



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, February 01, 2022

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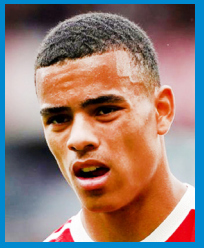
Detailed News On Page-07

Over 100 Afghan officials killed since takeover

Detailed News On Page-08

Greenwood held after rape allegations

Detailed News On Page-06



Ravi Riverfront Project SC nullifies LHC's verdict

The LHC had declared the RRUDP illegal while announcing the verdict on pleas challenging the project last week

STAFF REPORT / DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court ruled out on Monday the verdict announced by the Lahore High Court (LHC) declaring Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project (RRUDP) illegal and, instead, ordered the Punjab government to resume work on the project. The LHC had declared the RRUDP illegal while announcing the verdict on pleas challenging the project last week. After this, the provincial government reached out to the apex court seeking nullification of LHC's verdict. During Monday's hearing, Justice Aijazul Hassan Lanjar inquired

about the flaws in the LHC verdict. However, Punjab Advocate General Ahmed Awais couldn't answer the court's question, only to draw Justice Lanjar's ire. "You don't even know what the case is about," the judge remarked. Justice Muzahir Naqvi remarked while addressing Punjab AG Awais that it seemed like he had come unprepared for the hearing. At this, the provincial advocate-general informed the court that the Punjab government was not a party in the case LHC announced the verdict for. "There were 18 petitions [challenging the RRUDP] in total. Not being a

Continued on Page 06

IHC issues contempt notice to NAB Chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday issued a notice to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chief on a petition seeking initiation of contempt of court proceedings against him over his failure to investigate former military ruler General (retired) Pervez Musharraf's assets. An IHC two-judge bench comprising

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RAWALPINDI: Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of European Union (EU) called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ, on Monday. – DNA

EU envoy meets COAS

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: European Union envoy Androulla Kaminara Monday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Bajwa here at General Headquarters, Rawalpindi, said army's media wing in a statement. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters pertaining to regional security, Afghanistan situation and bilateral cooperation with European Union were discussed in the meeting. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation, efforts for regional stability and pledged to play her role for further improvements in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels, it added. On Jan. 10, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa stressed the need for swiftly devising an institutional mechanism to channel humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in order to avert a looming humanitarian catastrophe in the war-ravaged country.

Pak active case count over 100,000 for third day

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: As many as 7,048 more Pakistanis tested positive for COVID-19, keeping the country's number of active cases above the 100,000 mark for the third consecutive day, the National Command and Operation Centre's (NCOC) data showed Monday morning. The new infections, detected during the last 24 hours after 61,077 diagnostic tests were performed across the country, placed Pakistan's COVID-19 positivity ratio at 11.53% and confirmed case count at 1.425 million. Meanwhile, 21 coronavirus patients succumbed to the disease overnight, pushing the nationwide death toll to 29,269. The NCOC has extended coronavirus curbs in the country from January 31 till February 15, as thousands continue to contract the infection amid a spread in the Omicron variant.

UAE foils new Houthi ballistic missile attack

UAE air forces, together with the Arab Coalition subsequently destroyed the missile launch site

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: The United Arab Emirates on Monday said it had intercepted a ballistic missile launched by Yemen's Houthi militia amid a visit by Israel's President Isaac Herzog. The attack did not result in any losses as the destroyed missile fell outside populated areas, the UAE's Ministry of Defense said in a statement carried by Emirates News Agency. UAE air forces, together with the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, subsequently destroyed the missile launch site in Yemen's Al-Jawf governorate, the statement said. The UAE defense ministry affirmed its "full readiness to deal with any threats," adding that it will "take all necessary measures to protect the UAE from any attacks."

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Pakistan condemns Iraq, UAE terrorist attacks

ALI FURQAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday strongly condemned the cowardly terrorist attack that targeted Baghdad International airport, causing damage to the civilian infrastructure. The Foreign Office Spokesperson in a press release while reiterating Pakistan's strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, said "Pakistan stands in

Continued on Page 06

Petroleum prices to stay unchanged

Shahbaz Gill says Prime Minister has deferred a summary sent by OGRA

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has deferred the decision to increase prices of petroleum products for the next 15 days, SAPM Shahbaz Gill confirmed the news on Monday. Taking to Twitter, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication, Shahbaz Gill, said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had deferred a summary sent by the Oil and

Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) seeking hike in POL prices for the next 15 days of February. "PM Imran Khan did not approve the summary of increasing petrol by Rs11 and diesel by Rs14 to provide relief to public," said SAPM Shahbaz Gill. "Petrol, diesel prices will stay unchanged", Gill wrote in a tweet. The move, he said, aimed at not transferring the burden of growing inflation in the international market to the masses of Pakistan.

Briefs
PPP's leadership must resign

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad on Monday took PPP leadership to the task and said their top leaders should have owned the fiasco in the upper house during major legislation. "Yousuf Raza Gilani is a noble man. Bilawal and Zardari should have resigned on whose instructions senators did not appear [in the Upper House]," he said in a tweet.

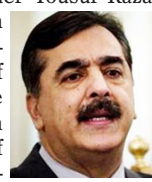
Trudeau tests positive for Covid-19

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Monday he had tested positive for COVID-19 but was feeling fine and would continue to work remotely while following public health guidelines. Trudeau went into isolation last week after one of his children tested positive but at the time a rapid test for him came back negative, he told the Canadian Press. – Agencies

Gillani resigns as opposition leader
PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto rejects Gillani's resignation

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: PPP leader Yousuf Raza Gilani announced on Monday that he had resigned as the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate during a speech in the upper house of parliament. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has rejected Yousuf Raza Gilani's resignation. Gilani was among at least eight opposition senators who had skipped last Friday's Senate session, which allowed the PTI government to narrowly manage to get the crucial State Bank of Pakistan



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10 to 15 Opp members are with Imran

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed has made the claim that ten to fifteen members of the Opposition are actually with Prime Minister Imran Khan even though they have been talking of voting him



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GUJRAT: Former Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira exchanging views with senior PPP leader Ch. Aitzaz Ahsan. – DNA

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PMC grants 10-day window for dental colleges' admissions – Page 03

"COMSTEC-CCoE Yemen Programme" to be launched – Page 04

Gandhi's murder: Debate rages still over Hindutva ideology role – Page 05

Aliyev seeks int'l recognition of Ganja bombing as war crime – Page 06

Kremlin urges US to abandon policy of fomenting tension – Page 07

Over 100 officials killed since Taliban takeover – Page 08

EU warns Russia of crippling sanctions

"As part of our work on deterrence (of Russia - TASS), we have advanced with the preparations of a high-impact response that would inflict severe costs on the Russian economy and financial system", Josep Borrell says

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: The European Union is working on new sanctions against Russia to deprive it of products it may need to attain its strategic ambitions, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Sunday. "As part of our work on deterrence (of Russia - TASS), we have advanced with the preparations of a high-impact response that would inflict severe costs on the Russian economy and financial system. Here we are also considering export controls measures that would have a longer-term effect, by denying Russia products that it needs to fulfil its strategic ambitions," he wrote on his personal blog. He also noted that European Union regrets Russia's decision to expand its blacklist of EU representatives banned from entering Russia and warns about its appropriate response. "In this context, I deplore the decision by Rus-

sian authorities, announced on Friday, to ban an unknown number of representatives of EU Member States and institutions from entry into Russia. This decision lacks any legal justification and transparency and will meet an appropriate response. With it, Russia continues to fuel a climate of tensions in Europe instead of contributing to de-escalation," he wrote. "Russia is waging a war of nerves," he claimed. "So we have to keep ours. In this stand-off with Russia, we are doing our best to make diplomacy work, using all possible paths." The European Union regrets Russia's decision to expand its blacklist of EU representatives banned from entering Russia and warns about its appropriate response, Borrell said. "In this context, I deplore the decision by Russian authorities, announced on Friday, to ban an unknown number of representatives of EU Member States and institutions from entry into Russia. This decision lacks any legal justification



and transparency and will meet an appropriate response. With it, Russia continues to fuel a climate of tensions in Europe instead of contributing to de-escalation," he wrote. In recent weeks, the European Union has been threatening Russia with new sanctions in case of its alleged aggression against Ukraine. Brussels, according to the EU leadership, is already working on possible restrictive measures against Moscow. Recently, Western and Ukrainian media outlets have been echoing claims about Russia's possible aggression against Ukraine. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov earlier slammed such statements as "empty and groundless" and their goal is to whip up tensions. He stressed that Russia doesn't pose any threat to anyone, but did not rule out possible provocations to justify the remarks in question and warned that attempts at using force to settle the crisis in southeastern Ukraine would have the most serious consequences.

Briefs

Two killers of boy convicted

FAISALABAD: Additional district and sessions judge Shahzad Ahmad on Monday handed down life term to two accused of a murder case. According to the prosecution, Abdullah and Faizan of Chak 67-JB killed Shahzad of the same locality by pumping air into his stomach through a compressor inserted into his rectum on June 08, 2021. Thikriwala police had registered a murder case against the accused and submitted challan in the court. The court ordered the convicts to pay Rs 400,000 as compensation to the legal heirs of victim, otherwise, they will have to undergo an additional six-month imprisonment. — APP

Yasin Malik's daughter receives father's award

ISLAMABAD: Raziya Sultana daughter of Mushaah Hussain Mullick and veteran Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader Mohammad Yasin Malik received her father's Human Rights Hurriyat Award. Yasin Malik has been languishing in notorious Tihar jail for his sole crime to defy the Indian brutal and unlawful occupation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Human Rights Council of Pakistan (HRCP) honored senior Hurriyat leader Mohammad Yasin Malik with Human Rights Award for his sacrifices and peaceful struggle to break the shackles of Indian slavery, here in a ceremony on Monday.

Muhammad Yasin Malik, the chairman of JKLF, was born in 1966 in a Kashmiri household of Maisuma Bazar, "The Gaza Strip of Kashmir", near Budshah Chowk in the centre of Srinagar, the capital city of Jammu Kashmir. He is the only brother of his three sisters and second child of his parents.

His introduction to pro freedom political activism occurred while he was still in school at the age of 14. Speaking on the occasion, Mushaah, wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader, Muhammad Yasin Malik, thanked Human Rights Council for recognizing peaceful struggle of her incarcerated husband of the birth right of right to self-determination of Kashmiri people, who, she said, is battling for life in the notorious Tihar jail. She said that Yasin Malik was the main youth leader along with his close friend Shaheed Ashfaq Majeed Wani who played vital role in public mobilisation in favour of MUF during 1986-87 so called state elections. The chairperson said that her husband has spent more than 15 years in jails but nothing could shake his resolve in fight against Indian occupation. Mushaah vowed that she would keep on exposing the brutal and fascist face of Indian government at all fora. — APP

Plan to remodel drainage in FDA city

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) has started preparing a comprehensive plan for remodelling of drainage (Nullah) in the FDA city. Presiding over a meeting here on Monday, FDA Director General Rizwan Nazir directed the quarters concerned to complete all ongoing projects in the FDA city without any delay.

He said that electricity work and installation of street lights should be completed, besides improving the security system in the city. He also directed for giving sewerage control and water supply system to WASA in those residential blocks where residences had been constructed. The meeting was told that FDA had so far served final notices to 4,270 defaulters for depositing dues immediately.

Later, the DG visited various blocks of FDA city and inspected cleanliness arrangements, security, condition of parks and greenbelts. — APP

Business leaders appeal PM to restore gas supply to Karachi'

Chairman BMG Zubair Motiwala said that the Government's promises and commitments to assure supply of gas to export industries appear to be an eyewash and a mere lip-service

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: While fervently appealing Prime Minister Imran Khan and his aides to restore gas supply to all industrial zones of Karachi, suspended since over 100 days. Addressing the press conference Chairman Businessmen Group (BMG) Zubair Motiwala, Vice Chairman BMG & Chairman Pakistan Apparel Forum Jawed Bilwani and President Karachi Chamber of commerce and industry (KCCI) Muhammad Idrees have stressed on federal government must save its reputation by putting an end to the discriminatory treatment with Karachiites, they suffered since long, not only aggravated miseries for the business community and the Karachiites but has also dented the government's efforts to ensure ease of doing business.

Business Leaders urged that in order to revive the industrial activities, Sindh's gas has to be returned to the province as it was highly unfair to keep the industries of Karachi deprived of Sindh's own gas resources. They said that the industries of Karachi were deeply shocked and totally disappointed with the Government for neglecting and ignoring the repeated appeals and press releases over looming gas/RLNG crises and remains indecisive in the burning matter for the last more than 100 days.

General Secretary BMG AQ Khalil, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Naqi, Vice President Qazi Zahid Hussain along with President Site Association of Industry Abdul Rasheed,



President Federal B. Area of Trade & Industry Haroon Shamsi, President Korangi Association of Trade & Industry Salman Aslam, Representative of Landhi Association of Trade & Industry Ajmal Afzal, President North Karachi Association of Trade & Industry Faisal Moiz, President Bin Qasim Association of Trade & Industry Elahi Buksh and President Site Superhighway Association of Industry Amir Hassan Lari attended the presser.

From Value-Added Textile Associations, Zonal Chairman Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA) Abdul Rehman, Chairman Pakistan Ready-made Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRGMEA) Sheikh Shafiq

Jhok-Wala, Chairman Pakistan Knitwear & Sweaters Manufacturers & Exporters Association Kamran Chandna, Chairman Pakistan Cotton Fashion Apparel Manufacturers & Exporters Association Aitazaz Ahmed Japanwala, Chairman Towel Manufacturers Association Kashif Mehtab Chawla, Chairman Pakistan Bedwear Exporters Association Asif Javed & Chairman Pakistan Denim Manufacturer & Exporters Association Asif Riaz Tata also participated. Chairman BMG Zubair Motiwala said that the Government's promises and commitments to assure supply of gas to export industries appear to be an eyewash and a mere lip-service.

It was highly unfair to deprive Karachi from Gas/RLNG as this city, being the textile and industrial hub of Pakistan, alone contributes 68 percent revenue to the national exchequer and 54 percent to national exports while 52 percent of textile exports also take place from Karachi.

"Yet this matchless contribution is not being taken into consideration and Karachi continues to undergo discrimination that has led to causing severe production losses of more than 66 percent due to reduced or no supply of gas. The inequitable conduct and discriminatory treatment with Karachi were totally unconstitutional hence intolerable and highly deplorable", he said while fearing that the discriminatory actions/policy towards Karachi will not only cause the industry to cripple but would also tarnish the vision of Prime Minister.

Chairman BMG further stated that the rising demand for gas in Baluchistan during winter season was being fulfilled by SSGCL alone which receives 125mmcf of gas from Sui whereas SNGPL, which takes away 180mmcf from Sui, stands completely spared from sharing the burden of rising gas demand in Baluchistan which was beyond anyone's understanding. "We firmly believe that the rising demand for gas in Baluchistan has to be meted out by SSGCL and SNGPL as per ratio of gas being received by them which means that the extra demand of 160mmcf in Baluchistan during winter should be rationally divided with 41 percent (65mmcf) burden on SSGCL and the remaining 59 percent (95mmcf) must be borne by SNGPL."



KARACHI: President Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industries (KCCI) Muhammed Idrees, keenly reading a credible Pakistan's first diplomatic Daily "Islamabad Post" here at his KCCI office on Monday. — DNA

PTEA demands continuation of DDT incentive

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) has demanded continuation of Duty Drawback of Taxes (DDT) incentive to continue the growth momentum in national exports.

In a statement issued here Monday, PTEA Chairman Sohail Pasha said that textile sector was capable of achieving US\$ 25 billion exports for the country. He said that country's economic outlook for 2022 looks strong as it had posted a growth of 5.37% in FY 2021, substantially higher than the previous two years.

He said that several indicators reveal that country's economy had done well despite of Covid-19 pandemic setbacks and textile sector was among the significant contributors. He said that textile industry had now picked up a growing pace following the removal of Covid-19 restrictions and witnessed a sharp surge of 26% year-on-year to \$ 9.38 billion in the first half of FY 2022. Higher textile exports came on the back of quantum growth in high value-added products, he said and added that Pakistan still need to increase private investment and enhance export volume to sustain strong economic growth. — APP

FWMC holds awareness walk about cleanliness



Chairman FWMC Waleed Arshad said that waste management company would mobilise all-out resources for the cleanliness in the city

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: An awareness walk regarding cleanliness was held under the aegis of Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC), here on Monday.

The walk started from Iqbal Chowk, Sadr Bazaar and culminated at the same point after passing through various bazaars. MNA Sheikh Khurram Shehzad, Chairman FWMC Waleed Arshad Dogar led the walk, while Chief Traffic Officer Malik Tanveer, religious personality Moulana Muhammad Hafeez, Arshad Qasmi and others participated. Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf MNA Sheikh Khur-

ram Shahzad said that the district administration was committed to make the month-long cleanliness drive successful. He appealed to citizens for making collective efforts for the cleanliness of city, saying Faisalabad is our home. "It is our duty to keep it neat and clean," he added.

Chairman FWMC Waleed Arshad said that waste management company would mobilise all-out resources for the cleanliness in the city.

During the campaign, the cleanliness of sewerage lines, drainage, parks roads, green belts, would be made besides, washing wall-chalking, dumping of heap of rubbish and covering open manholes. Pamphlets were also distributed among citizens.

Registration for city marathon open: Commissioner Karachi

KARACHI: Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Iqbal Memon announced on Monday that the registration for the 3rd Commissioner Karachi City Marathon was now open.

Addressing a news conference here at his office, he asked citizens from across the city to come forward and register to participate in the race that would be held on February 13th at

DHA Moin Khan Academy. He said "Marathon is an important celebration for Karachi." He urged citizens to join hands to make it a successful event. Commissioner Karachi said the marathon is open to everyone, and registrations can be made through the given link: https://apcp-pak.live/online_registration/Spot_registration will also be carried out at Moin Khan Acad-

emy DHA before the start of the marathon at 8:30 am to 9:30am and the marathon will be started at 10am.

Additional Commissioner Karachi Jawwad Muzaffar, Deputy Commissioner South Irshad Sodhar, Members of technical committee, Assistant Commissioner General Abid Qamar, Assistant Commissioner Civil lines Shahab Aslam, and representatives of the sponsors of the event and others were present on the occasion.

Commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Memon said the competition would be for Under 19, Under 29, and 29 plus, however, the veteran runners would be participating as a special category. — APP



FAISALABAD: Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting Farrukh Habib visit to Dispensary in Ahmednagar. — APP

Imam concerned over silence of world community on HR violations in IIOJK

The event was organised to give award in absentia to senior hurriyat leaders including Massarat Alam Butt, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Asia Andrabi, Yaseen Malik, Shabir Ahmad Shah for their untiring struggle for the cause of freedom

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed, Fakhar Imam on Monday expressed grave concerns over the criminal silence of international community on the gross human rights violations by the occupation forces in India Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Addressing an event organized by Human Rights Council Pakistan, he called upon the civilized nations to take notice of these gross human rights violations, use of lethal weapons on the unarmed innocent civilians and large-scale massacres of Kashmiri youth. The minister feared that it could trigger nuclear war between two

nuclear powers, which could be catastrophic not only for the South Asian region but for the whole world. He reiterated the government's firm resolve to continue its political, diplomatic and moral support for the people of India Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in their struggle for right of self-determination. The event was organised to give award in absentia to senior hurriyat leaders including Massarat Alam Butt, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Asia Andrabi, Yaseen Malik, Shabir Ahmad Shah for their untiring struggle for the cause of freedom. He said that United Nations Human Rights Council had published

two reports revealing state of worse human rights conditions in IIOJK. The minister said that due to successful diplomacy and prudent policies of Prime Minister Imran Khan, so far, three meetings of UN Security Council were held and world had started recognising gravity of the situation. Imam stressed the need for focusing on geo-economic, geo-political and diplomatic policies to highlight the Kashmir issue on international forums and attracting the attention of international community towards human rights violations. Imam said that India was claiming itself as one of the largest democracy of world, but in contrast it had deprived the Kashmiris from

their basic human rights and had martyred over 100,000 unarmed and innocent civilians. He also appreciated the role of Kashmiri women and term their sacrifices matchless, adding that their struggle and sacrifices for the right of self-determination would be succeeded and achieve the desired aim of freedom. Speaking on the occasion Chairman Human Rights Council Pakistan Jamsheed Hussain said that council was organizing different programs and seminars to highlight the plights of Kashmiris and human rights violations by the its forces. He said that council would also organize programs in future as well. — APP

FESCO issues shutdown programme

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown program for Tuesday for necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines.

According to the program, power supply from Niamoana feeder emanating from 132-KV Sammudri Road grid station, Saeed Abad, Sadr Bazaar, Muneer Abad, Ejaz Town and Raja Chowk feeders originating from 132-KV University grid station, Kashmir Road and Rehman Abad feeders emanating from 132-KV Narwala Road grid station will remain suspended from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. while new Factory Area feeder originating from 132-KV Chenab Nagar grid station, Fateh Textile, Makkah City and Siana Road feeders emanating from 132-KV Khannuana grid station will observe shutdown from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday (February 1).

Similarly, electricity supply from A-4-PSHF feeder originating from 132-KV Khannuana grid station, new Dikot feeder emanating from 220-KV Sammudri Road grid station, Makkah City, Sir Syed Town and Fowara Chowk feeders originating from 132-KV Factory Area grid station, Mahi Chowk, Sammudri Road and Rehman Shah feeders emanating from 132-KV Tandiawala grid station, Data feeder originating from 132-KV Jhang Road grid station, AK Khaliq feeder emanating from 132-KV Thikriwala grid station, Raja Chowk, Saeed Abad and Ejaz Town feeders originating from 132-KV University grid station, Fateh Abad feeder emanating from 132-KV OTP Canal Road grid station, Sarfraz Colony feeder originating from 132-KV City grid station and Muzaffar Colony and Sammudri Road feeders emanating from 132-KV Sammudri Road grid station will also remain suspended from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on February 10, 2022. — APP

Masses' problems to be resolved on priority basis

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abbottabad Tariq Salam Marwat on Monday directed the district administration to resolve public issues on top priority.

He issued these directives while receiving phone calls from the people to listened their grievances. The DC sought the views of the people regarding transfers, registries, acquisitions, domiciles, arms and driving licenses. The purpose of the citizen's feedback calls was to provide solutions to their problems and revenue-related services.

He directed the district administration to ensure provision of all possible revenue-related facilities and expeditious services. Citizens can register their complaints by contacting the District Control Room 24/7 for identification and feedback. — APP

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Rawal Town.....	5773343

Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125



RAWALPINDI: Tapas Adhikari Ambassador of Nepal in Pakistan visited Murree Brewery Company. Mr. Isphanyar Bhandara CEO Murree Brewery Company presented a souvenir of Oldest Brewery in the Indo-Pak. – DNA

PMC grants 10-day window for dental colleges' admissions

The commission noted that lowering of standards is simply not an option as the same would represent allowing ultimately a lower quality output in terms of graduates who are to become tomorrow's doctors and dentists

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Medical and Dental Council, in an urgent response to concerns of dental colleges over low rates of admissions, has granted a special 10-day window from February 1 (Tuesday) for dental colleges. According to Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC), this window is only for dental colleges to complete their admissions while also allowing them to consider students who may have applied to other colleges and are now interested in obtaining admission to a different dental college. It added, over the past

weeks, representatives from medical and dental colleges especially from Punjab met with the President and the Vice President of the PMC to discuss the extremely low response by students for admission to dental colleges. This was also followed by written requests to look into the matter, it said. Suggestions made by the colleges included lowering the MDCAT pass standards as well as granting an additional one month for admissions. The facts provided by the dental colleges highlighted that very few students applied to dental colleges to start with and even fewer accepted offers for admission.

The majority of the colleges agreed with the commission's finding that the increased fee for dental colleges coupled with a limited career option after graduation led to the students making an informed choice and these factors were seen by them as a deterrent to selecting dental education as a choice. The commission pointed out that the market forces are determining the demand for not only the choice of education but also the colleges that students seek to aspire to. The commission noted that lowering of standards is simply not an option as the same would represent allowing ultimate-

ly a lower quality output in terms of graduates who are to become tomorrow's doctors and dentists. The commission also pointed out that the primary objective is to ensure students with the capacity and capability to undergo the rigorous of a medical and dental program are admitted to the limited seats in medical/dental colleges. It said that it is not the mandate of the commission to forcibly ensure all seats are filled in a private college. It is for the private colleges to provide the quality of education and value in training which would attract students to compete for a seat in the institution. The commission also noted

that the decline in response to dental education had commenced a year ago as it was seen mainly in dental colleges in Sindh and this has now extended to dental colleges in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, to provide maximum relief to the dental colleges, the matter was placed before the Medical and Dental Council by the President PMC and the Council decided the exceptions for dental colleges as MBBS admissions will close on January 31st, 2022. Only admissions of students with delayed results will be allowed till February 10. It was also allowed that BDS colleges may, howev-

er, continue their regular admissions on vacant seats till February 10, 2022, including admission of students with delayed results. Dental colleges between February 1st and February 10th, 2022 may entertain admission of students, subject to merit, who may have applied to other medical or dental colleges but not the offering college itself. It said that the exemptions are provided in response to requests received from multiple dental colleges to the reduced response to admissions. However, no admissions beyond February 10, 2022 will be entertained by any public or private college.

HEC announces Phase-II of IPFP program

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) Phase II (Batch III) 2022 for Pakistani/AJK nationals. According to Assistant Director National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Sohail Raza Mangi, the applications are invited for IPFP programme in all areas of study/disciplines under the IPFP Phase-II (Batch-III). Through the IPFP programme, HEC creates an opportunity for fresh PhDs to obtain academic experience and mentorship for one year in the higher education institutions (HEIs), federal/provincial government postgraduate colleges or public sector R&D organisations offering

degree programmes, prior to their formal entry into the academic job market. The candidates should have 40 year of maximum age limit on the closing date, while he/she must hold a PhD degree from an HEC-recognised university (Pakistani or foreign) completed within the two years preceding the advertisement. The candidates should have published at least two research publications in HEC recognised or indexed journals Individuals holding regular faculty positions are not eligible. However, those holding irregular or contract positions (or other sub-optimal jobs) in universities or elsewhere may apply, and if selected, will have to resign and submit a clearance certificate from their previous employer.

146 new positive cases reported

DNA

RAWALPINDI: As many as 146 more were tested positive for fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 44,239 in the Rawalpindi district, while three persons lost their battle of life against the deadly virus. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Monday, the total infected cases included 41,004 from Rawalpindi and 3235 from outside districts. Among the new patients, 47 belonged to the Rawalpindi Cantonment, 33 from Potohar town, 31 from Rawal town, 13 from Taxila, five from Gujjar Khan, four from AJK, three from Attock and Kallar Syeda, two from Islamabad and Kahuta while one of each case has arrived from Abbottabad, Khushab and Gilgit.

11 years imprisonment awarded on corruption

ISLAMABAD: The Accountability Court, Karachi on Monday awarded 7 years rigorous imprisonment and Rs 1.77 billion fine to accused Muhammad Jamil Ansari and Muhammad Ajmal Ansari due to vigorous prosecution of NAB Karachi. The fine would be equally distributed on both accused Ahmed Jamil Ansari and Muhammad Ajmal Ansari. NAB Karachi had filed reference No.3/2012 (State Vs

Ahmed Jamil Ansari & Others) against accused Ahmed Jamil Ansari, Muhammad Ajmal Ansari and Hasan Jamil Ansari in the Accountability Court No. IV, Karachi on the allegations of cheating public at large. In another case, the Accountability Court, No. 1, Karachi awarded 4 years rigorous imprisonment and Rs.10 million fine to another accused Habib Ahmed Khan. NAB Karachi re-

ceived a complaint against accused Habib Ahmed Khan, Ex-Office Superintendent, Finance Department, Karachi Port Trust from the Ministry of Communication & Railways. Accused Habib Khan submitted the forged bills in the name of five of his fake companies and presented 781 managed bills of Rs. 8.85 million which were later withdrawn by him fraudulently. – APP

Govt notifies transfers, postings of officers

ISLAMABAD: The federal govt on Monday notified transfers and postings of high-ranking officers. According to a notification issued by Establishment Division, Khalida Bashir, a BS-20 officer of Secretariat Group, presently at the disposal of SPP, under Section 10 of the Civil Servants Act, 1973, is transferred and posted as DG, STI, under Establishment Division, under Section 10 of the Civil Servants Act, 1973, for a period of two years, with immediate effect and until further orders. While, Muhammad Ali, a BS-19 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted under Govt of the Punjab, is transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. – DNA

Chairman CDA holds consultative session

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) met with Naveed Iftikhar, renowned urban policy expert. Officers of Engineering Wing also attended the meeting. CDA intends to explore more options for making Islamabad pedestrian friendly and in this endeavor the consultative session was held with Dr. Naveed Iftikhar. There is a need for better signposting and awareness campaigns alongwith evaluation of pedestrian needs, Dr. Iftikhar emphasized during the meeting. He offered to assist CDA in planning and advocacy of pedestrian friendly and environmentally friendly initiatives. During the meeting it was discussed that CDA which has already decided to complete foot paths across Islamabad will eventually develop a pedestrian map for residents. Implementation of paid parking to come up along with introduction of buses which are scheduled for end of March. Such exchange of ideas, the chairman said, is essential for a public sensitive policy formulation by CDA.

1,372 citizens get fine tickets

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) issued 1,372 fine tickets to road users over violation of traffic signals during the month of January, a police spokesman said on Monday. Following directions of IGP Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younis, he said a special campaign underway to check road violations while various squads headed by Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Mazhar Iqbal were performing duties at main roads of the city and taking action against the violators. The Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic), he said had said that efforts afoot to ensure disciplinary traffic system in the city. He said Islamabad Traffic Police personnel have been directed to ensure implementation on traffic rules and regulation irrespective of status and rank, demonstrate patience and politeness while issuing traffic violation tickets to the road users. He said Islamabad Traffic Police was utilizing all available resources to facilitate the general public. The force issues traffic violation tickets not as a punitive measure but the purpose was to ensure safe road environment in the Capital and secure the lives of the people. "The SSP (Traffic) appealed the motorists to cooperate with Islamabad Traffic Police in maintaining traffic discipline in the city", said spokesman while quoting SSP. – APP

IRSA releases 42931 cusecs water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 42931 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 46482 cusecs. According to the data released by Indus River System Authority, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1447.96 feet, which was 55.96 feet higher than its dead level 1392 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 16000 and 20000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1141.20 feet, which was 91.02 feet higher than its dead level of 1050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded 7666 and 115 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 30726, 28964 and 19870 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 7200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 15616 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM on Youth Affairs Usman Dar in a meeting with Finance Minister Shaukat Tareen. – DNA

WASA's cleanliness campaign in full swing

RAWALPINDI: On the directions of Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar, special cleanliness campaign launched by Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) is in full-swing to make the city neat and clean. Managing Director, WASA Raja Shoukat Mehmood appealed to the citizens to come forward and play a role to make the campaign a success. The citizens should cooperate with the sanitation staff to keep the city clean, he said and urged the residents to throw garbage in waste containers and avoid dumping it on roads, drains and open plots. He said that solid waste and garbage should not be thrown in sewerage lines and nullahs. The MD informed that the civic body had covered open manholes while the sewerage lines were being cleared and the sanitation staff of WASA was removing garbage from sewerage lines and nullahs, utilizing heavy machinery including jetting and sucker machines. The staff was also completing the task manually in narrow streets of the city, he added. The civic body had started the work from Satellite Town C-Block, Commercial Market, he said. MD WASA further said that they were working to complete the cleanliness task as per the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar. He informed that the agency had already covered all the manholes in the city areas. Raja Shoukat informed that WASA was also providing drinking water to the residents in different city areas through water bowzers. – APP

Briefs

Pakistan's exports to Germany increase

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports of goods and services to Germany has witnessed an increase of 15.40 percent during the six months of financial year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to Germany were recorded at \$864.183 million during July-December (2021-22) against exports of \$748.794 million during July-December (2020-21), showing growth of 15.40 percent, SBP data revealed. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports to Germany during December 2021 also increased by 29.81 percent, from \$133.250 million against the exports of \$172.980 million. On month-on-month basis, the exports to Germany during December 2021 as compared to the exports of \$154.976 million in November 2021, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to all countries witnessed an increase of 28.96 percent in six months, from \$11.814 billion to \$15.236 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from Germany into the country during the period under review were recorded at \$626.954 million against \$502.622 million last year, showing increase of 24.73 percent in six months of this year. - APP

SEAD announces Contest for space enthusiasts

ISLAMABAD: Space Education and Awareness Drive (SEAD) has announced an Astrophotography Contest titled "Capturing the Marvel of the Night Sky" for the space enthusiasts. According to an official of SEAD, the Glory of the Night Sky is mesmerizing during the long winter nights and serves as a treat to the eyes of astrophotographers at this time everywhere. To participate in the contest, the astrophotographers can send their geo-tagged Astro images at manager.sead@gmail.com along with mentioning their name, address and cell numbers in the email with their entries. The last date for the submission of entries is February 5 after which any submission will not be entertained, the official informed. Space Education and Awareness Drive (SEAD) www.sead.pk is a dedicated website under the ambit of SUPARCO's Space Education and Awareness Programme to enthuse students and general public through activities, competitions, space news etc. - APP

Pak textile exports to surge as orders move from rivals

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce, Abdul Razak Dawood said that Pakistan's textile sector is bringing cheer to its flailing economy, with exports set to swell to a record after gaining an edge over South Asian rivals during the pandemic. In an interview to international news agency he said textile exports are poised to surge 40% from a year earlier to a record \$21 billion in the 12 months ending June. He predicted that figure would expand to \$26 billion in the next fiscal year, surpassing the nation's total exports last year, he said. The textiles industry - which supplies everything from denim jeans to towels for buyers in the U.S. and Europe - is one of the country's few economic bright spots. Textiles amount to about 60% of Pakistan's total exports and the nation allowed its factories to open ahead of India and Bangladesh when the pandemic first emerged in 2020, drawing orders from global brands including Target Corp. and Hanesbrands Inc. "A lot of orders actually were shifted from Bangladesh and India to Pakistan" during the pandemic, said Dawood. "The other good thing that's happening is we are now becoming competitive with Bangladesh. Three, four years ago, Bangladesh was really beating us." - APP

"COMSTECH-CCoE Yemen Programme" to be launched

The ICCBS has offered 15-20 fellowships, whereas 15 fellowships have been offered by The University of Lahore and Health Services Academy Islamabad each

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Yemen, H. E. Mohammed MotaharAlashabi called on Coordinator General COMSTECH, H. E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary at COMSTECH secretariat. Both the dignitaries discussed avenues of mutual interest and cooperation. During the meeting it was agreed upon that COMSTECH in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Yemen in Islamabad will launch "COMSTECH-CCoE Yemen Programme" for the capacity building of Yemeni scientists.

H. E. Mohammed MotaharAlashabi, welcomed the offer of Coordinator General COMSTECH to start this capacity building programme for Yemeni nationals and offered full support to this initiative



from the Embassy of the Republic of Yemen. COMSTECH-CCoE Yemen Programme includes 50 fellowships for Yemeni nationals. These fellowships are being offered by member institutions of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence

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(CCoE): International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) (University of Karachi), The University of Lahore, Lahore, and Health Services Academy (HSA), Islamabad. The ICCBS has offered 15-20 fellowships, whereas 15 fellowships have been offered by The University of Lahore and Health Services Academy Islamabad each. Yemeni nationals holding Masters, PhD and Postdoc degree or currently enrolled at these levels are eligible to apply for these fellowships.

The objective of this programme is to provide high quality state-of-the-art training to Yemeni nationals so that they can serve their nation, as well as train and prepare young generation for future.

Master plans of 80 major cities to be completed by 2022

"The Punjab govt as per PM Imran vision of vertical expansion has already banned use of farmland for new housing. It is now conditioned with the approval of the provincial cabinet's approval which is an uphill task," Amin informed

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam on Monday said the master plans of 80 major urban centers were underway that would be completed by the end of 2022 to clearly demarcate limits of cities expanding rapidly. The SAPM while commenting on the unbridled sprawling of the cities without proper planning and management told APP that there was no master plan of any city before the establishment of the federal capital of Islamabad. Amin said the present government of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan has taken the initiative to set a positive direction of the fast developing cities across the country. He said the master plans were direly needed to protect the arable land under threat of greedy builders and housing societies' owners. "The Punjab government as per Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of vertical expansion has already banned use of farmland for new housing. It is now conditioned with the approval of the provincial cabinet's approval which is an uphill task," Amin informed. The SAPM noted that the similar plan was being replicated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. To a question, he said the master plan of Islamabad was developed back in 1960 and it required moderation and review as per the recent population and urbanization trends. He mentioned that there was need to ensure strict compliance of the master plans of the urban centers to ensure a sustainable and livable cities for the coming generations amid surging phenomenon of climate change.

Govt bringing legal reforms in Parliament: Babar Awan

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Babar Awan on Monday said that the government was bringing legal reforms in the Parliament. Talking to media persons, he said because of the effective accountability system in the country, the former prime minister is absconder. He said the judicial reforms were an important requirement of the time. The government wouldn't tolerate any interference in the independence of judiciary, he added. The adviser said the world's largest institutions were praising to the fact that with the facility of Health Card, every citizen of the country can avail the facility of medical treatment up to Rs. 1 million without any discrimination. This was the real change that has been brought about by the PTI government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan. Baber Awan said it was unfortunate that the people did not have access to justice. In this regard, the present government has done four major things. Through the web portal, the prime minister redeemed the lands of overseas Pakistanis and addressed the issues of poor and widows. - APP

World should force India to stop killing of Kashmiris: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaal Hussein Mullick here on Monday said that the international community and world powers should force the brutal India to stop the killing spree in IIOJK and ensure resolution of the Kashmir dispute as per the UN resolutions. Talking to APP Mushaal said that around one million Indian occupying forces have detained 8 million Kashmiris and turned the occupied territory into one of the largest open prisons in the world. She said that despite facing the worst form of Indian state terrorism, the people of occupied valley have always shown extraordinary courage, strength and resilience, adding that fascist India cannot break their will by using brutal force. "I salute our Kashmiri mothers, sisters, elders and brothers for their sacrifices and their invincible spirit in fight for their justice and birth right of right to self-determination," she added. Said that India is not a democratic state but



a terrorist country as its troops are involved in genocide and ethnic cleansing of innocent Kashmiri people. She said that Indian forces landed in Srinagar and illegally occupied and subjugated the people of Jammu and Kashmir in clear violation of international law and humanitarian principles. Mushaal said that Indian barbaric forces unleashed a wave of state terrorism in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), who used all brutal tactics to silence the dissenting voices in the

occupied valley. The hurriyat leader said that India portrays herself as champion of human rights, whereas, minorities and non-Hindu communities living in India are persecuted by RSS backed fascist Modi government. The chairperson lamented that due to the world's apathy and inaction to stop Indian forces for committing war crimes, the Hindutva regime further emboldened and resorted to change the demography of Kashmir by bringing settlers from other parts of India. - APP

NPO to organize training on 'Cyber Security'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) would organize a webinar on "Cyber Security Basic Essential Skills" on February 03. The cyber security training course is the practice of defending computers, servers, mobile services, electronic systems, networks, and data from malicious attacks, according to the NPO document.

The workshop was focusing on definition, key terms, concepts in the field of cyber security, identifying and distinguishing cyber threats and protection, able to learn concepts topic wise and enriching your knowledge in the field you are looking or, exploring the cyber risk management and understanding the concept by answering a basic question. The program will consist of presentations, virtual group discussions, exercises, and activities.

The program has been designed for those who start a career in cyber security, information security, security analyst position, everyone who wants to learn how to stay safe online in this digital era, who wants to enrich knowledge in the field of cyber security, applying for certificate like CEH, Comp TIA security, and NSA or equivalent ones.

Kharian-Rawalpindi Motorway to open new avenues

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said on Monday said that Kharian-Rawalpindi Motorway to be built under public private partnership model would open new avenues of development for Northern and Central Punjab.

In a tweet, he said that the people living in 42 National Assembly constituencies will benefit from this project. The minister said that after opening of this motorway distance between Lahore and Islamabad will be reduced by 100 km. - APP

PM Khan stirs world's conscience

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications and Postal Services Murad Saeed Monday said Prime Minister Imran Khan exposed the organized propaganda campaign to link Islam with terrorism rather stirred the dead conscience of the world at various global foras. The minister released videos of Prime Minister Imran Khan's speeches against Islamophobia on international forums on his official Twitter handle. In his statement issued here on Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Russian President Putin's joining Imran Khan's voice against Islamophobia, the minister said that as Imran Khan became the Prime Minister, he raised voice against Islamophobia at the international forums. He said that the world witnessed the moment, when the message of Islam resounded at the United Nations' general assembly session. He said, Imran Khan informed the world about the agony and pain of Muslims being inflicted in the name of freedom of expression. Murad said that Prime Minister Imran Khan also wrote letters to the United Nations, the World Economic Forum and the OIC to take steps for stemming Islamophobia. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan also contacted world Islamic leaders, including Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, to convey the true message of Islam and to counter propaganda against Islam. The minister added that global voices were rising against Islamophobia in the world today, after Russian President Putin and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's statements against Islamophobia. He said that today the world listened to Imran Khan's speeches as he emerged as the leader of the Islamic world. Murad Saeed said, Today, the whole country is asking why the political clerics and so-called liberal politicians were silent when Islam is being linked to terrorism through an organized campaign. - APP

Murree Incident: Travel advisory, weather alerts went unheeded

ISLAMABAD: Murree tragedy, in which over 20 people had lost their lives earlier this month, was caused by many reasons including maladministration, however, a less talked about reason was public not following the travel advisory, weather alert and making abrupt plans to visit the snowy mountains. Although, the official website of Pakistan Meteorological department (MET) had issued a monthly weather outlook for the month of January quoting, "Overall, a tendency for 'above normal' precipitation is predicted over most parts of the country".

The Met Office had also issued an alert on Jan 5 that heavy snow storm may cause road closures in Murree, Galiyat, Nathiagali, Kaghan, Naran and other areas from Jan 6 to Jan 9 afternoon. "All authorities concerned are particularly advised to remain 'alert' during the forecast period," the Met Office had stated. Seeking travel advisory before making travel plans in severe weather conditions has almost been a non-practice in the country that causes distress and sometimes puts the tourists in dangerous situations. A tourist from Lahore Haroon Ali who had returned from the Bharahkoh check point with his family told this scribe that they did not know about the travel advisory as they did not bother to check the weather alert on the PMD website before departure. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a meeting with Board of Governors of Institute of Regional Studies. - DNA

Experts urge strong industry-academia linkages

Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that advanced countries have achieved fast economic growth by developing strong industry-academia linkages and Pakistan has to adopt the same approach to accelerate its economic growth

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) organized a roundtable to strengthen the academia-industry linkages. Rectors, Deans, Directors and other representatives of various universities including Nust, Comsats, Bahria, Fast, Quaid-e-Azam, Riphah, Foundation, Institute of Space Technology, Szabist, Cust, IIU, National Skilled University, Pieas, Federal Urdu and Air University and representatives of various local industries participated in the roundtable. The representatives of both sides discussed short, medium and long-term goals to improve academia-industry linkages. They also discussed the key challenges that should be addressed to improve

the industry's reliance on academia for applied research to enhance industrial productivity and produce demand-driven students for industry. It was highlighted that HEC should further encourage universities to adopt its already approved 3+1 academic criterion to enable students to spend 3 years in universities and one year

in industries for degrees in order to provide them practical experience of industrial functions. Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Shaista Sohail, Executive Director, HEC said that HEC has started a series of interactive meetings with Chambers of Commerce & Industry to improve academia-industry linkages that would help

tailor the research initiatives of universities to solve the industrial problems and produce skilled human resource for industry that would ultimately improve economic growth of the country. She also gave a presentation about the various grants being provided by HEC to universities for research initiatives for the benefit of industry.

Dr. Akram Sheikh, Member HEC said that the government was focusing on promoting the knowledge economy and the only best option to achieve this goal was to bridge the gap between academia and industries. He said that 25 percent of the country was being lost due to industrial wastage and stressed that universities and industries should work together to plug this wastage and improve GDP growth. Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that advanced countries have achieved fast economic growth by developing strong industry-academia linkages and Pakistan has to adopt the same approach to accelerate its economic growth. He also highlighted the importance of giving representation to Chambers of Commerce & Industry in Boards of Universities and Academic Councils to improve academia-industry linkages.



New anti-harassment law

NEARLY twelve years ago, Pakistan passed a law titled the "Protection against Harassment of Women in the Workplace Act", which largely proved to be weak and insufficient in protecting women from all spheres from workplace harassment. After a whole decade, the parliament, recognising the shortcomings in the previous law, and on the basis of Supreme Court judgements which identified the 2010 law as lacklustre, has passed a law that significantly strengthens protections for women in the workplace against violence and harassment.

This is a big victory. The law, titled the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Bill, 2022" includes some ground-breaking provisions that could transform the way society and the justice system see harassment. Firstly, the new law expands on the definition of harassment from merely harassment of a sexual nature, to include "discrimination on the basis of gender", whether it is sexual in nature at all, inflicted upon any man, woman or gender minority. This change in the scope of the meaning of the word harassment appears to be influenced by the Supreme Court decision in "Nadia Naz v President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan & Others", where the court stated that conduct that is rooted in gender-based discrimination and creates an abusive and hostile work environment should also be considered harassment.

This change was highly necessary considering several accused escaped the brunt of the law based on the reasoning that their harassment was not strictly of a sexual nature, seizing on the loophole that the scope of "sexualised" harassment itself was a nuanced question. Another major change that the new law brings is expanding the definition of "employee" and "workplace". Under the previous law, freelancers, performers, artists, entertainers, sportspersons, students, domestic workers, intern trainees or apprentices working with or without pay had no recourse if they experienced harassment at the workplace. This is highly relevant especially in Pakistan where workplaces use the excuse of contractual employees to deny being subject to legal requirements. Under the previous law, there was a limited scope of employees who could seek recourse. The more people can legally benefit from the new law, the more cases of harassment will be reported, and more jurisprudence on this crime will inevitably develop.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 227

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Covid-19 persist

THE roaring fifth wave continues uninterrupted in Pakistan as 7978 new cases were reported within the last 24 hours. This has pushed the positivity ratio to 12.49 percent which is worrisome when considering it had declined a few points previously. What can be taken away from such statistics is the fact that simple precautions are not being taken by the public which has bought the false sense of security that comes with the inaccurate claim of Omicron being mild. Against all hopes, it seems as though the country will have to ride the fifth wave for a longer period of time if this continues.

According to new data released in the Swiss region, the highest concentration of deaths owing to Omicron was amongst the unvaccinated sections of society. The fully vaccinated followed them and those who had received their booster were the most protected. There is an important lesson to take away from this; vaccination will not prevent transmission but it will improve your chances for survival.

The government must emphasise the importance of observing basic protocols like wearing a mask, practicing social distancing and refraining from congregating while the vaccination campaign is being expanded to cover each member of society. The people must be reminded what is at stake so that they adhere to such steps and protect themselves. There should be no tolerance for failing to follow the code of conduct during a global pandemic and when so many lives are at stake.

The medical community, and all state authorities, must also work toward correcting the perception that Omicron is nothing but a mild case of the flu. Recent research has shown that it causes long-term lung damage, still causes fatalities and has virtually no lasting immunity against reinfections. This is on top of the fact that its transmission is still a massive burden on the healthcare system. There should be no undermining the virus. It is still relatively new and there is much to be learnt about it still.

Gandhi's murder: Debate rages still over Hindutva ideology role

Ruben Banerjee

Godse and another accused, Narayan Apte, were hanged while six others were sentenced to life in prison the following year

WHILE two new books offer opposing views on the role of the far-right RSS in the assassination of the spiritual and political leader, Hindutva ideology remains a common thread.

January 30 this year will mark the 74th anniversary of the assassination of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. It was in the evening of that day in 1948 that Gandhi – better known as the Mahatma – was felled by the bullets of an assassin, as the unrivalled global icon of non-violence walked towards a prayer meeting. Though stunned by the violent act that shocked the world, justice followed swiftly. The assassin – Nathuram Vinayak Godse, a 38-year-old member of the right-wing Hindu Mahasabha political party – was tried, together with several of his accomplices. Godse and another accused, Narayan Apte, were hanged while six others were sentenced to life in prison the following year.

Despite the quick punishments, speculation never really ended over whether the far right-wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – considered to be the spiritual fountainhead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – had any role in the killing. Sustained interest in the subject has continued due to the many similarities between the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS.

Both right-wing and pro-Hindutva, the two are driven by the prime objective of establishing the primacy of Hindus in India, where non-Hindus constitute around 20 percent of the population. Godse, who killed Gandhi for reportedly being pro-Muslim and soft on

the then newly-created Pakistan, was in fact a member of the RSS before he took up a membership with the Hindu Mahasabha.

The close ties stoked popular suspicion about the involvement of the RSS, and the organisation was banned in the wake of Gandhi's death. However, no direct links between the group and the murder were ever established and the ban was lifted after a year. But the debate over the RSS' role in the killing has nevertheless continued.

It has only become louder and more divisive since Modi – a life-time member of the RSS – became the prime minister. Opponents of the prime minister often bring up Gandhi's murder to embarrass the ruling party. A couple of years ago, opposition party Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, kicked up a storm by publicly accusing the RSS of being behind Gandhi's killing.

Now, the debate has grown even more intense with the publication of two new books. Interestingly, the books – one titled "Gandhi's Assassin: The Making of Nathuram Godse and His Idea of India," and the other "The Murderer, The Monarch and The Fakir" – have taken diametrically opposing views, stoking further speculation rather than settling the dispute. Contrary to what Godse himself had said during his trial, Dhirendra K Jha, the author of "Gandhi's Assassin," contends that Godse had never really quit the RSS even after he had joined the Hindu Mahasabha. Having trawled through archives, Jha argues that the two organisations had "close connections and sometimes even overlapping membership" – an arrangement that was only discontinued after Gandhi's killing. According to Jha, Godse was a member of the RSS while he was with the Hindu Mahasabha. "Disassociating [the] RSS from Gandhi's assassination is a fabrication of history," he argued in his book.

The book's claim is certainly an embarrassment for both the BJP and the RSS, as for a long time their leaders have tried their best to deny any links with Godse or the murder. Though the emboldened pro-Hindutva leaders do not mind sounding anti-Muslim in their utterances – one actually hailed Godse as a patriot – they hate the very thought of having to

carry the baggage of Gandhi's murder. They fear that being linked to the killing of someone considered the "Father of the Nation" would be politically inconvenient and morally indefensible. As proof of their innocence, however, they could cite the second book, "The Murderer, The Monarch and The Fakir."

Its co-authors – Appu Esthose Suresh and Priyanka Kotamraju – have argued the opposite of that of "Gandhi's Assassin".

According to them, the RSS was never a suspect in Gandhi's killing, contrary to popular perception. Celebrated as a freedom fighter, his framed photographs adorn the offices and homes of current top BJP functionaries. However, critics say that he spread communal hatred and was also a coward, having repeatedly begged the British to free him from jail.

In the months following Gandhi's assassination, Savarkar was arrested and tried alongside Godse and others. He was freed for want of conclusive evidence. However, in their book, Suresh and Kotamraju claim to have unearthed new evidence. According to them, Godse did not act alone and there were co-conspirators that included Savarkar. The authors have cited the date and the passenger manifest to show that Godse and Savarkar travelled together by air from Mumbai to Delhi months before the murder was carried out.

Once in the capital city, they met with others known to have been involved – such as Narayan Apte. It was supposedly the "meeting of minds" where the plan to kill Gandhi was hatched.

A probe – the Jeevan Lal Kapur Commission of Inquiry – that was ordered by the Indian government in later years had also pointed to Savarkar's role in the assassination.

But by the time the inquiry findings were made public in 1969, Savarkar had been dead for three years and no action was taken. It is unlikely that the revelations in the two books – however contradictory – will prompt the Indian government to order fresh inquiries. But what they do prove is that the speculation over who conspired to kill Gandhi has survived, just as the Mahatma's rich legacy has. Both are seemingly immortal.

–Courtesy: TRT World

The Pakistan portrayal in Afghan peace development – 1

Fatima Iftikhar



The two Islamic states sharing the common border, the largest 2240 Km forming the Durand Line, battled with mutual skirmishes influenced by India at East

THE Pakistan-Afghanistan history dates back to the inception of the two states bearing positions in neighbourhood. The relation of the two needs a scrutiny to comprehend the on-going pattern of interconnection. Highlighting Pak-Afghan relations, numerous frequently disregard the way that the historical backdrop of Pakistan and Afghanistan didn't begin in 1979 when Pakistan equipped the Mujahideen to counter the Russian attack in Afghanistan however traces all the way back to the years prior to that as well. Pakistan and Afghanistan have a set of experiences from 1947, since the previous commencement, until 1979 also. Truth be told, the long intermediary battle of 26 years executed by Afghanistan in Pakistan advancing Pashtunistan (1947-73) is one that many don't think about. Purposefully not recognizing the pre-1979 history of Pakistan and Afghanistan might be scholarly untrustworthiness on our part. For mindfulness, coming up next is a timetable of activities taken by the Kabul system from 1947 to 1979:

September 1947: Afghanistan turned into the Lone nation to cast a ballot against Pakistan's enrollment in the United Nations what was the United Nations. The government of Pakistan was delicate at that point while thinking about this incredibly unfriendly start by Afghanistan. The newly born state was in need to good bilateral relations with its neighbouring countries back then. Following that in 1947, the Pashtunistan banner was raised close by the Afghan public banner in Kabul. Afghanistan began equipping and subsidizing intermediaries in the boundary regions (Afridi Sarishtas and Ipi Faqir) for the 'Freedom of Pashtunistan'. This prompted engagements between Pak powers and Afghan intermediaries.

The two Islamic states sharing the common border, the largest 2240 Km forming the Durand Line, battled with mutual skirmishes influenced by India at East. The struggle to be at peace has been no less than a roller coaster for the two. The period of 1947 till 1963 was regarded as afflicted with misconceptions as the claims on Pakistan's region particularly asserted under Durand Line before it was deteriorated. The subsequent confusion depended on oneself accepted dread among Afghan rulers that Pakistan's endurance and effective walk to a majority rule arrangement of administration would subvert the situation of the rulers in

Afghanistan. Pakistan, which previously had an undermining East proved unable envision bearing the cost of another unfriendly country on its West. It was uniquely with the amicable relations with Afghanistan that could assist Pakistan with getting away the bad dream of being sandwiched between two antagonistic neighbors at the same time from East and the West. However, Kabul's refusal to perceive the Durand Line as a genuine global limit and its interest as to was very disturbing start. The Afghan government censured the consolidation of West Pakistan areas, and on Walk 30, 1955, Afghan demonstrators assaulted the Pakistani international safe haven and offices in Kabul, Kandahar, and Jalalabad. Pakistan fought back by shutting the boundary, a monetary barricade. Discretionary relations were reestablished in September. Again because of the Pashtunistan issue, the two nations blamed each other for line mispractices in 1961

Afghanistan's approaches had put a serious strain upon Pakistan-Afghan relations during the 1960s, up until the 1970s, when the Pashtunistan development to a great extent died down as the populace came to relate to Pakistan; despite the fact that, hatred against the Punjabi first class kept on taking place. The Pashtun osmosis into the Pakistani state followed long stretches of rising Pashtun impact in Pakistani governmental issues and the country's organization, coming full circle in Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Ishaq Khan – all Pashtuns, achieving initiative of Pakistan. The serious patriot gathering of the time, the Awami Public Gathering (ANP), dropped its secessionist plan and accepted the Pakistani state, leaving just a little Pakhtunkhwa Millat Gathering to advocate the reason for autonomy about both Pakistan and Afghanistan. In spite of the shortcomings of the early secessionist development, this period in history proceeds to adversely impact Pakistani-Afghan relations in the 21st century, notwithstanding the territory's politics.

In December 1971 following the Soviet attack in Afghanistan the United States joined Pakistan to counter Soviet impact and advanced its own advantages in the district. Thus, Afghan, Indian, and Soviet knowledge offices assumed their part by supporting al-Zulfikar – a Pakistani liberal. Al-Zulfikar was a Pakistani left-wing association framed in 1977 by Mir Murtaza Bhutto, child of previous Pakistani Executive Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Its objective was to topple the tactical system that expelled Bhutto. After Walk 1981 Al-Zulfikar asserted no further attacks. The Bhutto family and Pakistani military despot Zia-ul-Haq shared a shared adversary, as Zia was the one supporting assaults against the Afghan government.

During the 1980s, the Durand Line was intensely utilized by Afghan exiles escaping the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan, including countless Mujahideen extremist gatherings who crossed to and fro. Pakistan turned into a significant preparing ground for around 250,000 unfamiliar mujahideen contenders who started crossing into Afghanistan every day to take up arms against socialist Afghanistan and the Soviet powers. The mujahideen included local people as well as Middle Easterners and others from more than 40 diverse Islamic countries.

(To be continued)

Islamophobia likely to cost UK Tories at the ballot box

Zaid M. Belbagi



Nusrat Ghani, a former transport undersecretary, spoke out about her dismissal in 2020 being down to her alleged "Muslimness" and that her faith "made colleagues feel uncomfortable"

IN May 2020, I wrote to then-chairwoman of the UK's Conservative Party, Amanda Milling, Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the leaders of the party in both Houses of Parliament with regards to Islamophobia in the Tory party. Following the Equality and Human Rights

Commission's decision not to investigate allegations of Islamophobia, I sought to raise the importance of the party seeking a comprehensive solution to an underlying prevalence of racism within it. Unsurprisingly, the prime minister did not respond, reflecting a casual attitude toward racism against Muslims in the party, which surfaced again last week. On Jan. 23, Nusrat Ghani, a former transport undersecretary, spoke out about her dismissal in 2020 being down to her alleged "Muslimness" and that her faith "made colleagues feel uncomfortable." Johnson has said he will launch an inquiry into Ghani's claims.

As a member of the executive of the Conservative Muslim Forum and a long-term party member, what I wished to communicate to the leadership was that the significant number of allegations of Islamophobia within the party warranted a thorough investigation and disciplinary action for those involved.

After much cajoling and assiduous follow-ups, Milling did respond, assuring me that the party "remains open to people of all backgrounds and rejects abuse or discrimination on the basis of someone's race or religion." I was encouraged to learn that an independent investigation led by former EHRC commissioner Swaran Singh would look into all forms of prejudice and discrimination and go some way to addressing this issue. The prime minister, who has in the past found himself in hot water owing to his comments regarding Muslims, remained silent.

Singh's report, published last year, found that "anti-Muslim sentiment has been evidenced at local association and individual levels," but thereafter focused on procedural matters concerning the registration of complaints. It stopped well short of tackling the high-profile Islamophobic discourse of the likes of serving minister Zac Goldsmith and Johnson, which in many ways typified the futility of the exercise. No. 10 spent the week trying to defuse the row, claiming that the fact the prime minister initially met with Ghani was a coup in itself. Justice Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab again urged Ghani to make a formal complaint to the party. Ghani, rightly, reiterated that this would not be appropriate. This has highlighted that a party supposedly built on meritocratic principles has failed to safeguard the integrity of its Muslim members and, indeed, uphold the principles it supposedly represents.

Certain important urban seats were only narrowly won by the Conservatives in the last election – constituencies where the Muslim electorate is influential. More concerning for the party, surveys suggest that more than 80 percent of British Muslims voted for Labour in 2019, owing in great part to the unmistakable whiff of Islamophobia with which the Conservatives have become associated. Should the party continue to harbor such sentiments, the reckoning will be at the ballot box.

–Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

FM holds telephonic conversation with FM of Tajikistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi held a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Tajikistan, today. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the steadily growing bilateral ties and exchanged views on further expanding the partnership. The Foreign Minister noted increased frequency of high-level visits between the two countries and acknowledged holding of political dialogues, reactivation of economic mechanism, and growing parliamentary ties. Foreign Minister Qureshi also underlined Pakistan's "Vision Central Asia" policy that focuses on enhanced and result-oriented engagement with Central Asian countries. He stressed the importance of enhancing trade and economic ties. The Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the implementation of flagship CASA-1000 power project. The two sides were pleased to note the excellent multilateral cooperation at global and regional fora, including in the UN, OIC, SCO and ECO. The Foreign Ministers also discussed the economic and humanitarian requirements in Afghanistan and agreed to continue working together in support of sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

10 to 15 Opp members...

FROM PAGE 01

out in a no-confidence motion. Sheikh Rasheed has been making regular pronouncements to buttress the government's position ahead of the Opposition's long march planned for March 23. The long march is being organised by the alliance of Opposition parties called the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). They are taking advantage of crippling inflation to make it their rallying cry.

At a press conference on Monday, Sheikh Rasheed said if the Opposition's Bilawal Bhutto is keen on coming to Islamabad on March 23 he can go right ahead and so can the JUI-F's Fazal-ur-Rehman because it won't make a difference. The Opposition has failed for three and a half years, Sheikh Rasheed argued.

"They must realise that we have to prove our national responsibility," he said. "Dharnas and long marches have nothing to do with it."

Pakistan condemns...

FROM PAGE 01

solidarity with the brotherly government and people of Iraq. No cause justifies such wanton acts of violence." According to media reports, on Friday, six rockets were fired at the Iraqi capital's airport, causing damage to runway and civilian planes. Separately, Pakistan strongly condemned the launching of missile from Al-Jawf, Yemen, by the Houthis towards the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is commendable that the missile was successfully intercepted by the air defence system of the UAE, preventing loss of innocent lives.

"We consider these attacks as a grave violation of international law and a serious threat to regional peace and security. Pakistan calls for their immediate cessation", said the statement.

UAE foils new Houthi...

FROM PAGE 01

The UAE General Civil Aviation Authority on Monday assured the public that the latest Houthi atrocity has not affected air traffic in the region's busiest air corridor. "The air traffic in the country is going as usual, and operations of all flights are running normally. There is no impact on flights and airports as a result of the ballistic missile launched by the terrorist Houthi militia," the authority said.

Aliyev seeks int'l recognition of Ganja bombing as war crime

"The war is over. Yes, we say there must be peace. But we must never forget the Armenian savagery and Armenian fascism. We must not forget the victims of Khojaly. We must never forget the victims of Ganja and the victims of our other cities," he said

DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has stated that the bombing of Azerbaijan's second-largest city, Ganja, by Armenia during the 44-day war in 2020 should be recognized as a war crime by the international community.

He made the remarks in an interview with Azerbaijan State News Agency-AZERTAC during a visit to Ganja.

"This was not an accidental fire, it was aimed at intentionally destroying a residential building, killing Azerbaijani citizens, intimidating the Azerbaijani people and deterring the Azerbaijani leadership from liberating the lands. Of course, this is a war crime and should be recognized by the world as a war crime," he said.

The president emphasized that the Azerbaijani army did not commit such atrocities during the war and fought with honor.

"When Ganja and other cities, such as Mingachevir, Barda, Tartar and Goranboy, Aghdam region, Fuzuli region, Naftalan were bombed, I said that we would take revenge on the battlefield. Unlike Armenians, we will never commit war crimes. This once again shows the greatness of our people and the correctness of our policy," he said.

Aliyev recalled that Ganja was repeatedly bombed by Armenia during the second Karabakh war and that 13 rockets were fired at the city, eight of which exploded. He also stated that Ganja was bombarded with "Tochka-U" and "SCUD" missiles.

"When we said out word on this issue, the Armenian side denied it. Then the false Armenian propaganda, making up yet another fabrication, declared that Azerbaijan had fired at its cities itself. Notice the level of ignominy and dishonesty," he said.

Noting that a recent demonstration in Russia against a film about Armenian fascist Garegin Nzhdeh



was stopped and suppressed, Aliyev emphasized that he was the first person to raise this issue at the political level.

"Staging this unacceptable act in Moscow through the Armenian Diaspora Organization does not fit any frames. Because Russia itself, like Azerbaijan, is at the forefront of the struggle against the glorification of fascism," he said.

Noting that Azerbaijan and Russia have repeatedly exchanged views on this issue, he underlined that the two countries agreed at the level of presidents, other officials and public organizations that fascism must not be allowed to rise, must not be glorified.

"On the one hand, although Armenia officially joins these views, it is actually taking steps to glorify a fascist such as Nzhdeh.

There are still streets, squares and an underground station in Armenia and Yerevan named after fascist Nzhdeh, and there is a large six-meter statue of him... This shows that Armenian fascism is still alive," he said.

The president underlined that Azerbaijan defeated Armenian fascism in the second Karabakh war. "We will continue to try to wipe out all manifestations of Armenian fascism, and we are capable of doing that. But other countries and the international community must also be united on this issue. The destruction committed by Armenian fascism in the 21st century should be an example for everyone that fascism is fascism," he said.

The president also stated that the Memorial Complex in Ganja, on

which he laid the groundwork, will span approximately four hectares. Noting that the demolished buildings will remain in their current state, Aliyev emphasized that this memory should not be erased.

"The war is over. Yes, we say there must be peace. But we must never forget the Armenian savagery and Armenian fascism. We must not forget the victims of Khojaly. We must never forget the victims of Ganja and the victims of our other cities," he said.

"We bow our heads to their holy spirit and say once again that their blood did not remain on the ground. Perhaps this is a consolation for their loved ones," he said. As part of his visit to Ganja city, the president inaugurated several important facilities. Among them was the opening of the second

ASAN Center and the Ganja Drama Theatre.

Aliyev also got acquainted with the construction of the Ganja Sports Palace. It should be noted that this is the largest sports center in the country.

"I can say that there is no sports center of this size in Azerbaijan, even in Baku. ... I am sure that this sports center will be commissioned by the end of next year and will be very useful for both athletes and city residents," the president said.

He also attended the opening of a locomotive depot in Ganja. Noting that the East-West transport corridor passes through Ganja, Aliyev stated that a locomotive depot was recently opened in Baku and a second depot has just been opened in Ganja.

Press freedom rapidly deteriorating in China

Foreign journalists working in China are facing "unprecedented hurdles" ahead of the Winter Olympics, according to a new survey

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Foreign journalists in China are facing "unprecedented hurdles," according to a press freedom report by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China (FCCC) released on Monday. "The FCCC is troubled by the breakneck speed by which media freedom is declining in China," the report said.

Of the over 100 foreign journalists that took part in the FCCC's survey, 99% said that they felt working conditions did not meet international standards.

Almost half of respondents said that their offices were understaffed as they were unable to bring journalists into the country as authorities have delayed visa approvals. 88% of respondents who traveled to China's northwestern Xinjiang region in 2021 said they were visibly followed, and 34% said that they were asked to delete data. Xinjiang has been the site of a crackdown on China's Uyghur ethnic minority, which has drawn international condemnation.

The FCCC noted that state-backed campaigns of online harassment have been used to make the job of reporting more difficult. In the run-up to the Beijing Winter Olympics, 60% of the 127 respondents criticized the insufficient information provided by the

organizers about events. 23% said that they were not able to get in touch with appropriate Olympics committee personnel, while 32% said they were excluded from events open to other media.

Only 10% of respondents said that they were able to reliably attend pre-Olympics events. Correspondents often only learn of press events after they occur, according to the FCCC report.

The FCCC said in its report that "media freedom deteriorates in the periods around China's major events — a time when the authorities want to ensure political stability."

According to the FCCC, most news organizations are planning to send foreign journalists from outside China to cover the Olympics, which will require entering a quarantine bubble. 90% of respondents to the survey said they were not planning to go into the Olympics bubble.

The FCCC report said that foreign correspondents that haven't been able to remain in China have relocated to cities such as Taipei, Singapore, Sydney and London. The FCCC said that Hong Kong is no longer an appealing option for foreign correspondents, as China has begun expelling foreign journalists as well as arresting and jailing local journalists.

10-member int'l team reaches K2 base camp

ISLAMABAD: A 10-member international mountaineering team on Monday reached K2 base camp to attempt to scale the world's second highest mountain at 8,611 meters height in winter. "The team is led by Taiwan's female mountaineer Grace Tseng and includes three Pakistan high altitude porters and five Nepalese sherpas," Karrar Haidri, secretary Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) told APP on Monday.

According to Haidri the plan to summit K2 in winter was prepared by Tseng. "She has embarked on the mission with the support of sherpa Nima Gyalzen, Chiring, Dawa, Furi, Ngima Tendi, Ningma Dorje Tamang and Tashi and Pakistan's high-altitude porters Muhammad Sharif, Mohsin Joshi and Karim," he added. "Today, they have hoisted Taiwan, Nepal and Pakistan's flags at the base camp. They have all the necessary equipment and sufficient food with them and we wish to see them successfully ascending the mountain. — APP

Greenwood held after rape allegations

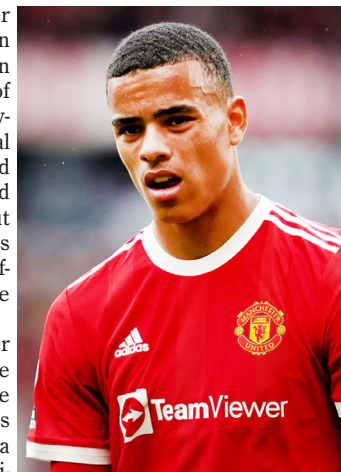
LONDON: Manchester United player Mason Greenwood has been arrested on suspicion of rape and assault following allegations on social media. The police did not name Greenwood but a statement about the investigation was provided on Sunday after inquiries about the 20-year-old forward.

"Greater Manchester Police were made aware earlier today of online social media images and videos posted by a woman reporting incidents of physical violence," the force said in a statement. "An investigation was launched and following enquiries we can confirm a man in his 20s has since been arrested on suspicion of rape and assault."

"He remains in custody for questioning. Enquiries are ongoing." Manchester United said it does not condone violence of any kind. Greenwood has since been suspended from training or playing with the Premier League giants "until further notice".

The allegations were posted early Sunday morning on the Instagram account of a woman who uploaded images of bruising to her body and bleeding from her lip.

A voice note purporting to be of an attack was also posted. The posts were all deleted from the social media site but were widely shared. — APP



SC nullifies LHC's verdict

FROM PAGE 01

party in only one petition doesn't make a difference," Justice Lanjar remarked. He said that the Punjab government had presented its stance in the high court.

"Don't go into technicalities," the judge warned the government lawyer, directing him to give a solid argument. Justice Lanjar further stated that the case records suggested that the land acquisition for RRUDP had also been challenged in the petitions, therefore, the government's lawyers should refrain from making false statements before the court. Meanwhile, the counsel representing Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA) maintained that the housing societies were the petitioners in LHC. At this, Justice Naqvi remarked that it was because the conflict housing societies' interest was evident here.

The government's lawyers managed to move the court to rule out the LHC's verdict. After hearing the arguments, the SC nullified the challenged verdict and directed the government to continue work on the RRUDP. Moreover, the court issued notices to the parties, making it clear that the work can be carried on only on the sites whose owners have been paid for their land. The court stated that it will figure out if inter-court appeals against the LHC verdict are maintainable or not. "The case will be forwarded to LHC if the appeals are maintainable," the apex court remarked. It gave the observation that the LHC referred to the US laws but there is a difference in situations in the US and Pakistan.

Last Tuesday, the LHC had declared the RRUDP illegal while announcing a verdict on the petitions challenging the mode and manner of the land acquisition proceedings undertaken by the RUDA. The court directed the Authority to return the money it had acquired from the government within two months.

IHC issues contempt...

FROM PAGE 01

Chief Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan took up the petition filed by Advocate Inamul Rahim who named NAB chief Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal as respondent. The petitioner stated before the court that this court had declared that the anti-corruption watchdog could investigate assets of the former president, who remained a public office holder.

"Was that verdict of ours challenged before any forum?" the chief justice asked the counsel who answered in the negative. He said he provided evidence to the NAB yet it was not acting against Gen Musharraf. As per the former military ruler's asset details submitted to the Election Commission of Pakistan, the petitioner said Musharraf's one account has the balance of about \$2 million.

After initial hearing, the court issued a notice to the NAB chief with a direction to submit his reply to the petition by the next hearing on Feb 15.

Gillani resigns...

FROM PAGE 01

(Amendment) Bill passed from the opposition-controlled house — a development that had raised many eyebrows.

In an indirect reference to his absence from Friday's session, Gillani said "some turncoats" were accusing him of helping the government.

"I am not astonished by the harsh words from my opponents, but I am astonished by the silence of my well-wishers," he said.

"If ministers would have said something [of this sort], it would have been an honour for me. But some turncoats are saying that I helped the government and I am saying that [the government] won because of your votes."

He concluded his brief speech by stating that he had already send his resignation to his party and he no longer wanted to be the Senate opposition leader. However, it remained unclear whether his resignation had been accepted.

Sweden wins handball c'ship in Budapest

"I cannot describe how I feel now. It really does mean a lot for us and for the whole country as it was our first gold medal in the last 20 years and we lost three finals in the near past so we are absolutely buzzing now"

SPORTS DESK

BUDAPEST: Sweden won the Men's EHF EURO 2022 handball championship here on Sunday, beating Spain 27-26 in a fantastic match, while the bronze medal went to Denmark, who defeated France 35-32.

The game was extremely tight, as it is not unusual in a final, and the Spaniards took the lead within the last minute of the first half, thanks to an efficient defense backed by goalkeeper Andreas Palicka, who was elected Player of the Match for his performance. Spain did manage to lead by two goals for a short time at the start of the second half, but after 17-15, neither team kept an advantage of more than one goal. The final score was set in the last minutes. The standstill at 26-26 was finally broken by an overtime penalty, called for Ekberg who became the hero for Sweden.

"I cannot describe how I feel now. It really does mean a lot for



us and for the whole country as it was our first gold medal in the last 20 years and we lost three finals in the near past so we are absolutely buzzing now," Swed-

ish right wing Valter Chrintz said after the game. "Now I cannot say that I am satisfied with the silver medal, but we did a really good tournament.

I did not expect that we could reach the final. It is very tough to lose like this. We will have time to think it over and we can say that it was an amazing EHF

EURO 2022, but right now it is hard to think that," Joan Canelas, from the Spanish team, told reporters right after the game.

Denmark returned to the podium after eight years. The feat is even more so historic, that the Danes have never defeated the French at the EHF EURO, in the five times they met on the parquet. Kentin Mahe earned the Player of the Match award, after scoring eight and making seven assists.

"It was a tough and exciting match. We had a tremendous defense and a strong goalkeeper. When Matthias Gisdal went out early, we even fought harder. We fought like crazy in the last 60 minutes of the game. I am so happy with this win and I am very proud of my team," Denmark coach Nikolaj Jacobsen commented following the victory. The Men's EHF EURO 2022, starting on January 13, took place in five venues across Hungary and Slovakia.

A total of 24 teams competed in six groups in the 15th European Championship and 65 matches took place during 18 days.

Briefs

Japan starts mass Covid boosters

TOKYO: Tokyo has launched a mass inoculation drive for COVID-19 booster shots at a temporary center operated by the military as Japan tries to speed up delayed third jabs to counter surging infections. Japan began administering booster shots to medical workers in December, but has only provided such inoculations to 2.7% of the population after delaying a decision to cut the interval between the first two coronavirus shots and a booster to six months from the initial eight.

Demand for the shots is intense: Online reservations that started on Friday resulted in all slots for about 4,300 doses to be given at the center this week being filled within 9 minutes. The center is providing the vaccine made by Moderna, Inc.

On a smaller scale, people 65 and older can get booster shots elsewhere. The center run by the Self-Defense Force in downtown Tokyo reopened Monday after closing down in late November. It will be vaccinating about 720 people aged 18 or older per day this week, ramping up to more than 2,000 a day next month. Another military-run center will begin booster shots next week in Osaka. The omicron variant has been spreading quickly, pushing new reported infections to much higher than earlier waves of coronavirus. Tokyo reported 15,895 new cases Sunday, a new high for a Sunday.

Nearly half of its hospital capacity is filled. Nationwide, Japan recorded some 78,000 cases for an accumulated total of 2.68 million, with about 18,700 deaths. A male resident in his 50s said in an interview with Japanese media that vaccination rollouts in his area were slow and he was relieved to get his shot. Another, in his 40s, said he was anxious to be vaccinated because omicron infections were spreading at his son's elementary school. - APP

Cyprus overturns UK woman's conviction

NICOSIA: The Supreme Court in Cyprus overturned the conviction of a British woman given a four-month suspended sentence for making up claims that she was gang raped by as many as a dozen Israelis during a vacation in Cyprus in 2019, defense lawyers said Monday. Michael Polak, who was among a team of lawyers representing the woman, called the decision a "watershed moment" for the woman and others "around the world who find themselves in similar positions."

Polak said the Supreme Court agreed with the defense that the British woman didn't receive a fair trial and that important fair trial provisions were "totally disregarded in this case." He said the "young, vulnerable woman was not only mistreated" when she reported the rape to police but was also put through a trial that was "manifestly unfair" as the Supreme Court found.

Israeli jets attack sites near Damascus

DAMASCUS: Israeli warplanes carried out a missile attack early Monday near the Syrian capital, Damascus, the state news agency SANA reported.

"The Israeli enemy launched an aerial aggression with bursts of missiles from the direction of Rifaq, east of Beirut, targeting some points in the vicinity of Damascus," SANA said, citing a military source. The source said Syrian air defenses intercepted the missiles and downed some of them. The military source reported material damage in the attack, without giving further details. There was no comment from the Israeli authorities on the report.

For years, Israel has targeted sites of Iranian and Syrian regime forces in Syria. Israel rarely claims responsibility for its attacks there. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Board of Investment presenting a souvenir to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi during his visit to BoI. - DNA

Kremlin urges US to abandon policy of fomenting tension

"Regrettably, American media outlets have been publishing a large amount of unverified, distorted and deliberately false and inflammatory information in recent months about what is happening in and around Ukraine"

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Moscow is calling on Washington and its European allies to give up their policy of whipping up tension around Ukraine and assume a constructive stance, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

"The hysteria that the United States is instigating is, indeed, leading to hysteria in Ukraine where people are almost packing frontline bags. This is obvious and this is a fact. This is the downside of this very malicious and damaging campaign being run by Washington. We consistently criticize this stance and call

on Washington and its allies on the European continent to give up this policy and assume a constructive, calm and balanced approach," the Russian presidential spokesman said, responding to a request to comment on Western media reports that the White House was dissatisfied with Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky's position on the threat of Russia's alleged invasion of Ukraine.

"Regrettably, American media outlets have been publishing a large amount of unverified, distorted and deliberately false and inflammatory information in recent months about what is happening in and around

US, UK ramp up sanctions pressure on Russia over Ukraine

WASHINGTON: The United States and Britain flagged new economic sanctions against Russia, as Washington and its NATO allies step up efforts to deter any invasion of Ukraine. Fears of an imminent invasion have grown in recent days, despite denials from Moscow and pleas from Ukraine's president to avoid stirring "panic" over the massive Russian military build-up on the border. Amid a flurry of diplomatic contacts, US Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland said a proposal on security issues presented last week by the US and NATO to Russia may have stirred interest in Moscow. "We've heard some signs that the Russians are interested in engaging on that proposal," Nuland said on CBS, including the likelihood of new talks this week between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov. - Agencies

Ukraine. This is becoming obvious actually for all," Peskov said, adding that these publications should be treated "correspondingly."

Replying to a question about whether Russian politicians and journalists should cover this issue so actively, the Kremlin spokesman said the following: "We are not empowered to tell the media how much and what they must cover, but we are empowered to recommend that people read this information as little as possible and maintain a sober view." CNN earlier reported, citing sources in the US administration that tension had been building between

Washington and Kiev. According to the American TV channel, US President Joe Biden and his advisers were annoyed by "Zelensky's public downplaying of the threat" of an alleged imminent invasion and that US backing "is being met with too much thanks" from the Ukrainian leadership. For its part, Kiev has branded the US assessment of the situation as an "overreaction that is inciting panic and economic turmoil" inside Ukraine while "at the same time the US refuses to take preemptive deterrence measures such as imposing new sanctions on Russia," CNN informed.

President honors the memory of the first Uzbek President



NEWS DESK

TASHKENT: President ShavkatMirziyoyev laid a wreath at the monument to the First President Islam Karimov at the Scientific and Enlightenment Memorial Complex named after Islam Karimov, reports "Dunyo" IA correspondent. According to the press service of the President of Uzbekistan, the people who honor the memory of their

ancestors and outstanding sons are always worthy of respect. Unfortunately, in our history, there have been cases when the leaders of the nation were glorified during life and denigrated after death. From the first day of his activity as President, Shavkat-Mirziyoyev declared that the good deeds of Islam Karimov would be continued, and made decisions to perpetuate his memory. The mausoleum of the First

Times considers Uzbekistan best place for tourism

LONDON: The UK's The Times has published an article titled "Where is hot in May?", which lists the best places in the world to travel in the last month of spring, including Uzbekistan. The author of the article is the well-known journalist of the publication Richard Mellor, who visited Uzbekistan in spring 2019. As noted in the article, with winter months now a distant memory in the northern hemisphere, more and more southern European destinations become an option for a pre-summer, tan-minded break - namely the likes of Sicily, Greece and Turkey. So too does Tunisia, across the Med and littered with historical remains. If you're overdue a long-haul break, there are gardens to admire in Japan, leopards to look for in Zambia or Sri Lanka. At the same time, for a long vacation in May, the author also recommends visiting historical cities in Uzbekistan along the route of the legendary Silk Road. The author writes that the average temperature during this time in Uzbekistan is 20C. - Agencies

President was built. It has become a tradition to hold commemorative events on his birthday - January 30. As ShavkatMirziyoyev noted, the more we honor the personality and merits of Islam Karimov, the stronger the spirituality of our people, youth will be. Today's event has become the embodiment of this truth. Verses from the Quran were recited. The deeds of Islam Karimov for the benefit and in the

interests of our people, his high human qualities - courage, justice and modesty - were noted.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the Chambers of the OliyMajlis, the Presidential Administration and the Government, scientists and cultural figures, representatives of the intelligentsia and the public. Flowers were also laid at the monuments to Islam Karimov in Samarkand and Karshi.

Baku, Ankara mull cooperation, regional situation



Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan; Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu have discussed bilateral cooperation between the two countries, the ministry reported on January 31. In a telephone conversation the ministers also exchanged views on the current situation in the region, the report added. Azerbaijan and Turkey cooperate in various fields of economy and have jointly completed giant energy and infrastructure projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, and TANAP. On June 15, Azerbaijan and Turkey signed the Shusha Declaration on Allied Relations, which focuses on defence cooperation, promoting regional stability and prosperity, and establishing new transportation routes. In the first ten months of 2021, the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Turkey amounted to \$3.4 billion. The trade turnover between the two countries amounted to \$4.1 billion in 2020. The two countries set up a goal to bring the mutual trade turnover to \$15 billion in 2023. It should be noted that so far, Turkey is Azerbaijan's second-largest investor followed by the UK. Additionally, Turkey was one of the first countries that expressed its interest and readiness to participate in the restoration of Azerbaijan's liberated territories.

AU suspends Burkina Faso after coup

ADDIS ABABA: The African Union said Monday it had suspended Burkina Faso in response to the January 24 coup that ousted President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré. The bloc's 15-member Peace and Security Council said on Twitter it had voted "to suspend the participation of #BurkinaFaso in all AU activities until the effective restoration of constitutional order in the country". MoussaFakiMahamat, chair of the African Union Commission, had already condemned the coup the day it happened and before it was clear who was taking charge. The West African bloc ECOWAS suspended Burkina Faso on Friday and sent a delegation to meet with the ruling junta Saturday. The coup is the latest bout of turmoil to strike Burkina Faso, a landlocked state that has suffered chronic instability since gaining independence from France in 1960. A jihadist insurgency that spread over Mali's border has killed more than 2,000 people and forced 1.5 million to flee their homes since 2015. Mali and Guinea, also in West Africa, have also seen coups in the past 18 months that have prompted AU suspensions. Sudan is also suspended following a coup there on October. The spate of coups is expected to be a major point of discussion at the AU summit in Addis Ababa this weekend, diplomats say. - APP

Portugal PM prepares to govern after surprise win

LISBON: Portugal's Prime Minister Antonio Costa prepared Monday to govern solo after his Socialist party scored a surprise landslide win, with economic recovery from the pandemic among his top priorities. His party secured a parliamentary majority in Sunday's snap elections, which also saw the far-right Chega party make significant gains. The Socialists received 41.7 percent of the vote in Sunday's snap polls, giving it 117 seats in the 230-seat parliament, up from 108 in the outgoing assembly.

Four seats still need to be attributed in the coming days from the results of votes cast abroad, but in 2019 the Socialists obtained two. The results defied final polls which had suggested that the Socialist were in a statistical tie with the main opposition centre-right PSD, which finished second with 76 seats. President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa was expected to formally invite Costa, who has headed two minority governments since 2015, later this week to form a new govt. - APP

Europe storms: Ships collide off Dutch coast

THE HAGUE: Rescue helicopters evacuated all 18 crew members from a ship that was left drifting rudderless in a wind turbine park off the Dutch North Sea coast Monday after it collided with another ship and began taking on water during a powerful storm, emergency services said. The collision happened as Storm Corrie lashed parts of the northern Europe. It came after Storm Malik killed at least four people over the weekend, destroying houses, unleashing flooding and leaving thousands of households without electricity.

A freighter called the Julietta D collided with another boat about 20 miles (32 kilometers) west of the port of IJmuiden, said Edward Zwitser, a spokesman for the Royal Dutch Lifeboat Company. The other boat, the Pechora Star, also was damaged, but was able to continue its voyage.

The Dutch coast guard said that all crew members were rescued. It didn't immediately provide more details of the rescue on the high seas amid powerful winds. Three helicopters, including one from Belgium, were involved in the rescue operation. The Juliette D suffered damage "that poses direct danger for the 18 crew on board," spokesman Edward Zwitser told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. Both ships had been anchored off the coast, but the Julietta D's anchor "did not hold," the coast guard said. - APP

Govt focuses on extensive dairy development

The focus of the meeting was to highlight the role of the Dairy Sector in Economy of Pakistan and opportunities for Foreign Direct Investment for the Country

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Senator ShibliFaraz Monday said the government intends to focus on an extensive Dairy Development Program to benefit our people and farmers. This minister was speaking during a meeting with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Mr. WouterPlomp, who called on the former at his office. The focus of the meeting was to highlight the role of the Dairy Sector in the Economy of Pakistan and opportunities for Foreign Direct Investment for the Country. The Ambassador thoroughly explained the extensive experience of the Netherlands in Dairy and Livestock. Moreover, he explained how this experience of 150 years could be utilized by Pakistan for the devel-

opment of the Dairy sector. Hein Schumacher, (CEO Royal Friesland Campina), Roel Van Neerbos (President Friesland Campina) and Ali Ahmed Khan (MD Friesland Campina Engro Pakistan Ltd) were also present

in the meeting. Earlier The Royal Frieslandcampina of Netherlands here on Monday sought support of the government for proliferation of dairy industry in Pakistan. Hein Schumacher, the Global Chief Executive Office, Royal

Frieslandcampina of Netherlands, who was accompanying Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands, WouterPlomp during a meeting with Finance Minister ShaukatTarin discussed some proposals in this regard, said a press

statement issued by the Finance Ministry here. Hein Schumacher appreciated the intention and practical steps taken by the government to facilitate businessmen and investors and providing favourable environment for encouraging foreign investment in the dairy industry of Pakistan.

Earlier, welcoming the guests, the finance minister highlighted government's policies and initiatives to provide conducive environment to the investors and businessmen and steps for ease of doing business to both domestic and foreign investors. Among others, the meeting was attended by Roel Van Neerbos, President and CEO of Food & Beverages, Royal Frieslandcampina, Ali Ahmed Khan, MD, Frieslandcampina Engro Pakistan Limited and senior officers of finance division.



Briefs

Canada to withdraw non-essential staff from Ukraine

TRENTON: Canada will temporarily pull out all remaining non-essential staff from its embassy in Ukraine due to the threat of a Russian invasion of the beleaguered country, the federal government announced Sunday. The government said it fears for the safety of its staff with 100,000 Russian troops massed on Ukraine's border and Western allies threatening reprisals if Russia invades. Some non-essential embassy personnel and children of staff under the age of 18 were called back to Canada on Jan. 25 and Sunday's move brings the rest home. "Canada has made the decision to temporarily withdraw non-essential Canadian employees and remaining dependents from the Canadian embassy in Ukraine," Global Affairs Canada announced in a statement sent to Anadolu Agency. "As we continue to closely monitor the situation, our highest priority remains the safety and security of Canadians." However, personnel specialists will be sent to the embassy. "As announced earlier this week, Canada will be reinforcing the team at the Canadian Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine with officials with expertise in areas such as security sector reform, conflict management, democratic reform, consular services and diplomacy," the statement said. "Together, they will increase our diplomatic capacity and allow us to continue to assess and respond to the evolving situation in support of Ukraine." The Canadian embassy will not be closed, the government said. "Our officials stand ready to provide consular assistance to Canadian citizens, as required," the statement said. "Canadians in need of assistance can contact the embassy by telephone at 380 (44) 590 3100 or by email at KYIV.Consular@international.gc.ca." - APP

Poland handing over defense aid to Ukraine

WARSAW: Poland has decided to hand over to Ukraine a batch of security assistance. This was announced during a press conference in Warsaw on Monday by the head of the National Security Bureau (BBN) of Poland, Pawel Soloch, according to an Ukrinform correspondent. "It was decided to transfer to the Ukrainian side ammunition of a defensive nature for defensive, not offensive action. This decision is currently being implemented by the Minister of National Defense," Soloch said. According to the official, the decision was made in close cooperation between the government and the Office of the President of Poland. Asked whether the weapons were intended for air defense, he confirmed they were. At the same time, the senior official added that the details would later be made public by the Polish Ministry of National Defense. "We have made an offer to the Ukrainian side and are waiting for a response," Soloch said. He said that Poland would supply Ukraine with the weapons that Kyiv would first select from the list proposed by the Polish side. "We are ready to do so at any moment now," said the official. He also said that the Polish offer today included the possibility of transferring "tens of thousands of pieces of ammunition." The President's Minister clarified that military aid could be delivered to Ukraine "within days." The Polish minister added that Warsaw would also provide humanitarian aid to Kyiv. These are the means required to help evacuate the population, as well as health care aid. - APP

HK minister quits over lockdown party

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's Secretary for Home Affairs Caspar Tsui resigned on Monday weeks after he attended a birthday party for a Hong Kong delegate to the Chinese national legislature. Although the party was not illegal at the time, the city's health chief had warned people to avoid gathering in large groups after an outbreak of the virus. The party was held at a tapas restaurant on January 3 for the birthday of Witman Hung, a member of China's huge National People's Congress. There were more than 200 people present, including top officials from the territory's police force, and immigration and anti-corruption bosses. Some 20 lawmakers also attended. The guest list of those present came to light after health authorities tracked down an infected person who attended. It became a source of embarrassment for Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, whose government is pursuing a strict "zero-COVID" policy akin to Beijing's. Photos of the party, leaked to local media, showed revelers singing karaoke and posing for group pictures without masks. - APP

Over 100 officials killed since Taliban takeover

The secretary-general said UN mission documented 44 cases of temporary arrests, beatings and threats of intimidation, 42 of them by the Taliban

NEW YORK: A United Nations report has said more than two-thirds of the killings were "extrajudicial killings committed by the de facto authorities or their affiliates." Afghanistan is in the grip of a humanitarian disaster, worsened by the Taliban takeover that prompted Western countries to freeze international aid. Afghanistan is in the grip of a humanitarian disaster, worsened by the Taliban takeover that prompted Western countries to freeze international aid. The United Nations has received "credible allegations" that more than 100 former members of the Afghan government, its security forces and those who worked with international troops have been killed since the Taliban took over the country on August 15. In a report obtained by The Associated Press on Sunday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said "more than two-thirds" of the victims were allegedly subjected to extrajudicial killings by the Taliban or its affiliates. The killings were carried out despite the Taliban's announcement of "general amnesties" for those affiliated with the former government and US-led coalition forces. The UN political mission in Afghanistan also received "credible allegations of extrajudicial killings of at least 50 individuals suspected of affiliation" with extremist group Daesh's Afghanistan chapter, Guterres said in the report to UN Security Council. In addition, the mission also received credible allegations "of enforced disappearances and other violations im-

acting the right to life and physical integrity" of former government and coalition members. Guterres said human rights defenders and media workers also continue "to come under attack, intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment and killings". The secretary-general said the UN mission documented 44 cases of temporary arrests, beatings and threats of intimidation, 42 of them by the Taliban. Guterres said Afghanistan today faces multiple crises: a growing humanitarian emergency, a massive economic contraction and the crippling of its banking and financial systems. In addition, it is facing the worst drought in 27 years, and the failures to form an inclusive government and

restore the rights of girls to education and women to work. "An estimated 22.8 million people are projected to be in 'crisis' and 'emergency' levels of food insecurity until March 2022," the UN chief said. On a positive note, Guterres reported "a significant decline" in the overall number of conflict-related security incidents as well as civilian casualties since the Taliban takeover. The UN recorded 985 security-related incidents between August 19 and December 31, a 91 percent decrease compared to the same period in 2020, he said. Despite the reduction in violence, Guterres said the Taliban face several challenges, including rising attacks against their members. "Some are attributed to the National Resistance Front comprising some Afghan opposition figures, and those associated with the former government," he said. - Agencies

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Two German police officers shot dead

FRANKFURT: Two German police officers were shot dead Monday after pulling over a car during a routine traffic stop, prompting police to launch a major manhunt. The shooting happened at around 4:20 am (0320 GMT) in the Kusel district of western Rhineland-Palatinate state during a routine patrol. A 24-year-old female police officer and her 29-year-old male colleague were killed. The young woman was still in police training, according to Rhineland-Palatinate Interior Minister Roger Lewentz. "We are urgently searching for the fugitive perpetrators," Westpfalz regional police said in a statement. "At least one of the suspects is armed," they warned, urging residents not to pick up hitchhikers. - APP

Israel's Herzog urges nations to follow UAE

DUBAI: Israel's president has spoken at Dubai's Expo 2020 world fair on the first presidential visit to the United Arab Emirates, hours after the Gulf state said it had intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthis. "I hope and I believe that more and more nations will soon follow the UAE lead and join the Abraham Accords," Isaac Herzog said at an event on Monday amid tighter than usual security at the Expo site. The UAE became the first Gulf state to normalise relations with Israel under a US-brokered normalisation agreement, dubbed the "Abraham Accords", in 2020. Gulf neighbour Bahrain followed. Herzog said 250,000 Israelis had so far visited the UAE and he hoped Emiratis would reciprocate once Covid-19 restrictions eased. "Already our trade has exceeded over \$1 billion, more than 120 agreements were signed and a \$100 million (research and development) fund was established recently," he said in a speech at the six-month-long world fair in Dubai emirate. UAE and Israeli flags were raised at the event and both countries' national anthems played. Iran, who severed ties with Israel after the 1979 revolution, condemned the normalisation of ties between Israel and Arab countries. "Some countries who are walking down the normalisation path and

thus helping this regime create more crises, must be aware that they will be the first victims of the aggressive, expansionist and crisis-making nature of this regime," warned Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry. Herzog landed in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi on Sunday where he discussed security and bilateral relations with the UAE's de facto leader. That night, at 20 minutes past midnight, the UAE said it intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi group - the third such attack on US-allied UAE in the past fortnight. UAE authorities did not say whether the missile was aimed at Abu Dhabi or Dubai. - APP

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sakib Foric in a meeting with Speaker of Balouchistan Assembly Mir Jan M Khan Jamali at Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. - DNA

Mossad official quits over dispute with spy chief

The commander of the Caesarea unit, which is responsible for Mossad's special operations, submitted his resignation over a clash of opinions with Barnea, Channel 13 reported

JERUSALEM: A senior official in Israel's spy agency Mossad has resigned over a dispute with the agency's director David Barnea, according to local media on Monday. The commander of the Caesarea unit, which is responsible for Mossad's special operations, submitted his resignation over a clash of opinions with Barnea, Channel 13 reported. Mossad does not disclose the names of its officials and agents due to the secrecy of their work, but the channel identified the commander as "B".

According to the broadcaster, the Mossad chief told the commander that he intended to make massive changes in the way the unit operates due to the difficulty of operating Israeli agents abroad. As the commander failed to implement the necessary changes, a heated discussion erupted between the two men during which the Mossad chief criticized the commander and his senior officials. "You have turned into a burden on the organization and we are obligated to make the changes," Barnea reportedly told the commander. - APP

Iraqi speaker says talks underway for unity govt

The Shia Coordination Framework consists of Shia parliamentary groups that seek to form a govt without al-Sadr's support

BAGHDAD: Iraq's Parliament Speaker Mohammad al-Halbousi confirmed Monday that talks were underway between Shia, Sunni and Kurdish parliamentary groups to form a national unity government. He said the three blocs will meet at the headquarters of Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr for talks on the government formation, without providing further details. Earlier Monday, al-Sadr met with al-Halbousi and Nechirvan Barzani, the head of northern Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in the southern city of Najaf for talk on the government formation. Last week, the head of Iran's IRGC Quds Force, Esmail Qaani, visited Iraq for talks with Shia leaders in an effort to bridge differences between al-Sadr's Movement and the Shia Coordination Framework. The Shia Coordination Framework consists of Shia parliamentary groups that seek to form a government without al-Sadr's support. Al-Sadr's Sairoon Alliance emerged the biggest winner in the Oct. 10 elections, with 73 seats in the 329-member parliament, followed by al-Halbousi's Taqaddum (progress) bloc with 37 seats. - Agencies

Ukraine: No general mobilization just yet

KYIV: The Ukrainian government currently sees no need to mobilize the population. This was stated by Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov, who spoke with LB.ua, Ukrinform reports. "There is no need for mobilization now, in terms of the threat. If we announce a mobilization drill, it will cause panic on the streets. Everyone will then think that we knew and hid the fact at the enemy could attack as early as tomorrow," the minister said. Reznikov noted that efforts are underway to form a Territorial Defense Force. "These people will be trained, there will undergo routine field exercises. And the first training will be held for the heads of regional state administrations, district state administrations, plus the Kyiv State City Administration, of course. We have four sectors: north, south, east, and west. The command of the Territorial Defense Force is also therefore divided. Let's start from the north, gather all the regions, plus Kyiv, and we will train them for two or three days at the training ground, on how to interact, how to do all this work. Then there will be east, south, and west," the minister said. As Ukrinform reported, Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov previously announced that territorial forces' exercises with the participation of heads of local authorities and self-government are scheduled for February to work out cooperation at the east-north-south and west levels. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has also criticised what he said was too much "panic" weighing on the country's economy. Speaking at a news conference on Friday, Zelenskyy said: "I don't consider the situation now more tense than before. There is a feeling abroad that there is war here. That's not the case." - APP

Pak to borrow \$5bn from China, Russia, Kazakhstan

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has decided to seek \$5 billion in loans from China, Russia and Kazakhstan as Pakistan make desperate efforts to stabilise forex reserves, well-placed sources said on Monday. According to a private television channel report, Pakistan is expecting to get \$3 billion loan from China and \$2 billion from Russia and Kazakhstan. The loan from China will be used for stabilizing the foreign reserves, while \$2 billion loan that is expected from Russia and Kazakhstan will be utilised for MLI. Sources privy to the matter shared that the finance ministry has finalised the plan for the loan and an agreement in this regard will likely be signed with China during Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Beijing next month. Initially, the finance ministry sources added, the loan agreement with China will be signed for one year period, the sources said. On January 28, the foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank fell 846 million during the week ending on January 21, the data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said. Sharing a break-up of the foreign reserves position, the central bank had said that foreign currency reserves held by the SBP were recorded at \$16.2bn, down \$846mn.

Money laundering bid foiled

KARACHI: Airport Security Force (ASF) on Monday thwarted a money laundering bid from Karachi airport and arrested an accused. As per details, a female passenger travelling to Dubai was caught with local and foreign currency. The recovered currency worth more than seven million was concealed in the bag of the passenger and was caught by the Airport Security Force during checking. The passenger has been handed over to the Pakistan Customs after an initial investigation by the Airport Security Force, the spokesperson said. Earlier, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) initiated money laundering probe against famous TikTok Harem Shah after the social media star in a video openly committed illegally carrying large sums of currency abroad. According to FIA Sindh spokesperson, the probe had been launched against TikTok under the country's foreign exchange regulation act. The FIA officials also decided to write a letter to the British National Crime Agency to request the body to investigate money laundering charges against Shah.

Governor ensures resolution of gas issue

Governor Sindh further directed for practical functioning of 'Working Group' to discuss, analyse and suggest measures for resolution of gas related issues with mutual consent

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Managing Director Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), Imran Maniar called on Governor Sindh Imran Ismail at Governor's House here on Monday. SAPM Mahmood Moulvi, Leader of opposition in Sindh Assembly Haleem Adil Shaikh, MNA Jay Parkash and Advisor to Governor Ali Jonejo were also present. Governor Sindh stressed the need to ensure resolution of genuine issues of industrialists on top priority basis. He also directed to extend maximum possible support and cooperation in continuing industrial production without interruption. Governor Sindh further directed for practical functioning of 'Working Group' to discuss, analyse and suggest measures for resolution of gas related issues with mutual consent. "The Working Group shall suggest measures to resolve such issues on regular and permanent basis", he added.

