

Sanahart

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

The EU repeatedly challenged by power politics in 2021

Detailed News On Page-07

Pakistan highly values its ties with the US

Detailed News On Page-08



Lengthy Covid break did Man Utd no favours

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Bilawal hosted by UAE minister

DNA



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, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and offered dua.

Hamza slams govt over food shortage

DNA



lim League-Nawaz member and Opposition Punjab

sembly 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



Industries and Produc tion Khusro 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

Inside.

percent more than last year.

Pakistani overseas' role vital in country's development - Page 02

Equipping youth with digital skills need of hour: Amin - Page 03

Govt to support ICCI for new industrial estate: Saleh

- Page 04 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

Army ready to play its part in NSP

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

day 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,

Continued on Page 06

JIT to probe RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army on Tues- Nazim Jokhiyo murder case

A sister publication of **CENTRELINE & DNA News Agency**



Ansar Bhatti

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

Continued on Page 06



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 Pakistan Mus-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

Continued on Page 06

'No taxes on consumer goods'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Finance Spokesperson Muzzammil 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

Continued on Page 06



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

China slams

US over space

station scare

Zhao Lijian called

on the US to act

responsibly in space

The

Foreign

putting

and another time in October.

a press conference.

astronauts at risk. Chinese space station

Tiangong had to maneuver to avoid col-

liding 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 ear-

lier this month. The Chinese station was

forced to move two times, once in July

The note said the incidents "constitut-

ed dangers to the life or health of astro-

nauts aboard the China Space Station."

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao

Lijian called on the US to act responsi-

bly in space. "The US... ignores its ob-

ligations under international treaties.

posing a serious threat to the lives and

safety of astronauts," Lijian said during

News Desk

Ministry said on

Tuesday that the

United States had

ignored obligations

under outer space

BEIJING:

Chinese

treaties,

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

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.

Continued on Page 06

Turkey, Qatar await green light to run airports

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

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

Continued on Page 06

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

Afghan women

protest against

target killings

News Desk

KABUL: A crowd of women marched

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.

Continued on Page 06

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 strength-

ening 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

tered 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.

Continued on Page 06

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

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 Pakistanis 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-

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Eminent poets and writers

of the country and a large number of lite-

rati of the twin cities attended the one-day

Parveen Shakir Urdu Literature Festival or-

ganized by the Parveen Shakir Trust (PST)

on Tuesday at a local hotel and listened to

their favourite poets and writers and attend-

ed a number of debates on different literary

The event featured stars of literary galaxy

Amjad Islam Amjad, Asghar Nadeem Sayy-

id, Mustansar Hussain Tarar, Prof Fateh

Muhammad Malik, Dr Tahira Iqbal, Dr Na-

jeeba 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

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

One important highlight of the event was

arrival of the Turkish scholar and writer Dr

Davut Sahbaz all the way from Turkey to Is-

lamabad to receive his award Nayyir Adabi

Award (along with Rs100,000) for his book

on Mazharul Islam (Life, Style and a Select-

chilly weather of Islamabad.

their endeavours.

ed Stories).

subjects.



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 patron-

izing and supporting the emerging writers

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

She also paid rich compliments to the life-

time member of the PST Mazharul Islam,

an acclaimed short story writer of the coun-

try for creatively organizing the event, de-

signing the awards and inspiring the team

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 poet-

Mian Atta Rabbani Sada Bahaar Award

(along with Rs 100,000) was given to

Mustansar Hussain Tarar for his novel

Nayyir Adbi Award (Rs 100,000) was given

Younas Sethi Wafa Award (along with Rs

50,000) was given to Asghar Nadeem Sayy-

id for his novel "Tooti Hui Tanab," while

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Award (Rs 50,000) was

given to Shaheen Abbas for his book "Galy-

to the Turkish writer Dr Davut Sahbaz.

26 years without fail, she said.

to continue to work for this cause.

ry, play writing and travelogues.

Khas-o-Khashak-e-Zamanav.

on Galyon."

Awards with cash prizes

given to poets, writers

Parveen Shakir Urdu Festival features

eminent poets, writers, holds thought-

provoking literary sessions

ment has fulfilled its promise of giving the voting right to overseas Pakistanis owing to 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.

1100 heart surgeries performed in PIC during

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC) performed more than 1100 heart surgeries and more than 5000 angiographies and angioplasties during one year.

one year

According to yearly performance report of PIC issued on Tuesday, more than 29000 patients visited Out Patient Department of the hospital for consultation while 6000 patients were provided emergency treatment during the same period.

According to the press release, the spokesman for PIC said that surgical procedures of about 200 children were also performed in the hospital during last year.

He told that 136 children suffering from Ventricular Septum Defects were provided medical help and 6000 children were provided treatment and consultation in emergency department of PIC besides provision of medical assistance to 7000 As many as, 20 open heart surgeries, 80 angiographies and angioplasties of Afghans were performed while 684 Afghan nationals were provided help. Free treatment was also provided to 61 Afghans in emergency department of PIC. It is worth mentioning that PIC was inaugurated by Prime

KSRelief distributes winter kits

Minister, Imran Khan on

December 16, 2020. - APP

ISLAMABAD: King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) in collabernment has completed a 140 of the Income Tax Ordi-

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

Dr. Athar Mehboob said that work on three UAF & IUB joint soybean pro-

jects 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

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%

Dr. Muhammad Ali Raza said that the National Center for Intercropping Technology has been set uat IUB in collaboration with Sichuan Agriculture University, China that would bring the



souvenir to the Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan 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

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.

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: It is a matter of grave concern that the country is spending as many as many \$ 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. Iqrar 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 joints soybean projects.

Dr. Iqrar 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-

benefits of intercropping system to the farmers. They also visited the difbillion, Rs. 4 billion has been secured ferent laboratories.

FBR Dera zone recovers Rs 48 mln tax arrears

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

of Revenue (FBR) DI Khan Zone, in a major operation,

oration with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and provincial govproject to distribute 29,000 winter kits among poor and deserving people living in Balochistan.

The KSRelief has also distributed around 10,000 winter kits in the earthquake-affected area Harnai and a total of 2100 kits were distributed to North Waziristan IDPs at the Bakakhail TDP Camp, said a news release. Each package comprises 2 Quilts, men's and women's shawls, 10 pairs of socks for men women and children, 4 Children Cap, 4 Children Maflars and 4 men's and women's warmers for needy families living in the colder regions of the country. - **DNA**

PESHAWAR: Federal Board nance 2001.

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 oper-

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

attachment. Javed Igbal. 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.

Health Officer District 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

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.

Balochistan Governor Syed Zahoor 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. Balochistan Governor

Syed Zahoor 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 Igbal Javed, Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Capt. Jamil Ahmed Baloch, DG, GDA Mujeeb Qambrani, 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 report12 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

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

vations 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 misabout the efficacy of the vaccine circulating among some healthcare workers and the general population is slowing down the vaccination pro-

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 COV-

Islamabad POST

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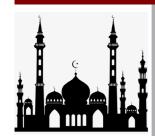
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Namaz Timings

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Z	ohr	12:09 pm
A	sr	03:30 pm
N	Iaghrib	$05{:}07~\mathrm{pm}$
Is	sha	06:37 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines......8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police)15				
Bomb Disposal15				
Fire Services Rawalpindi/				
Islamabad1122 & 16				
Emergency Ambulance1122				
& Rescue Services.4451122				
Motorway Police9266044				
Motorway Police9270601-20				
Women Police Stations				
Islamabad9222596				
Rawalpindi9270601-20				

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Edhi Ambulance115
PIAFlightInfo114
PIA Cargo9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA9281092



Hospitals

CMH	5611111
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa Internatio	nal.4603666



Denartments

Departments				
CDA	9221334-43			
CDA	9208301-04			
Met Office	9250360-6			
RDA	5555864			
TMA	5770886			
Cantonment B	oard 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-12,9266316 Wapda Islamabad....9217579 Wapda Rawalpindi 111-309-309

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
RawalTown	5773343

emerging where

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Hindu vigilante

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many parts of

India & burnt

groups

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....0331-5022125

Equipping youth with digital skills need of hour: Amin

The agreement was signed by CEO Ignite Asim Shahryar Husain and Rector Virtual University of Pakistan Arshad Saleem Bhatti

for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque has said that equipping the youth with digital skills is the need of the hour. He expressed these views while addressing the Agreement Signing Ceremony between Ignite and the Virtual University of Pakistan for the launch of DigiSkills Program, said a news release.

The agreement was signed by CEO Ignite Asim Shahryar Husain and Rector Virtual University of Pakistan Arshad Saleem Bhatti. The minister said Pakistan is the 4th fastest growing country in terms of freelancers and their earnings in the world. He said youths are assets and the Ministry of IT & Telecom is taking steps for the development of youth. The minister appreciated the DigiSkills results, saying that DigiSkills has played a commendable role in equipping emerging and existing freelancers with knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques necessary to seize the opportunities available internationally in online freelancing marketplaces.

About IT exports, he said that



strong measures are being taken to increase IT exports. He said

that the empowerment of women is an important motto of the Ministry of IT. IT Minister also gave directions for the completion of all projects in a transparent manner and on time.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary IT Dr Sohail Rajput said that after the success of the first phase of DigiSkills, the second phase will prove an important milestone.

Earlier, Rector Virtual University Dr Arshad Saleem Bhatti said that in the second phase, DigiSkills is targeting to impart 1,500,000 pieces of training

Speaking on the occasion, CEO Ignite stated that the inclusion of 5 new courses and up-gradation/renewal of the existing 10 courses will equip the freelancers with the knowledge necessary to seize the opportunities available on global freelancing marketplaces and with the direct clients as well.

It is worth mentioning here that, Digiskills is Pakistan's premier online training program that has already imparted 2.2 million free-of-cost training in freelancing skills. - APP

Water **Policy** crucial

National

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Water Resources Chaudhry Moonis Elahi Tuesday chaired the second meeting of the Steering Committee of National Water Policy at the Ministry of Water Resources.

The meeting was attended by the Federal Secretaries of MoWR, PD&SI, representatives of Finance Division, M/O NFS&R, and the provincial secretaries of Irrigation and Agriculture departments of the government of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan as well as Representatives of governments of AJK and Gilgit Baltistan also attended the meeting. Besides, representatives of WAPDA, Surveyor General of Pakistan, IRSA, Flood Commission and the Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters also attended, said a press release here.

Moonis Elahi highlighted the importance of water sector and underscored the importance of implementation of the National Water Policy for achieving economic development goals of the country and well being of the people of Pakistan.

The Minister for Water Resources reviewed the status of concurrence on Implementation Framework of NWP presented in the first meeting of the Steering Committee held in September 2021. While appreciating the painstaking efforts made by the Ministry in formulating the Implementation Framework, he urged the stakeholders to expedite furnishing the concurrence of the respective stakeholders within two weeks. - APP



RAWALPINDI: Brigadier Anjum Saeed Khan ®, CEO AC&R signs MoU of strategic partnership at Headquarters NRTC, Haripur with Sohail Anjum, GM S&M. – DNA

New federal ombudsman takes charge

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman, Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi has said that our mandate is to redress grievances of the general public against maladministration by the government agencies. He was addressing the officers and staff of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat after taking oath as the Federal Ombudsman the other day. He urged the officers and staff of Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat to redouble their efforts for the service of common citizen. He said that it is a great opportunity for the employees to alleviate the problems of aggrieved citizens, therefore, everyone in this secretariat discharge his duties with utmost zeal and dedication. He said that awareness campaign on the role of Wafaqi Mohtasib would be extended to far flung areas.

While appreciating the efforts of his predecessors, he said that further initiatives will be taken to address the systemic issues and reports prepared by the committees constituted earlier for the purposes and would be pursued for implementation by the government agencies concerned. He also stated that the Implementation Wing of the Wafaqi Mohtasib would be strengthened to ensure provision of due relief to the complainants. He also underscored the need for adhering to merit and fair play. He also constituted various committees for the purpose of better managing the affairs of the Wafaqi Mohtasib secretariat. Moreover, he appointed Grievance Commissioners for women employees and children. - DNA

Quran Khawani held for mother of Amir Dogar

ISLAMABAD: The Quran Khawani for the salvation of the departed soul of mother of Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Malik Amir Dogar held here at the Parliament House. Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser and Senate Deputy Chairman Mirza Muhammad Afridi, besides a large number of federal ministers, senators, members of the national assembly and senior officials from both the houses attended the Quran Khawani. The participants of the Quran Khawani expressed their heartfelt grief and sorrow over the sad demise of Amir Dogar's mother. They prayed Almighty Allah to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage and fortitude to Amir Dogar and other members of the family to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity. - APP

IIUI, University of Wah,

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A memorandum of Agreement between International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIU), University of Wah and COM-SATS was signed here at the new campus of IIUI on Tuesday under which it has been agreed that a consortium shall be made to establish a Business Incubation Centre (BIC) at University of Wah (UW). The IIU will be providing a lead consultancy as part of the consortium in the tune of over Rs. 2.3 million for the development and

capacity building of BIC at University of Wah. In the signing ceremony at IIU's new campus, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, President IIUI, Dr. Jameel un Nabi, Vice Chancellor UW and Dr. Sajid Madni, Registrar COMSATS signed the agreement. It was also attended by Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed, Vice President Research and Enterprise and Director BIC-IIUI, Engr. Muhammad Ahsen Mirza. In this consortium, IIUI shall provide support and services as a lead partner to the University of Wah for

capacity building. The IIUI's

Directorate of Research and Enterprise through its two components BIC and ORIC shall guide and support the University of Wah for establishment of BIC. The IIU shall also support UW in Post establishment Capacity building, Trainings of staff and startups through Start and Improve Your Business. COMSATS under this agreement shall provide support to the University of Wah for development of strategic and sustainability plans. COMSATS shall also support for Communications and marketing of BIC at University of Wah and Industry

/ startup connect for BIC at University of Wah. All three parties agreed to cooperate for the establishment of BIC at University

Transmission line, Rs 2,500 million for 220-KV Mastung Rs

1,300 million for 220 KV Mirpur Khas Grid Station and Rs 640

million for 500/220 KV Sialkot Substation. - DNA

of Wah sharing resources, training, capacity building and dissemination of knowledge and information. It has also been agreed to establish a collaborative entrepreneurship club for all three institutes. All three organizations agreed to conduct Entrepreneurial Workshops, mentorship sessions, business plan competitions/ hackathons as well as startup challenge/ showcasing and investor connect events.

PTI to clean sweep next elections, says Fayaz

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Prissan Chohan Tuesday said Tehreek-e-Insaf Pakistan (PTI) would clean sweep in the next general elections due to its outstanding performance and the incumbent government was making all out-efforts to provide relief to the citizens.

Talking to media persons here at the public secretariat, he said the PTI under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was endeavoring to fulfill expectations of the people.

The government had succeeded to achieve various targets set to bring the country on the path of development, he added. He said the journey of change was going on successfully with the fulfillment of promises. He said Nawaz Sharif appeared in a court in London on November 19 and tried to get asylum raising the issue of affidavit of Rana Shamim.

The minister informed that the Punjab government had achieved a historic success as it introduced important reforms to revamp the old jail system. "We are pursuing a policy of zero tolerance against corruption," he added. He informed that after taking over charge of minister for prisons he took solid steps to improve conditions of jails. Several other steps were also taken to provide relief to the pris-

NEPRA urged to raise power tariff by Rs4.33 per unit

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) will take up a request of Central Power Pur chasing Agency (CPPA) today (Wednesday) seeking raise in electricity tariff by Rs4.33 per unit. The CPPA had already submitted its request in connection with monthly fuel adjustment charges for November 2021. According to the CPPA 33.21 percent of electricity was generated from water in November, 16.26 percent from coal, 1.71 percent from furnace oil and 0.29 percent from high-speed diesel. The electricity generated from diesel in November was the most expensive at Rs27.20 per unit and the same was the case for electricity generated from furnace oil. Electricity produced from gas in November was 12.89 percent and from LNG was 14.25 percent. The electricity rate was enhanced by Rs4.74 per unit in connection with monthly fuel adjustment charges for October 2021. The federal government has decided to divide three power distribution companies of the country. Power distribution companies of Peshawar, Multan and Quetta will be split owing to their expansion by hundreds of kilometres covering huge areas. A five-member committee to be led by the federal energy minister has been set up for the purpose. Several Cabinet members have opposed the energy minister's proposal for recruiting new staff following the creation of new distribution companies. The Cabinet members were of the view that staff should also be divided along with the distribution companies. - DNA

Disruption of Christmas gatherings real face of India

Hindu vigilante groups disrupted Christmas mass in parts of India, including in Modi's core territory ahead of local elections in the coming months

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Tuesday said that the disruption of Christmas gatherings and burning of the Santa Claus effigy manifested the emerging real face of the fascists the president tweeted. Hindutva India. The president was commenting on a news report on the freezing of the bank accounts of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity (MoC) in West Bengal by the Narendra Modi government, after protests media reports. over Christmas celebrations. "The real face of fascist ing religious conversion Hindutva India is

a Santa Claus effigy chanting slogans against Xmas celebrations & religious conversions. World beware before it is too late,"

Hindu vigilante groups disrupted Christmas mass in parts of India, including in Modi's core territory ahead of local elections in the coming months, according to the They accused the MoC of lead-

> programmes under the guise of charity by offering poor Hindus and tribcommunities money, education and shelter. - DNA

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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 cam-

paign to muster up support

of voters in the forthcoming

annual election of Federa-

tion of Pakistan Chamber of

UBG Chairman and veter-

an 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 Pakhtoonk-

wa have announced publicly

their full fledged support

to our panel. He said as a

result of two successful

rounds of nationwide cam-

paign one of UBG candi-

date Mohsin Maqbool Sh

eleted unopposed as Vice

President from Sindh which

speaks of the overwhelming

Presidential candidate Dr

Nouman Idris Butt said

UBG would sweep elec-

tion 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 recommen-

dations for submission to

He announced that after

coming into power, he

would hold two convention

of all chambers and affiliat-

ed associations to address

aimed at boosting economic

All other candidates for

Vice President seats also

briefed the meeting about

the outcome of their indi-

vidual efforts and personal

Iftikhar Ali Malik while

concluding expressed his

utter satisfaction over the

pace of successful cam-

paign and vowed to contin-

ue to serve business com-

munity for accelerating

the economic activities in

IRSA releases

32758 cusecs

water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River

System Authority (IRSA)

Tuesday released 32758

cusecs water from various

rim stations with inflow of

According to the data re-leased 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

Water inflow and outflow

in the dam was recorded as

17300 and 10000 cusecs re-

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 record-

ed a 5714 and 4000 cusecs

32562 cusecs.

1392 feet.

spectively.

respectively.

the country. - APP

problems mainly

government.

their

activities.

campaign.

popularity of the group.

Commerce and Industry.

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

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 deploring 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 Lam-haat" (A Soldier's Memories) on January 6.

A statement said that the book was written by Brigadier (r) Nauman Ul Haque Minister for Farrukh's. 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



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 slowdown 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 introduce 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 is-

sues of the economy.

Zhongtong Bus to boost Pakistan's transportation

ISLAMABAD: Zhongtong Bus, the Green Line Bus Rapid Transit Service (BRTS) willboost 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 pas-

In a 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 undoubtfully bring epoch-making significance to

ISLAMABAD: Women parliamentarians and members of civil society discussing

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

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 Shafqat 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 droughtsrougths, 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 fo climate chance. 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.

ANF seizes

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, twi 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.

erations 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

2.226 tons drugs in 39 operations

ANF Punjab recovered 61.879 Kg drugs in seven op-

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

NHE 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.

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Digitizing processes

HE 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.

A personal tribute to Germany

Irfan Shahzad Takalvi



Recent developments indicate that Germany remains one of the most prominent development partners for Pakistan. Be assistance for health and education – particularly that of girls and women top players. Good to see that Climate Change and its wide-ranging impacts are becoming an important area of cooperation between the with policy research and that German political

it technical cooperation or Germany is visible among two sides. Being attached academics, I must mention constructive contribution foundations are rendering for academic discourses and raising awareness on critical issues confronting Pakistan, internally and externally

S 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 filed. 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 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 Stieglitz. 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 Lor-e 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 greats 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 window 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 limate Char ing 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

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 n 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.

- The author is CEO of Policy Pak and founder of the Eurasian Century Institute (ECI), Islamabad. He may be accessed at irfanzad@gmail.com

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

E 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 Dali 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".

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 ad-

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 real 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 Mphilo 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 Nomali-

sa Leah Tutu, and four children. - Courtesy: TRT World

Taliban's side A troublesome thorn in the

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

HE 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.

Taiikistan'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 as 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 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 terror 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

Briefs

Army ready to play its part in NSP

From Page 01 National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf said it is an umbrella document, which entails human security as well as population, health, climate, water, food, energy, and gender security. He said education has been clubbed with the economy. Dr Moeed Yusuf said the process of formulating the NSP had begun in 2014 and this document has been approved after getting input from all civil and military institutions, including the private sector. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan will launch the public version of NSP in coming days.

JIT to probe Nazim Jokhiyo...

From Page 01 He said the cabinet directed the Punjab Government to launch a massive action against smuggling and hoarding of Urea to end artificial shortage of the commodity. He expressed the belief that situation will improve in next 48 hours.

The Minister said the cabinet was briefed about the production of Urea in the country. He said the government provided gas to the fertilizer manufacturing plants to fulfill requirements of Urea and other fertilizers in the country. He said Urea is being sold at the rate of 1700 to 1900 rupees per bag, whereas its price in the international market is 10,000 rupees, which prompted profiteers to indulge in hoarding and smuggling to make money. He said we have sufficient production and stock of Urea at affordable rates.

Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said the cabinet also approved publication of tax directory of parliamentarians for the year 2019 to ensure transparency as per vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said Ex-post facto sanction was granted to a water project for the people of Gwadar. He said the cabinet approved sending of Covid related medical equipment worth 23 million rupees to Cuba.

Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said the cabinet also approved appointment of senior officer of the Information Ministry Asim Khichi as Executive Member of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority.

Education crucial for healthy...

From Page 01 successful participants of the course. He appreciated the participants for their participation and keen learning during the course. General Nadeem Raza said that NDU has experienced a rapid transformation and has lived up to its tradition of dispensing quality education in a conducive environment. He also acknowledged the efforts of NDU team for efficaciously continuing academic activities on during the challenging times of pandemic.

At the end, General Nadeem extended his felicitations to the graduating students, their parents and NDU faculty members on achieving this important milestone in the academic career.

Earlier, upon arrival at NDU, Chairman JCSC was received by President NDU.

Turkey, Qatar await green...

From Page 01 Qatari officials have said little about the details of the memorandum of understanding, refusing to say which companies were to be involved.

Afghan women protest...

From Page 01 Since the hardliners returned to power in August they have effectively banned unsanctioned protests and frequently intervene to block demonstrations against their austere brand of Islam

Australia retain Ashes after crushing humiliated England

The tourists resumed in Melbourne on 31 for four, still 51 runs behind, after a disastrous final hour on Monday against some outstanding fast bowling that left their Ashes dreams in tatters

AGENCIES

MELBOURNE: A relentless Australia spearheaded by debutant Scott Boland skittled England for an embarrassing 68 on Tuesday to win the third Test by an innings and 14 runs and retain the Ashes with two matches still to play. The tourists resumed in Melbourne on 31 for four, still 51 runs behind, after a disastrous final hour on Monday against some outstanding fast bowling that left their Ashes dreams in tatters.

Their survival rested on skipper Ioe Root, but when he fell for 28, it was just a matter of time before the rest followed. Boland, called up as injury cover, was invincible on his home ground at the MCG, taking 6-7 off four overs, equalling the record for the fastest

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Min-

ister Syed Murad Ali Shah

on Tuesday said that the

sports and education were

meant to elevate standards,

promote development and

peace. "The sports and ed-

ucation are part and parcel

and connect people of vari-

ous cultures, that's why the

United Nation recognized

Sports as an enabler for

Sustainable Development."

He said this while speak-

ing at the celebrations of

the arrival of the Queen's

Baton of the Common-

wealth Games in Pakistan

at Mazar-e-Quaid. The Chief

Minister said that the Ba-

ton carried the message

of international coopera-

five-wicket haul in 19 balls. Mitchell Starc ended with 3-29 as England's misery was complete. "It is pretty insane. Just an awesome few weeks, everything clicked and everything worked said Australian skipper Pat Cummins."Thrilled for Scott Boland. We have been relentless." Ben Stokes resumed on two

but his poor tour continued when he has clean-bowled by Starc for 11. Jonny Bairstow made five and when Root was out it was all over, with the tailenders quickly following. "It is what it is. We have come to dealing with this sort of an environment for a while now," said a dejected Root. "Credit to Australia, they blew us away. We have a lot of hard work to do now and come back hard in the next two matches."

tion and understanding for peace and prosperity. "As a

tradition, the Baton of Com-

monwealth Games carries a

goodwill message from the

Queen and the Citizens of

UK." he said and thanked

them all for their best wish-

es for international peace

He said, "I truly believe

that the sports, the arts

and physical activities have

the power to change per-

ceptions, prejudices and

behaviours, as well as to

inspire people, break down

racial and political barriers.

combat discrimination and

Mr Shah said and went on

saying that the sports was

and cooperation.

defuse conflicts."

Queen's baton of commonwealth

games handed over to CM Murad

beyond any kind of politics

and that was why it must

be widely utilized for edu-

cating the youth and incul-

cate in them the highest

Murad Ali Shah said that we

understood that the sports

and education were meant

to elevate educational and

health standards, promote

development and peace.

"The Sports and education

are part and parcel and con-

nect people of various cul-

tures that's why the United

Nation recognized sports

as an enabler for Sustaina-

ble Development," he said

adding, "We acknowledge

the contribution of sport

to promoting tolerance and

ethical standards.



respect and empowering

women and the young peo-

ple, individuals and commu-

nities." It may be noted that

the Commonwealth Games

- 2022 will be held from July

28 to August 08, 2022 at

Birmingham, UK. The CM

extended his best wishes

for the Pakistani athletes,

who would participate in

Mr Shah thanked the Or-

ganizing Committee for

choosing Karachi to cele-

brate the Relay this time.

"I would like to congratu-

late the citizens of Sindh

province and especially of

Karachi to be honored to

have this Baton amongst

us all," he said. - APP

the Games.

play at all was in doubt after four members of the England party - two support staff and two family members - tested positive for coronavirus on Monday. But all players from both

teams underwent PCR tests after stumps and returned negative results Tuesday morning with the first ball bowled on schedule. England headed to Melbourne knowing they must win to keep the five-Test series alive after heavy defeats in Brisbane and Adelaide, with Australia only needing a draw to retain the urn as holders.

And they fleetingly hauled themselves into contention on the back of a vintage bowling effort from veteran seamer James Anderson, which restricted Australia to 267 in their first innings in reply to the tourists' 185. But it was only an 82-run lead and any dreams England had of staying in the Test, or even winning it, fell apart in the face of an intense fast bowling blitz on Monday from Starc, Cummins and Boland.

In an hour of mayhem, they removed hapless openers Zak Crawley (five) and Haseeb Hameed (seven), Dawid Malan for a golden duck and nightwatchman Jack Leach (0), leaving England staring into the abyss on 31 for four after another stunning collapse. Once again, their hopes rested with Root, who resumed on 12, and star all-rounder Stokes, still 51 runs behind. Stokes has failed to fire this series but flogged Starc for four to show intent, only for the New South Welshman to respond in devastating fashion two balls later with a fuller, tighter delivery that

Nine Asian countries see benefits in BRI project

From Page 01 Professor Wang Yiwei, Director of Institute of International Affairs, Renmin University of China, said that the post-pandemic era is all about adaptation to the 'New Normal'. He said that in these challenging times, multilateralism is the only way forward, and BRI can be taken as a blueprint to advance multilateralism. He also welcomed China's Zero Coal policy, which, he maintained, will help in fighting the looming threat of Climate Change. Kalyan Raj Sharma, General Secretary of Nepal "Friends of Silk Road Club" said that China-Nepal economic rela-

tions have been further cemented since the start of BRI and the economic & social development trajectory of Nepal now depends on BRI. He said that the impetus to advance this relationship with China came after India blockaded Nepal in 2015-16. Dilip Barua, Chairman of "Bangladesh China Silk Road Forum" called for jointly countering the anti-BRI propaganda which emanates from India and Western countries. He termed BRI as an economic masterstroke of President Xi Jinping, which has improved infrastructure in Asia. Moreover, he said there is a positive perception of BRI in Bangladesh, since

benefits of this initiative. Mme. Dararat Puechmongkol, Assistant Secretary General of Thai-Chinese Culture and Economy Association said that Thailand has been increasingly cementing its relationship with China especially in the context of BRI, accruing benefits for its people.

it has started reaping the

Professor Dai Yonghong, Director of Institute of Global Governance and Area Studies, Shenzhen University said that the international environment calls for advancing green development, adapting green business practices, and promoting human development.

Shehbaz

fears more

inflation in

year 2022

From Page 01

rubber stamp in order to

meet conditions of Interna-

tional Monetary Fund (IMF).

He added that majority of public has lost hope in incum-

bent government. PML-N

president said that govern-

ment has hike price of petrol

by Rs39 in a year while prices

of medicines has seen a con-

tinuous increase in last three

vears. It merits mention

that federal government has

announced to present mini

budget on Wednesday in the National Assembly.

Speaking to a private tel-

evision channel, he said

Federal Minister for Infor-

mation and Broadcasting

Fawad Chaudhry said that

the mini budget will be pre-

sented in the National As-

sembly on Wednesday. He

said that the government

is in talks with the IMF to

secure loan, adding that the

conditions of the interna-

tional lender will be clear.

'No taxes on

Pakistan to face Sri Lanka in Asia Cup U19 semifinal

LAHORE: Pakistan will meet Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup U19 semifinal whereas India will go head-to-head against Bangladesh on December 30.

The semifinalists were confirmed following Asian Cricket Council's meeting, which was organised to deliberate over the match cancellation between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh due to two officials testing positive for Covid-19.

"It is confirmed that two officials have tested positive for Covid-19. The officials are currently safe and being treated in accordance with tournament protocols. All personnel associated with this match are undergoing testing protocols and isolating until results returned," the Asian Cricket Council said in a statement.

The abandonment meant that Bangladesh improved their run rate, which meant they would finish top of their group and face India who finished second.

Thiem to Miss Australian Open

The 28-year-old 2020 US Open champion, who has been out for six months with a wrist injury, said he now planned to start at the Cordoba Open in Argentina, which begins on January 31. "My team and I have assessed all matters and we have decided to make some changes to my initial tournament schedule... We believe this is the right decision in order to have a good return to competition," said the 28-year-old in a statement.

The Austrian, ranked 15th in the world, has already

It is worth pointing out that Pakistan U19 have delivered strong performances throughout the tournament, winning all three matches they played against India, Afghanistan, and UAE. The Boys in Green will now face Sri Lanka on December 30 to book a spot in the final of the tournament, which will be played the following day. - DNA

VIENNA: Dominic Thiem said Tuesday he would miss next month's Australian Open, delaying further his plans to rejoin after injury "to have a good return to

pulled out of the ATP Cup, which starts next week, and an exhibition event in Abu Dhabi earlier this month. Despite pushing back his return further, Thiem, who reached the 2020 Australian Open final, said his wrist was now "in optimal condition" allowing him to practice "normally with a very good intensity". The Australian Open begins in Melbourne on January 17. - APP

PCB, Sindh govt to organise Sindh Schools Cricket League in February

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting regarding promotion of cricket in Sindh was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah at Sindh Secretariat last week. The meeting was attended by Chairman Sindh Cricket Association Imran Husain, PCB Director High Performance Nadeem Khan, GM Domestic Cricket PCB Junaid Zia, Secretary Sports Department Akhtar Bhurgari, Secretary College Education Khalid Haider Shah and all the divisional commissioners

In the meeting, the PCB officials announced that the PCB is going to organize Sindh School Cricket League in the province from February next year with the cooperation of Sindh government. In the first phase, 239 matches would be played in 30 districts of the province. PCB officials added that 240 school level teams and 3850 players will be part of the Sindh School Cricket League. In the second phase, 24 matches will be played between 30 teams at divisional level. In the third phase, five matches will be played between six teams in Sindh Championship. In the meeting, PCB officials added that the kind of talent that has emerged in cricket from Sindh is remarkable and PCB will now go to the district level in search of talent hunt. - DNA

Lengthy Covid break did Man Utd no favours, says Maguire

LONDON:Harry Maguire said a 16day coronavirus break had done Manchester United no favours after they salvaged a 1-1 draw at Premier League strugglers Newcastle, leaving them seven points off the top four.

Ralf Rangnick's men needed a 71st-minute equaliser from half-time substitute EdinsonCavani after Allan Saint-Maximin scored a superb early opener, and were indebted to David de Gea for a series of fine saves.

It was United's first match since December 11 after a Covid-19 outbreak forced them to close their training complex - Victor Lindelof was absent from St James' Park after testing positive.

"No 16-day break in the middle of a football season is going to help

you," Maguire told Manchester United's official website. "The training ground has been shut and half the lads playing today are recovering from the virus, so of course it's not going to help us.

"We've had people with symptoms, people without symptoms - it's been a real mixed bag for everyone at the football club and it's been a tough time."

But the England international defender said United could not make excuses for their sloppy performance. "We've got to stay on the ball, we've

got to stay active and we've got to play the ball in their half and we didn't manage to do that," he said. "You can look at that and ask whether the last 16 days had a big impact out of steam out there.

"A point in the end is a fair result, but it's a result that we're disappointed with.

The draw means United are seven points behind fourth-placed Arsenal with two games in hand ahead of Thursday's clash with Burnley at Old Trafford, but Maguire said they would be better after their tough evening at Newcastle.

"I'm sure 90 minutes will have benefitted every single player out there," he said.

"The Burnley game and the Wolves game are coming up thick and fast and we've got to play better than we have done tonight to make sure we get three points." - Agencies

consumer goods'

From Page 01 the international market

has widened the current account deficit, while COV-ID-19 increased the debt burden on many countries. "Inflation is rising throughout the world but we are trying to control it," he said, adding that the government has brought down the prices of food and beverages locally in the last six months; however, the price of imported goods has increased. The spokesperson said that no burden has been imposed on the common man in the mini-budget, no new tax is being imposed and no tax will be levied on anything used by the common man.

According to a report, the government will withdraw GST exemptions and slap a standard rate of 17% on import of mobile phones, computers, silver/gold, different articles of jewellery, re-meltable scrap, LPG and many other products. Sales tax could be imposed on the import of live animals and live poultry; meat of bovine animals, sheep, and goat; fish and crustaceans: eggs including eggs for hatching; live plants including bulbs, roots, and the like; edible vegetables including roots and tubers; pulses; and edible fruits.

Premier League hit by record 103 positive Covid tests

"The safety of everyone is a priority and the Premier League is taking all precautionary steps in response to the impact of the Omicron variant" increased testing of players and

WEB DESK

LONDON: The Premier League has revealed a record of 103 players and staff tested positive for the coronavirus in the period from December 20 to 26.

That surpassed the total a week earlier when the English top-flight hit a new high since testing began in 2020 with 90 positive cases. So far in December, 15 Premier League games have been called off, while the three divisions be-

low the top tier have been decimated by postponements. "The League can today confirm between Monday 20 December and Sunday 26 December, 15,186 COVID-19 tests were administered on players and club staff. Of these, there were 103 new positive cas-

es," a Premier League statement said. "The safety of everyone is a priority and the Premier League is taking all precautionary steps in response to the impact of the Omicron variant."

Liverpool's game against Leeds, Watford's trip to Wolves, and Burnley against Everton, all on Boxing Day, were cancelled.

Arsenal's home match against Wolves on Tuesday was axed on Sunday after an increase in case of numbers among the Wolves squad. Leeds' game with Aston Villa, scheduled for December 28, was also postponed on Sunday due to Leeds' continued Covid and injury issues.

Despite the rise in Covid cases and postponements, Premier League chiefs last week opted against halting the season despite calls from some top-flight bosses for a 'circuit breaker' At the same meeting, clubs were

warned that games will go ahead if each team has 13 fit outfield players and a goalkeeper. The League has reverted to its

Emergency Measures, and has

club staff to daily Lateral Flow and twice-weekly PCR tests, having previously carried out Lateral Flow testing twice a week," the statement said. "The League is continuing to work

with clubs to keep people safe by helping mitigate the risks of COV-ID-19 within their squads.

"We are also liaising closely with the Government, local authorities, and supporter groups while being responsive to any future changes to national or local guidance.' It is the sixth successive week that the number of Premier League

positive cases has increased.

In October, only 68 percent of players and staff had received either their first, second, or third vaccination dose.

The Premier League last week said 92 per cent of players and staff have now had at least one vaccine jab. Six Premier League games did go ahead on Sunday in front of crowds as Britain battles a significant

rise in Covid cases. No restrictions have yet been put on attendance at matches in England, although supporters do have to provide proof of vaccination or a negative test taken in the previous 48 hours.

Business / World



Israeli

warplanes strike Syria's

Latakia port

WEB DESK

DAMASCUS: Israeli war-

planes struck the Syrian port of Latakia early Tues-

day, in the second such attack this month, according

to the state news agency

SANA. "The Israeli enemy

carried out an air aggres-

sion at dawn today, with

missiles from the direction

of Mediterranean, west of

the city of Latakia, target-

ing the container yard in

the commercial port in La-

takia," SANA said, citing a

military source. It said the

attack caused "significant

The agency said the Israeli

attack targeted "oils and

spare parts for machinery

and cars". A hospital and

a number of buildings sus-

tained damage in the attack,

SANA said, without giving

There was no comment

from the Israeli military on

In the last four years, re-

gime-controlled areas in

Svria have come under fre-

quent Israeli attacks target-

ing sites and military bases

used by regime forces and

Russia stages

'successful'

third launch

of new rocket

MOSCOW: Russia has con-

ducted a third launch of its new heavy-class Angara

rocket, the first developed

after the fall of the Soviet

Union 30 years ago this

month. Space agency Ro-

scosmos announced late

Monday that the next-gener-

ation Angara-A5 rocket had

been launched with a mock

payload from Plesetsk in

It was the third launch of

the new rocket after its

"Roscosmos congratulates

the military-space forces

and the entire Russian

space industry," the agency

said in a statement, calling

Agency head Dmitry Rogoz-

in welcomed the news on

Telegram, writing: "Come

ter a Siberian river flowing

out of Lake Baikal - are the

first new family of launchers

to be built after the collapse

of the Soviet Union. They

are designed to replace the

the launch "successful".

on, baby!

maiden voyage in 2014.

northern Russia.

Iran-backed militias.

any reports of casualties.

the report.

material damage".

Briefs

U.S. helps **Ukraine** to strengthen its borders

AGENCIES

KYIV: The United States will finance projects including surveillance and monitor ing equipment to strengthen Ukraine's borders with Russia and Belarus, amid continuing escalation with Moscow, Ukraine's border service said on Tuesday.

Kyiv accuses Moscow of massing tens of thousands of troops near its borders in preparation for a possible

Russia denies planning any attack but accuses Ukraine and the United States of destabilising behaviour, and has sought security guarantees against NATO's eastward expansion.

The border service said in a statement the projects worth \$20 million involved the purchase of video recording systems and drones, as well as personal protective equipment for border guards.

Ukraine, which seeks to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), has since 2018 also received a series of consignments of U.S. ammunition and Javelin missiles, prompting criticism from Moscow.

80% of NATO missions responded to Russian aircrafts

BRUSSELS: Nearly 80% of NATO fighter jet missions across Europe were launched in response to Russian military aircraft flights in 2021, NATO said on Tuesday.

"NATO fighter jets scrambled around 370 times Europe in 2021, mostly to check aircraft flying unannounced near Allied air space," the military alliance announced in a press statement.

According to NATO, 290 of the missions, which is 80% of the total deployments, were launched in response to flights by Russian military aircraft. "NATO fighter jets are on duty around the clock, ready to take off in case of unverified flights near the airspace of our Allies," NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu commented

on the announcement. Most of the unverified flights - unannounced military flights or civilian aircraft losing communication with air controllers - were intercepted in the Baltic region. Only a very few intercepted flights could actually enter the airspace controlled by NATO since the iets identified them and escorted them out, the

statement added. There are over 60 jets on high alert for NATO air-policing missions for Estonia. Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as for Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Slovenia. - APP

Russia orders top rights group shut

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Russia's Supreme Court ordered the country's best-known human rights group on Tuesday to be liquidated for breaking a law requiring groups to register as foreign agents, capping a vear of crackdowns on Kremlin critics unseen since the Soviet days. The shuttering of the group Memorial closes a year in which the top Kremlin critic was jailed, his political movement banned and many of his allies forced to flee. Moscow says it is simply enforcing laws to thwart extremism and shield the country from foreign influence.

"This is a bad signal showing that our society and our country are moving in the wrong direction," the TASS news agency quoted Memorial Board Chairman Jan Raczynski as saying.

Closing the group would increase the risk of "total repression" in Russia, one of Memorial's lawyers, Maria Eismont, said during the fi-

nal hearings on Tuesday. Memorial has called the lawsuit politically motivated. The Interfax news agency quoted a lawyer for the group as saving it would appeal, both in Russia and at the European Court of Human Rights

EU repeatedly challenged by power politics in 2021

In a blog post, Josep Borrell defined 2021 as a year of transition. Touching on the COVID-19 pandemic, Borrell said it has carried on longer than imagined a year ago and the ongoing omicron variant necessitates major restrictions while it is threatening the recovery

Foreign Desk

BRUSSELS: Geopolitical changes intensified in 2021, with power politics repeatedly challenging the European Union and its values, the EU's foreign policy chief said Monday.

In a blog post, Josep Borrell defined 2021 as a year of transition. Touching on the COVID-19 pandemic, Borrell said it has carried on longer than imagined a year ago and the ongoing omicron variant necessitates major restrictions while it is threatening the recovery. He went on to say that the bloc already surpassed its goal of delivering 250 million doses of coronavirus vaccines to other countries, adding the aim is to have donated a total of 700 million doses by mid-2022.

Apart from the coronavirus pandemic, Borrell said the crises in Belarus, Ukraine, Mali, Sudan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Venezuela and Bosnia and Herzegovina dominated the international and EU agenda in 2021.

"Being in permanent crisis man-



agement mode has sometimes weakened our capacity to address transversal, longer-term issues that should be at the center of our foreign policy, such as revitalizing multilateralism or handling migration in a balanced way, or the energy and climate crises or the rules for the digital transition," Borrell added.

Pointing to the positive developments in 2021, he said the EU "managed to present the Strategic Compass to the EU member states," adding its "purpose is to

strengthen the EU's role as a security provider." Although he described the US administration's decisions on Afghanistan and AUKUS as "unfortunate," Borrell noted that "2021 also saw the relaunch of EU-US relations under President (Joe) Biden."

He underlined that the EU puts emphasis on diversifying its partnerships across the Indo-Pacific, adding "we have also engaged more closely with Central Asia and started to improve our cooperation with the Gulf countries.

Swiss-EU ties could fall apart: Sefcovic

BERLIN: The European Union's relationship with Switzerland could fall apart if negotiations over Switzerland's place in the EU internal market fail, European Commission Vice President Maros Sefcovic, told Der Spiegel magazine.

Brussels has pushed for years for a treaty to cap an array of bilateral accords and require the Swiss to routinely adopt changes to single market rules. Talks between Bern and its biggest trading partner broke off in May over concerns about yielding too much sovereignty to the bloc. "Should new negotiations not lead to success, the bilateral agreements that were still in force would gradually expire and make our relationship obsolete at some point," said Sefcovic, who oversees EU-Swiss affairs, in an interview published on Tuesday. Switzerland would have to give assurances it would abide by EU internal market rules if Bern is committed to new negotiations, Sefcovic said.

The European Union wants Switzerland to agree to a dynamic alignment of its laws with EU law, a level playing field, a mechanism to settle disputes and regular contributions to EU funds for poorer EU members. Sefcovic reiterated the EU's demands in the Spiegel interview. "We urgently need to know from Switzerland whether it seriously wants to negotiate with us," Sefcovic said. In November, the European Union urged Switzerland to set out a clear timetable for resolving the EU internal market issues by January. "We have to know what we want to talk about when - so that it is clear that the discussion will not last 20 or 30 years," Sefcovic told Spiegel. - Agencies

Spain's govt clears crucial labor reform and budget

Foreign Desk

MADRID: Spain's left-wing ruling coalition on Tuesday secured its hold on power with the approval of a landmark labor reform backed by both unions and employers and a new national spending plan for next year that includes a hefty disbursement of pandemic recovery funds.

An array of left-leaning and nationalist lawmakers gave the final go-ahead to Spain's 450-billion-euro (\$509 billion) budget for 2022, which allocates more than half of the funds to education, health, forms of social spending. The budget includes the

first 20 billion euros of 70 billion euros (\$79.2 billion) total granted to the country from the European Union's COVID-19 recovery funds. The European Commission, the executive branch of the 27-nation bloc, transferred to Spain an initial tranche of 10 billion euros (\$11.3 billion) earlier this week.

The budget approval is seen as a crucial test of the parliamentary support of the minority coalition of Socialists and the anti-austerity United We Can party. By clearing the hurdle in a 281-62 vote with one abstention, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez dispelled pressure to call an early election and increased his chance es to see out his term, which



SAINT PETERSBURG: CIS Heads of State posed together for a group photo prior to the meeting. (From left to right) Ilham Aliyev President of Azerbaijan, Nikol Pashinyan Prime Minister of Armenia, Alexander Lukashenko President of Belarus, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev President of Kazakhstan, Vladimir Putin President of Russia, Sadyr Japarov President of Kyrgyzstan, Emomali Rahmon President of Tajikistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow President of Turkmenistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev President of Uzbekistan. - Agencies

Huthis announce temporary resumption of UN flights

News Desk

SANAA: Yemen's Huthi rebels said Tuesday they have allowed the temporary resumption of UN aid flights into the capital Sanaa, a week after a halt due to Saudi-led coalition air strikes.

"The civil aviation authority announces the resumption of UN and other organisation flights into Sanaa airport on a temporary basis," the rebel-run Al-Masirah television reported.

"The (rebel administration's) foreign ministry was contacted to notify the UN and all international organisations that Sanaa airport was ready to receive flights." Yemen has been wracked by civil war since 2014 pitting the government - supported by the Saudi-led coalition - against the Iran-backed Huthis who control much of the north.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed, in what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Flights into the rebel-held capital have been largely halted by a Saudi-led blockade since August 2016, but there have been exemptions for aid flights that are a key lifeline for the

The Huthi rebels had said UN aid flights into Sanaa had been halted by Saudi-led air strikes last week but the coalition said the airport had already been closed two days earlier and blamed the insurgents.

Coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki said Sunday the Huthis were "militarising" Sanaa airport and using it as a "main centre for launching ballistic missiles and drones" towards the kingdom. He also accused Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah group of helping the Huthis launch missiles and drones at Saudi Arabia, where two people were killed last week. On Saturday, the coalition launched what it called a "large-scale" military operation against the Huthis after the fatal rebel attack.

The coalition raids killed three civilians, including a child and a woman, Yemeni medics told AFP.

The coalition maintains its operations are carried out in accordance with in-

repeatedly accused the Huthis of using civilians as human shields. Saudi Arabia has long accused Iran of supplying the Huthis with sophisticated weapons and its Hezbollah proxy of training the insurgents. Tehran denies the charges, while Hezbollah on Monday dismissed Saudi charges as "ridiculous". The US Navy said last week it seized 1,400 AK-47 rifles and ammunition from a fishing boat it claimed was smuggling weapons from Iran to the Huthis, The Huthis on Tuesday accused the coalition of preventing the entry of "communication and naviga-

replace the old ones". "The UN and international organisations have been informed that the long-term operation of these devices are not guaranteed, given how old they are," they added.

tion devices... into Sanaa airport to

The rebels also warned they will "hold the UN and international organisations responsible for landing and takeoff operations in the event of a sudden device failure".

Russia lauds peacekeepers' role in Karabakh

MOSCOW: The Russian peacekeeping contingent fulfilled the complex tasks of disengaging the conflicting parties in the Nagorno-Karabakh area and is currently accomplishing planned missions in the region, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu said at the ministry's conference call on Tuesday.

peacekeeping forces and now steps are underway to carry out planned work. Now this work can already be called planned. Life is gradually returning to the region. Peace and calm are increasingly present there," Russia's defense chief said. As Shoigu said, "a large amount of credit here goes to all those who were engaged in the provision of medical and humanitarian aid." "And, of course, to all those who are on watch at peacekeepers' posts round the clock."

The Russian defense chief expressed his gratitude "to all the commanders, servicemen, privates and sergeants who are on duty in Nagorno-Karabakh, Syria and at our other bases abroad.

'But especially in these two areas. All that existed, say, a year ago in Karabakh, when the situation was extremely difficult and dramatic, was overcame by the efforts of our supreme commander-in-chief who held these negotiations and this work round the clock," Shoigu stressed.

During the conference call, the Russian defense chief also thanked army engineers for constructing more than 3,000 facilities over the year. – **Agencies**

The defence ministry added: "All prelaunch operations and the launch of the Angara-A5 rocket took place properly." The last launch of the heavyclass Angara rocket took place in December 2020. Angara rockets - named af-

Proton rockets that date back to the 1960s and have suffered a series of failures We managed to calm the situation there by introducing our in recent years. - Agencies Xi'an reports

highest daily COVID-19 surge BEIJING: Xi'an, an ancient

city in Northwest China's Shaanxi Province, registered 175 confirmed cases in a single day, the highest daily surge since the outbreak started on December 9. Among them is a 38-dayold infant, the youngest confirmed case in this round of outbreak.

175 is the highest registered number of confirmed cases in a single day since the outbreak started on December 9, which has seen domestically-transmitted cases in Xi'an surpassing 100 for a third consecutive day. The total number of confirmed cases in Xi'an has reached 810 so far, Global Times reported on Tuesday.

The 38-day-old newborn boy from Yanta district of Xi'an is one of 175 newly confirmed cases in Xi'an.

The infant boy was a close contact of a confirmed case. He was quarantined on December 22 and was diagnosed as a confirmed COVID-19 patient with mild symptoms on Monday, according to Shaanxi Provincial Health Commission on Tuesday.

The oldest confirmed case reported on Monday was an 85-year-old man from Yanta district of Xi'an. Ma Guanghui, an official

Shaanxi Provincial Health Commission, said that the local epidemic situation in Shaanxi Province is still at its peak and newly reported cases may continue to emerge in the following days with possible sporadic flare-ups. – APP

Baku hails Tokyo's role for national water systems

The meeting was held within framework of the "small cities water supply and sewerage systems project" between the Azerbaijani government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency tween the two countries exceeded

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan has highly appreciated the role of the Japan International Cooperation Agency in the implementation of projects on the reconstruction of water supply and sewage systems. The relevant statement was made

at a meeting between representatives of Azerbaijan's Azersu and the Tokyo Engineering Consultants companies. The meeting was held within the

framework of the "small cities water supply and sewerage systems project" between the Azerbaijani government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Azersu's Deputy Chairman Etibar Mammadov noted that Japanese

companies are actively involved in

the infrastructure projects implemented in the country. Tokyo Engineering Consultants representative Naota Toda empha-

tions. sized the successful implementation of the project and noted that it had improved the population's



social well-being and living condi-

It should be noted that the drinking water supply and sewerage systems in Gusar, Khachmaz, Khizi, Gobustan and Naftalan

were reconstructed as part of the project. New water sources were created in these cities, as well as reservoirs, main lines, drinking and sewage networks, collectors and treatment facilities were built.

Currently, Azerbaijan and Japan are cooperating in different fields of economy. Japanese companies in Azerbaijan work in the fields of oil and gas as well as agriculture.

Last year the trade turnover be-

zone based on modern energy management approaches to supply the region with energy. The trade turnover between the two countries amounted to \$228.1 million in the first 10 months of 2021.

\$200 million and the growth of this

sector is forecasted to increase up

to four times in the near future. In

addition, Japan has invested \$7.1

billion in Azerbaijan, during the

entire period of cooperation be-

It should be also noted that 2022

will be the "year of friendship be-

Additionally, earlier this year, Azerbaijan's Energy Ministry and

Japan's TEPSCO company signed

an agreement on the establish-

ment of the "green energy" zone

in the newly-liberated lands. The

agreement envisages the effective

use of renewable energy potential

such as wind, solar, hydro, geo-

thermal, and bioenergy on the lib-

erated territories. It considers the

establishment of a "green energy"

tween Azerbaijan and Japan".

tween the two countries.







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Briefs

Zardari should be in Jail, says Shafuat

DNA

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training in Pakistan Shafaqat Mehmood said that Co-chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Asif Ali Zardari must be in jail.

He said this while addressing a media conference after meeting the former chief minister Puniab Pervaiz Elahi, he added that Asif Ali Zardari cannot lead mass demonstrations against gov-

Meanwhile, Pervaiz Elahi went on to discuss matters pertaining to the national issues and local government bill with Shafaqat in the meeting. On the other hand, the meeting was also attended by Secretary Puniab Assembly Muhammad Khan Bhatti and greeted Shafaqat Mehmood on becoming President DG parliamentary affairs Punjab.

On the occassion, Shafqat said that the government will see when Nawaz Sharif arrives in Pakistan. The opposition has been talking about minus-one from past three years. Nawaz Sharif holds Rs16 billion in his accounts but he is unaware.

Russian gas supplies to Europe under scrutiny

FOREIGN DESK

BERLIN: With the arrival of winter in Europe and energy prices soaring, tensions are running high over the provision of gas from Russia - especially through the Yamal-Europe pipeline that runs through Poland and Belarus.

But the Yamal pipeline is just one part of a complex gas infrastructure network shaped not only by energy needs but also wider economic interests and politics, including strife between Russia and Ukraine. The pipeline, opened in 1994, runs over 2,000 kilometres (1,242 miles) to Ger many from the city of Torjok in central Russia, transiting through Belarus and Poland. It delivers 30 billion cubic metres of gas to Europe each year, making it one of the most important vehicles for the provision of Russian

gas to the continent. Russia sells Germany gas at a cheaper rate than it does to Poland, in part to make up for the higher transit fees through the longer delivery distance. But this means that it is more cost efficient for Poland to buy Russian gas from Germany.

Some of the gas sold by German traders to Poland flows directly into Polish territory, or if that is not sufficient, the pipeline can also operate in reverse to send more to Germany's eastern neighbour.

Japan's CG travels on Green Line **Bus Service**

KARACHI: Japan's Consul General in Karachi Toshika zu Isumora on Tuesday took a ride in the newly inaugurated Green Line Bus Service saying these bus servic-

es are common in Japan. "These bus services are common in Japan, however, we are delighted to witness modern transport facility in Karachi," he said and added that he would again visit the Green Line bus service once it is fully made operational.

Toshikazu Isumora earlier in the day visited the Numaish stop of the bus service along with his other staffers and got the ticket while standing in the queue. He later traveled in the bus like other passengers and review the working of the service. He later disembarked from the bus at the Golimar stop.

Karachiites were able to travel on the recently inaugurated BRTS Green Line by Prime Minister Imran Khan from December 25 after it was made operation for four hours initially. -APP

IHC to indict Rana Shamim, others after affidavit opened

The court decided to launch contempt proceedings against Rana Shamim, Ansar Abbasi and others and directed all of them to appear before the court on January 07 for indictment proceedings

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) has decided to indict former Chief Judge of Gilgit Baltistan Justice (retd) Rana Shamim and others in contempt of court case on January 7. The court decided to launch contempt proceedings against Rana Shamim, Ansar Abbasi and others and directed all of them to appear before the court on January 07 for indictment proceedings.

Earlier during the proceedings, Rana Shamim opened up his sealed affidavit before the Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Athar Minallah in which the former has reportedly leveled allegations against the judiciary including the former CJP Justice (retd) Saqib Nisar.

Rana Shamim and his counsel- Supreme Court Bar Association President Abdul Latif Afridi, attorney general and others were present in the court when the sealed affidavit was opened up and presented to

The court initially asked Rana Shamim's counsel to open up the affidavit, however, the attorney general reminded that the court has previously asked the former chief judge of the GB to present the affidavit and now he should open it.

"It is Rana Shamim's responsibility to inform how his affidavit got leaked," he said. The IHC chief justice admitted the plea and directed the ex-GB judge to open up the sealed envelope carrying the affidavit who then opened it and presented it before the court. The court later directed to re-seal the envelope after the attorney general sought

Previously speaking to media before the court hearing, Rana Shamim while responding to queries from journalists said that he was alone while signing the affidavit. He further asked the journalists to seek answers regarding the presence of PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif during the signing of an affidavit from those who are claiming it.

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Asad Qaiser receives US Charge d' Affaires,

Angela Aggeler, at Parliament House. - DNA

"India Out" campaign in

Maldives gains momentum

Thousands of people have marched on the streets of

capital Malé city calling for the removal of Indian military

personnel from the Maldives

removal of Indian soldiers stationed

in the Maldives. The protestors ac-

cused the current administration and

the New Delhi friendly President So-

lih of colluding with India to influence

the 2018 Presidential Election and the

2019 Parliamentary Election. "We are

Dr. Gulbin Sultana, a research analyst

at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for

Sultanas said the first long-standing

Defence Studies and Analyses.

PML-N elevated Shamim to the position of CJ GB: Gill

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Political Communication Dr Shahbaz Gill on Tuesday said, the story of alleviation of Rana Shamim to the post of Chief Justice of Gilgit Baltistan by Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) is known to the world. In a statement, he said Rana Shamim prepared his affidavit while sitting in the office of Nawaz Sharif in London.

It was an old modus operandi of PML-N that they always promoted incompetent and fraudulent people like Rana Shamim and later used them for their own benefits. He said Rana Shamim was a part of PML-N lawyer wing. Earlier, all out efforts were made by PML-N to appoint him a judge of Sindh High Court but failed and later was appointed as CJ of GB, he said.

He said as per report of former Chief Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, Rana Shamim was not eligible for the post of high court judge on a ground that he tampered his date of birth record in the Bar Council document. As per the actual record, Rana Shamim was born in 1946 but later was changed to 1950 after tampering in the documents, he said. Gill said that PML-N started changing social fabric of all institutions in 1980s for their personal benefits. The government was anxiously awaiting the rejection of Nawaz Sharif's request so that he could return and serve his sentence, he said. - DNA

'Pakistan attaches great importance to ties with US' imperative for progress and

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: US Chargé d'Affaires Angela Aggeler called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser in Islamabad on Tuesday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest, including regional and international issues.

Speaking on the occasion, Asad Qaiser said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with the United States. He stressed the need to promote parliamentary interactions between the two countries to further expand bilateral relations.

The Speaker said Pakistan desires resolution of all outstanding issues peacefully through dialogue as per relevant UN resolutions. He

prosperity of the region. He said Pakistan has always played a positive role for

peace in Afghanistan. He said the people of Afghanistan are facing difficult economic situation after the emergence of new administration in their country. Talking about recently held

extraordinary session of the council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Islamabad, the Speaker said the OIC foreign ministers emphasized on promoting religious harmony. The Chargé d'Affaires said her country gives immense importance to Pakistan's efforts for durable peace in region. She said Pakistan rendered unmatched sacrifices in war against terrorism. She

said peaceful Afghanistan is cessful organizing the OIC. NIH confirms

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Health (NIH) on Tuesday said that a total of 75 cases of the Covid-19 Omicron variant have been confirmed in the country so far. In a statement, the NIH said that the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination (NHSRC), the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) and the provincial departments were vigilantly keeping an eve on Omicron cases in Pakistan ever since it was designated a variant of concern by the World Health Organisation (WHO). "The first case of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 was report-

"As of December 27, a total of 75 Omicron cases have been confirmed; 33 in Karachi, 17 in Islamabad and 13 in Lahore," the statement said, adding that the remaining 12 cases were associated with international travel. The NIH

"The relevant authorities have isolated the patients and initiated contract tracing in order to control the spread of the variant," the NIH said. Vaccination and following standard operating procedures (SOPs) continue to be our best defence against Covid-19 despite the mutations being

reported, the statement added. "All government approved Covid-19 vaccines available in Pakistan remain highly effective at preventing severe disease and hospitalisation. The government urges everyone to get both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine as well as the booster dose as per the eligibility criteria and process," the statement said. Pakistan reported its first suspected case of the Omicron variant on December 8. Following its gene-sequencing, Aga Khan University Hospital con-

75 Omicron cases in Pakistan

firmed it was the new variant on Dec 13.

sion of the Indian military from the just protesting military presence in tarian purposes only, but some in the country, fearing the compromise of the country. We are not calling for a vianti-India constituency, particularly ed on December 13 in Karachi," the statement said. Yameen's party PPM, were trying to olent clash against India or Indians in Maldives," Shifxan Ahmed, co-founder Thousands of people have marched on portray that by gifting these helicopthe streets of capital Malé city calling of Dhiyares, who has been active in the ters, India was creating military presfor the removal of Indian military percampaign, told Indian media. ence in the country because they were sonnel from the Maldives. The anti-India sentiment didn't just military choppers," Sultana told Indidid not provide any further details. The protest demonstrations intensprout overnight last year, but is nearanExpress.com sified about a fortnight since Mally a decade old and can be traced back Consquent to the agitations in 2016, dives's ex-President Abdulla Yameen

rescue operations.

controversy was over the two Dhruv

Advanced Light Helicopters (ALF)

that were given by India to the Mal-

dives in 2010 and in 2015, both of

which were used for ocean search-and-

"These helicopters were for humani-

to when Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gaythe Yameen government had asked oom of the Progressive Party (PPM) India to take back these gifted helbecame president in 2013. icopters but India refused to take India-Maldives relations deteriorated during the PPM's five-year rule and the anti-India sentiment was apparent even back then, researchers say. "A lot of anti-India rhetoric was used during that time because the Maldivian government was pro-China," said

them back. By 2018 when Ibrahim Mohamed Solih assumed office, he immediately re-signed these agreements, extending the stay and use of these choppers in the country Mohamed Shareef, vice-president of PPM told media that "Any sort of military presence on our soil is not welcome and it is not welcome by a vast majority of Maldivians and these agreements have given India that right.

2021, the year military coups returned in Africa

Guinea's September 5 coup was neither the first nor the last power grab this year in sub-Saharan Africa. There had been four successful military takeovers across the continent, up from one last year

MONITORING DESK

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The "India Out" cam-

paign in the Maldives is gaining mo-

mentum with every passing day with

the protestors demanding the expul-

walked free, after the Supreme

Court overturned his conviction in

a money-laundering case. The pro-

testers have been calling for the

removal of Indian troops from the

Maldives and the cancellation of mil-

itary agreements with India. The sol-

diers in question are being stationed

under various military agreements

made under the current administra-

tion. The participants of the rally

carried the national flags and clad in

red shirts called for the immediate

sovereignty.

KHARTOUM: Surrounded by soldiers and with Guinea's flag draped around his shoulders, Colonel Mamady Doumbouya appeared on state television hours after leading a coup in September.

"Guinea is beautiful," he told his co-patriots, using a crude analogy to describe what would be his vision for the future of his country. "We no longer need to rape her. We need to make love to her, Doumbouya's elite Special Forces had earlier stormed the presidential palace and detained Alpha Conde, the country's first demo-

cratically elected president whose

election victory in 2010 was once

seen as a new beginning after dec-

ades of authoritarian rule. But the 83-year-old's time at the helm of the West African country ended dramatically, with a video showing him sitting on a dusty sofa, barefoot with his printed shirt buttons open and surrounded by heavily armed guards

Guinea's September 5 coup was neither the first nor the last power grab this year in sub-Saharan Africa. There had been four successful military takeovers across the continent, up from one last year. Most recently, Sudan's military detained the country's civilian leaders and seized power in October, about a month after authorities said they had thwarted an attempted coup they blamed on plotters loyal to former ruler Omar al-Bashir. In May, Malian soldiers had their second

coup in the space of 10 months. This came weeks after General Mahamat Idriss Deby immediately seized power in Chad by suspending the constitution and dissolving the parliament following the death of his father on the battlefield. In the second part of the 20th cen-

tury, military coups in Africa were used as a common means of changing the political order in the wake of decolonisation. Between 1960 and 2000, the overall number of coups and coup attempts stood at an average of four per year, according to a study by Jonathan Powell, an associate professor at the University of Central Florida, and Clayton Thyne, a professor at the University of Kentucky. However, as calls for democratic reforms and constitutionalism

grew with the new century, military coups decreased to two per year until 2019.

Now, however, they seem to be making a comeback - prompting United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres earlier this year to decry what he dubbed "an epidemic of coup d'etats".

The recent surge in the militarisation of politics, analysts say, is influenced by a mix of external drivers, including the increasing and diverse number of international actors who are active in the continent prioritising their interests, and internal factors, such as widespread public frustration against corruption, insecurity and poor governance.

The Guinean coup took place after widespread dissatisfaction protests against Conde's

largely unpopular move to scrap the presidential two-term limit. Hence, Colonel Doumbouya justified the power grab by claiming poverty and endemic corruption compelled his special forces to intervene.

"The personalisation of political life is over. We will no longer entrust politics to one man. We will entrust it to the people," he said at the time.

For Powell, this militarisation comes amid "an increasing crisis" of legitimacy for rulers. "When leaders like Alpha Conde toy with constitutions, term limits and the electoral process, it increases public support for the armed forces to 'do something'," he added. Ryan Cummings, the director of consulting firm Signal Risk, agreed.

Israel open to 'good' Iran nuclear deal

News Desk

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said on Tuesday that Israel would not automatically oppose a nuclear deal with Iran but world powers must take a firmer position.

"We are not the bear who said 'no'," Bennett said in an interview with Israel's Army Radio, referring to a popular naysaying character from children's literature.

Israel prefers a more result-oriented approach, he said. "For sure there can be a good agreement. For sure. We know the parameters. Is that expected to happen now in the current dynamics? No. Because there needs to be a much firmer position," he said.

'Iran is negotiating with a very weak hand. But unfortunately the world is acting like Iran is at a strong point." Bennett declined to comment on Israel's military strike capabilities against Iran, saying he preferred the approach of 'speak little and do a lot."

On Monday, Iran and the United States resumed indirect talks in Vienna on salvaging the 2015 Iran nuclear deal with Iran focused on one side of the original bargain, lifting sanctions against it, despite what critics see as scant progress on reining in its atomic activities.

Kim Jong Un holds key strategy conference

PYONG YANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has presided over the first day of a high-level meeting of the ruling Workers' Party that is to discuss strategic planning for the coming months, state media reported on Tuesday.

The plenary meeting, one of the highest-level decision-making bodies in the country, opened on Monday amid problems posed by the coronavirus pandemic and a diplomatic deadlock with the United States.

A report from the state news agency KCNA said the conference would review this year's policies and decide on "the strategic and tactical policies and practical tasks for dynamically guiding the struggle of our party and people to usher in a new period of the development of socialist construction to the next stage of victory.'

North Korea is facing international sanctions over its nuclear weapons program, which has been expanded under Kim during his 10 years at the helm.

The program has brought the country into conflict notably with the United States, which has imposed multiple sanctions along with several other countries, the United Nations and the European Union. – APP

US halves Covid-19 isolation time

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: US health officials have halved the recommended isolation time for people with asymptomatic Covid-19 from 10 to five days, amid a surge in cases. The measure is expected to alleviate disruption caused by staff shortages in many areas because of infections. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says most transmissions happen in the two days before and three days after symptoms develop

But experts have criticised the lack of testing requirements to end isolation. The sharp rise in cases has

been fuelled by the Omicron variant of the virus, which is now dominant in the US. Early studies suggest Omicron is more contagious than other variants, although milder.

The growing number of people having to isolate has put pressure on several industries, including air travel, with thousands of flights cancelled during the Christmas holiday.

Leaders of major US airlines were among those calling for the change, as cancellations continued for a fourth day on Tuesday.