassy in Tajikistan. Soon after the fall of Kabul, the same embassy refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Taliban regime. Once the mistaken wire transfer was noticed by the Taliban, the group quickly requested that the embassy return the money to Kabul. Unsurprisingly, this has not happened. The head of the opposition-run embassy, Zahir Aghbar, has said that the funds will be used to pay the salaries of embassy staff. It is noteworthy that the Taliban mistakenly sent such a large sum of money to the embassy. For

many reasons, Tajikistan, and the pro-opposition Afghan Embassy there, are becoming a thorn in the Taliban's side. Of all the Central Asian countries, Tajikistan has been the most critical of the Taliban and the most supportive of the ethnic Tajik community in Afghanistan. Dushanbe has also given tacit support to the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan. This opposition force emerged in the Panjshir Valley in the wake of the Taliban's takeover in August.

The NRF is led by the capable and astute Ahmad Massoud, the son of the former resistance commander Ahmad Shah Masoud, who fought against Soviet forces and the Taliban in the 1980s and 1990s. Although the NRF is largely ethnically Tajik, the group says that it supports Afghans of all ethnicities against Taliban oppression.

While neighboring countries such as Uzbekistan have gone out of their way to court the new rulers in Kabul, Tajikistan has taken a different approach to the Taliban-led government. For Tajikistan, it is a simple matter of geography. Of all the countries in Central Asia, Tajikistan shares the longest land border with Afghanistan. In many places, this border is remote and unmonitored. There has been a history of extremist groups emerging from the region to threaten Tajikistan's security. Tajik President Emomali Rahmon recently announced: "Due to the unstable situation in the region I once again remind the people of Tajikistan that we must be ready to protect the peace and stability that have been achieved at a high price." He has acted swiftly.

Soon after the Taliban takeover, Tajikistan conducted snap military exercises, which included 130,000 troops from its military reserve and 100,000 soldiers from the active duty force. In addition, at least 20,000 soldiers from the country's reserve force have been deployed to the border with Afghanistan since September. Tajikistan's security concerns are not unfounded. It is obvious that the Taliban will be suspicious of Tajikistan's support to the NRF. Many of the Taliban's older leaders will remember that Tajikistan played such an important role in the 1990s support-

ing the Northern Alliance, the NRF's predecessor. It has been reported that the Taliban have handed control of the Tajik-Afghan border to Ansarullah and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Ansarullah is made up of Tajik extremists with the stated goal of overthrowing the country's legitimate government. Ansarullah fighters who received their training in Iraq and Syria are now believed to be trying to infiltrate Central Asia. In a twist of geopolitical irony, the Taliban have also armed them with US-made equipment and weapons.

The NRF is also aware how important Tajikistan is to advance its cause. A political office of the NRF has been opened in Dushanbe. Although it has not been confirmed publicly, a limited and unofficial helicopter air bridge is believed to have been established between Tajikistan and Panjshir. Of course, the harsh Afghan winter has prevented the resistance from launching any major attacks against the Taliban. However, if the opportunity presents itself in the warmer months, the NRF will probably try expanding its territorial control to the north in the Afghan provinces of Badakhshan, Takhar and possibly Baghlan. These provinces have a sizable number of Afghan Tajiks and would be more welcoming to the NRF, and control of the areas could create an important land bridge with Tajikistan.

There is no doubt that Tajikistan faces tremendous pressure from Russia and China when it comes to the situation in Afghanistan, but Dushanbe is unlikely to sit by idly while terrorist groups such as Ansarullah mobilize along its border. Also, as "buyer's remorse" with the Taliban becomes apparent in Moscow, it is possible that Russia could use Tajikistan to hedge its bets against the militants. So instead of preventing Tajik opposition to the Taliban and support for the NRF, Moscow is likely to turn a blind eye to Dushanbe's actions in order to see how things play out in Afghanistan. As the situation there continues to deteriorate, the effects will be felt across the region. How Tajikistan acts in the coming months could be crucial to the future and the viability of the anti-Taliban resistance in Afghanistan.

Keep a close eye on Tajikistan.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Digitizing processes

THE initiative of the Mines and Minerals Department of the Government of Punjab to digitise the mining sector to encourage growth and promote worker welfare was certainly needed. The profession is incredibly risky in and of itself and when factoring in the lack of safety measures, equipment and training, the condition of the mining industry becomes a matter of grave concern. If however, the ultimate objective is to create safe working conditions and lower the frequency of fatal mining disasters, more improvements must be sought outside of digitisation.

According to the concerned department, the process of inspection, royalty monitoring, IT integration, e-filing and the implementation of the Human Resource Management Information System are the main points of focus of the initiative. It further promises to protect worker interests by improving hospital services through digitisation. There is no doubt that these are the right steps to take by the government, but in the later stages of revamping the mining industry, Such initiatives can be taken once the bare minimum of providing a safe environment for workers is achieved. The primary objective should be to prevent the countless life-threatening incidents that occur on a regular basis in regions like Balochistan and take the lives of an average of 200 miners each year, according to the Pakistan Labour Federation.

The ingestion of toxic gasses released in mines, collapses, explosions and even suffocation are common occurrences. It is alarming that basic safety measures are not taken or endorsed in the industry and little is done institutionally to improve the situation. Digitisation will surely make the process smoother but what is required is the utilisation of modern technology and equipment in a manner the miner labour union sees fit. Only after this is done successfully will the digitisation of routine processes and healthcare benefits make more sense.

Desmond Tutu: World has lost a moral beacon

Shuaib Manjra

Tutu was intersectional in his quest for a just society, expressing the spirit of Ubuntu as, "my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together". His quest for a common humanity was loudly expressed in the face of xenophobic violence that gripped South Africa, or as a vocal advocate for LGBTIQ rights, or as a supporter of the ordination of women priests. A Nobel Laureate in 1984, this deserved award afforded Tutu an international platform – one he was unafraid to use to address many burning issues

HE demonstrated consistency and bravery in the face of repression and injustice, whether in apartheid South Africa, Palestine, or Iraq. Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, who passed away on December 26, 2021 at the age of 90, served as South Africa's moral beacon. Small in stature, his giant personage was a prophetic voice who courageously spoke truth to power, with an admixture of humour, humanity and humility; love, respect, and tenderness. Tutu's anger did manifest when speaking out against the most egregious acts that demanded no less. His position ensured that political actors remained faithful to the moral and ethical, and true to the values South Africa's liberation movement once espoused.

His voice was a constant presence on South Africa's landscape, first as a strident critic of the Apartheid regime; then appointed by Nelson Mandela to head the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as the country transitioned towards an inclusive society grappling with an ugly past; and then as an unflinching critic of the post-apartheid African National Congress (ANC) government, when it became mired in AIDS denialism, corruption, and a failure to deliver on its promises to the poor. Tutu was enraged when the government he fought for refused a visa to his close friend, the Dalai Lama, in deference to China's growing influence in the region. He then described the ANC as "worse than apartheid ... and that one day we will pray for its downfall". Mandela, a friend of Tutu, described him as "sometimes strident, often tender, never afraid, and seldom without humour; his voice will always be the voice of the voiceless".

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dress many burning issues.

A vociferous critic of the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, Tutu called for the US' George W Bush and UK's Tony Blair to face charges in the International Criminal Court in The Hague, as Asian and African leaders were forced to. He even withdrew from a conference in South Africa rather than share a platform with Blair.

"If it is acceptable for leaders to take drastic action on the basis of a lie, without an acknowledgement or an apology when they are found out, what should we teach our children?", Tutu wrote in an op-ed, and presciently added that the war "has destabilised and polarised the world to a greater extent than any other conflict in history".

He raised his voice for Palestine when it wasn't popular to do so. Speaking at the tenth international Israeli Apartheid Week, Tutu castigated those who called for neutrality in any struggle: "Those who turn a blind eye to injustice actually perpetuate injustice. If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor". He stared down the pro-Israel lobby who attempted to tarnish him as an anti-Semite and strongly supported the BDS campaign while instilling a sense of realism to advocates for Palestine: "your struggle will be harder than ours, as Israel's apartheid is even worse than South Africa's. We never had F-16s bomb our Bantustans killing hundreds of our children. Remember that."

Tutu also humanised the enemy. He famously said: "Peace comes when you talk to the guy you most hate. And that's where the courage of a leader comes, because when you sit down with your enemy, you as a leader must already have very considerable confidence from your own constituency." There was an incident where a conspirator with apartheid was being lynched and faced certain death. Tutu waded in and saved his life.

As described by his Foundation, "Tutu spoke out against illegal arms deals, respect for the rule of law, HIV/Aids, Tibet, China, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and vociferously campaigned for gentler stewardship of the Earth, and against the coming ravages of climate change, a very rare example of how human survival rests on our ubuntu-spirited ability to cooperate and work together". The South African Council of Churches or the Anglican Church will never be the same after Tutu. His abiding contribution was the notion of a theology of liberation in the broadest sense. Whilst the Apartheid regime was buttressed by the conservative Calvinist NGK Church, Tutu and other clerics challenged their reading of the bible, shaking the foundational basis of Apartheid and other forms of discrimination. It also inspired an Islamic theology of liberation in South Africa.

He left a lasting legacy in the formation of the interfaith movement, which saw a broad coalition of religious leaders unite in the struggle against apartheid.

Dr Rashied Omar, Imam of the Claremont Main Road Mosque, and a leading figure in South Africa's interreligious solidarity movement wrote: "South Africa has a unique and unparalleled interfaith and interreligious solidarity movement, thanks in large measure to the wise leadership and sterling contributions of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu."

"Under [his leadership], St. George's Cathedral emerged as a centre for interfaith mobilisation against apartheid in the city of Cape Town. People from all faiths or none, found inspiration and comfort in their struggle against the evil and oppressive system of apartheid in the Cathedral".

South Africa has lost one of its last great figures – a moral compass, a fearless warrior, an internationalist, an indomitable spirit, a deeply spiritual being with a love for humanity, with an infectious laughter and absence of malice. He was an ardent cricket lover who frequented the Newland Stadium in Cape Town during international matches. He leaves behind his pillar of strength and life partner, Ma Ma Nomalisa Leah Tutu, and four children.

– Courtesy: TRT World

