



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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PSG superstar Lionel Messi tests positive for Covid-19

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Omicron variant to unleash new wave in Pakistan

Detailed News On Page-01



Pak, China can have joint film production

Detailed News On Page-07



Briefs

Erdogan discusses ties with Putin

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed Turkey-Russia relations and regional developments with Russian President Vladimir Putin, a statement by the Presidential Communications Directorate said Sunday. The two leaders touched upon developments in the Caucasus, Syria and Libya, as well as international developments. They also reiterated the determination to further enhance Turkey-Russia cooperation in all spheres.

2021 was a successful year at UN

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan continued to push for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination in 2021 in a determined bid to advance the cause of their freedom from India's yoke, Ambassador Munir Akram has said while recounting key achievements at the United Nations on the multilateral diplomatic front. "2021 was a successful year for Pakistan's multilateral diplomacy here at the United Nations," he said in a New Year message released on Saturday.

Saqlain quits as interim head coach

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Saqlain Mushtaq has stepped down as Pakistan's interim head coach with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) while a foreigner is all set to join team Pakistan. According to the details shared by PCB, Mushtaq will serve the Men in Green for the T20 World Cup, tour of Bangladesh and home series against West Indies while the foreign coach will train them for home series against Australia. A day earlier on Saturday, Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Kamiz Raja had signaled that a foreigner will be hired as the next head coach of Pakistan Cricket team.

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Ombudsperson has given relief to many people: Nabila - Page 02

Report reveals 31 families control Stock Exchange - Page 03

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Qatar, like Saudi Arabia and UAE, cleanses its textbooks - Page 05

Huge fire brings down roof at South Africa parliament - Page 06

US Capitol riot investigation body prepares to go public - Page 07

66 cases brought to legal conclusion: Chairman NAB - Page 08

16 more Omicron cases in Islamabad

Omicron to unleash new wave

So far 44 omicrons cases have been detected in the port city of Karachi

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Chairman National Command and Operation Centre (NCO) Asad Umar on Sunday warned that there were clear signs that the country was going to be hit by another wave of Covid-19 pandemic as genome sequencing revealed that the Omicron variant cases started surging across the country particularly in Karachi. On Sunday, 16 more cases of Omicron variant were reported in Islamabad. In his tweet, the minister wrote: "Clear evidence now of a beginning of another Covid wave which has been expected for last few weeks. Genome sequencing shows rising proportion of Omicron cases particularly in Karachi. Remember: wearing a mask is your best protection." "Genome sequencing showing the rising proportion of omicron cases particularly in Karachi," he said while cautioning that 'wearing a mask is your best protection.' As the world struggles to breathe from the

Continued on Page 06

Omicron: Punjab imposes emergency in hospitals

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab government has imposed a covid-19 emergency in all major hospitals after 170 Omicron cases were reported in the province, Punjab Health Minister Yasmin Rashid has announced. At a press conference in Lahore on Sunday, she revealed that the overall infection rate in Punjab is 1%. "In Lahore, on the other hand, the positivity ratio is 3.8% which is alarming." Rashid has warned that if people stop taking precautionary measures such as wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, a new outbreak is imminent in the province.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar talking to media at Insaf House. - DNA

March 23 protest will bring govt to its end: Fazlur Rehman

Vows to lead mass demonstrations against the government with Shahbaz Sharif

DNA

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that PDM's protest on March 23 will bring the Federal government to its end. He said this while addressing a press conference on Sunday in Peshawar. Fazlur Rehman stated that the government has brought inflation, poverty and economic instability to the country. Criticizing the mini-budget, he mentioned that the state bank will go under the custody of IMF while the gov-



ernment will have to take the debts from commercial banks. Addressing the conference he added that he along with Shehbaz Sharif will lead mass demonstrations against the government in Islamabad. PDM has never considered PPP and ANP its rival parties. He added that PDM is independent. Fazlur Rehman further added that it is Nawaz Sharif's country, he should return back. Afghanistan needs peace and Pakistan should play its pivotal role in trying to bring peace to the country. Earlier a week ago, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had announced to reach Karachi on a

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Sudan: Anti-coup protests continue despite tear gas

Demonstrators were shouting "power to the people" and demanding a return of the "military to the barracks"

CENTRELINE REPORT

KHARTOUM: Sudanese security forces have fired tear gas canisters at a thousands-strong rally outside the presidential palace in Khartoum demanding civilian rule. The demonstrators on Sunday marched towards the presidential palace in the 12th round of major protests since the October 25 coup launched by military leader General Abdel Fattah al Burhan. Demonstrators were shouting "power to the people" and

demanding a return of the "military to the barracks". Sudanese authorities had cut mobile internet services earlier on Sunday amid calls for pro-democracy rallies in "memory of the martyrs" killed in recent protests. Web monitoring group NetBlocks said the mobile internet was cut from mid-morning ahead of the planned protests, the first of the year. Activists use the internet for organising demonstrations and broadcasting live footage of the rallies.

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Authorities order probe into protests

KHARTOUM: Sudan's Security and Defense Council ordered to speed up investigations into Thursday's mass protests in the capital Khartoum and neighboring areas which resulted in the deaths of four protesters and injuries of hundreds of others. The council held an emergency meeting at

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SKARDU: An attractive and eye catching view of snowfall in the hilly area of Pakistan. - APP

Big hike in power tariff likely

Increase in tariff will put an additional burden of Rs 17.85 billion on consumers

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: After increasing prices of petroleum products, the government is preparing to put more burden on masses by increasing the power tariff, electricity distribution companies have approached NEPRA to increase the tariff. According to the plea filed by the power distribution companies, the increase in power tariff has been requested in the context of the first quarter adjustment of current financial year. The increase in tariff will put an additional burden of Rs 17.85 billion on consumers while the increase will be in terms of capacity charges and transmission losses. NEPRA will hold a hearing on January 12. The regulatory authority said that electricity distribution companies have demanded increase in electricity prices in terms of capacity charges, transmission and distribution losses and other issues.

Finance bill to be finalized very soon

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Shaukat Tarin on Sunday said the government would get finance bill passed from the National Assembly very soon after which it would be presented in Senate for final process. Talking to a private news channel, the minister said new taxation would be adjustable and refundable. He said the government was taking steps for the proper documentation of national economy for future taxation and productions of the different commodities. The minister said the prices of commodities would be reduced soon. - APP

Efforts afoot to bring Nawaz Sharif back

Fawad says govt mulls legal action against Shahbaz as he was the guarantor

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Federal Information Minister Chaudhry Fawad has said that since Shehbaz Sharif was a guarantor on the bond promising Nawaz Sharif's return from abroad so the government will file a case against him and his elder brother. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan instructed the attorney general to adopt a legal course for PML-N supremo Nawaz's return. He said Shehbaz had submitted a declaration giving a guarantee that his brother would return back and face charges after getting his medical treatment in the UK.



Continued on Page 06

Abbasi refutes reports of Sharif's early return

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has refuted news of the early return of party's supremo Nawaz Sharif to the homeland. The former prime minister without taking anyone's name said that statements of party leaders regarding Nawaz Sharif's return are merely "political". "The statements have nothing to do with the narrative of the PML-N," Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said and added that elder Sharif will return to the country after completion of his treatment. - DNA



LUNCH DEALS

Miso Soup
Chicken Katsu
Rock Shrimp (Tempura) 2 Pcs
Crunchy Maki 4 Pcs
Chicken Teppanyaki/Teriyaki Portion
Garlic Rice
Fudge Cake Slice/Caramel Custard
Rs. 2499

Dobin Mushi/Miso Soup
Steamed Edamame
Yaki Tori 4 Pcs
Prawn Tempura 2 Pcs
Beef Teppanyaki/Teriyaki Portion
Spicy Salmon Roll/Volcano Roll 4 Pcs
Garlic Rice
Fudge Cake Slice/Caramel Custard
Rs. 2999

Soup of Choice
(Miso / Dobin Mushi)
Lobster / Asian Wok Special
Steamed Edamame
Tuna Tataki 4 Pcs
Wasabi Prawns 2 Pcs
Nigiri of choice 2 Pcs
(Salmon / Tuna / Prawn / Crab / Unagi)
Chicken Katsu Curry Portion
Chicken Yaki Udon Portion
Fudge Cake Slice / Caramel Custard
Rs. 3499

Beverly Centre, Jinnah Avenue, F 6/1 Blue Area, Islamabad.

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Briefs

PAL, PACP to unveil book

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in collaboration with Performing Arts Circle Pakistan (PACP) would organize a new book launching ceremony titled "Zinda-Lamhaat" (A Soldier's Memories) on January 6. A statement said that the book was written by Brigadier (r) Nauman Ul Haque Farrukh's. Minister for Science and Technology Senator Shibli Faraz is likely to preside over the launching ceremony. Eminent scholars Director General National Language Promotion Department Prof. Dr. Rauf Parek and Chairman PAL Dr. Yousaf Khushk would also be present as guests of honor. The event would be held at the Conference Hall of Academy. The book titled "Zinda-Lamhaat - A Soldier's Memories", is a collection of light-hearted memories & incidents from Brigadier (r) Nauman Ul Haque Farrukh's career of over 40 years with the Pakistan army. Prof. Munir Fayaz, Ayesha Masood Malak, Hameed Qaiser, and Dr. Fakhranaseen will speak on various aspects of the book. - APP

PNCA to organize an art show on Jan 05

ISLAMABAD: Nomad Art Gallery in collaboration with Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) would organize opening ceremony of an art show titled 'The Golden Hour' on January 5. According to PNCA, Minister for Federal Education, Professional Training and National Heritage Shafiqat Mahmood likely to be the chief guest on the occasion. The Art show will feature artwork of fifteen artists from across the country exploring the Northern Areas through their creative originality and technical skills in their chosen mediums. The artwork of fifteen artists including Ali Sajid, Arif Ansari, Ajab Khan, Tariq Mahmood, Bashir Haider, Sadia Arif, Shahzad Sial, Danish Khan, Shaima Umar, Muhammad Hafeez, Farooq Sial, Abid Zaman, Qazi Amanullah, Sanobar, and Tahir Bilal would be displayed under the umbrella Studio Ali Sajid and National Artists Association of Pakistan. The exhibition will continue till January 10 from 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. - APP

PNCA starts registration for music classes

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has started registration process for music learning classes. The professional artists would impart training to participants for Guitar, Keyboard/Piano, & Rubab. Renowned music instructors Sherry Bakhshi (Guitar) Yawar Bakhshi (Keyboard) and Ijaz Ahmed (Rubab) will conduct music learning classes, said a press release issued here. PNCA believes in giving the musicians and artists the platform they need to grow and the inspiration they seek to realize their unique potential. - APP

4-day winter Bazeecha workshop starts

ISLAMABAD: Four-day kids winter Bazeecha workshop will be held at Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts from January 3-6. Amina Shah, director of Hunerkada, said Bazeecha workshop was made a permanent feature and continue throughout the year given the interest and enthusiasm of children and parents. She said that most of the teachers were below the age of 20. "Hunerkada is one of the oldest art institute that offers degree and short-term courses in Fine Arts and Design, and it has produced over 300 graduates in last decade, she said." It has also trained more than 3,000 young enthusiasts in its short courses, she added. - APP

Sania inaugurates first ever ginger harvest in Pakistan

Dr. Sania said, "Ginger can emerge as a major crop and can be a game-changer for the farming community. Agri is profoundly linked to poverty alleviation in Pakistan"

DNA

CHAKWAL: Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar, SAPM was a chief guest at the Ginger Harvest Workshop to inaugurate the first ever ginger cultivation in Balkasar area of Chakwal. The harvest celebration was organized by Agrionics Farms. This was the first ginger harvest piloted in Pakistan. The crop was grown in eleven months. Being an essential ingredient of Pakistani cuisine, ginger is high in demand, but unfortunately it is not grown here, and all the crop is imported to meet the domestic needs. At the event, participants learnt from experts about the sustainable production and management of ginger and how to properly harvest this crop. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Sania said, "Ginger can emerge as a major crop and can be a game-changer for the farming community. Agriculture is profoundly linked to poverty alleviation in Pakistan. Government, private sector, research institutions, innovators and farmers can work together to build synergies and develop agri-value chains.



This will lead to greater impact for poverty alleviation, livelihoods creation, economic growth and foreign trade boosting." Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman Paki-

stan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Muhammad Najeibullah, Director Vegetable Research Institute, Faisalabad and other experts were also present on the occasion. Participants were provided with information on how to successfully grow and harvest ginger in the country. Experts presented research-based information about the agricultural benefits of growing ginger locally. After knowledge-sharing, all participants went to the field for the formal inauguration and demonstrations. Chairman PAC briefed Dr. Sania on the success of ginger cultivation project and its potential to boost Pakistan's farming sector. "This variety of ginger has been successfully grown and field tested and can yield up to approximately 8 to 10 tonnes per acre in this area" he said. Other experts shared that Pakistan is an agri economy field to progress as it should be but now it has started its journey towards self-sustainability. With help of drip irrigation, sprinklers and shading fabric, it was the first ginger farming project that turned out commercially successful.

Justice Bandial to be next Chief Justice of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Justice Umar Ata Bandial of Supreme Court will take oath as next chief justice of Pakistan next month as incumbent CJP Justice Gulzar Ahmed will hang his robe on February 1, 2022. As many as seven senior judges of the judiciary including Justice Gulzar Ahmed will retire this year. These will include five apex court judges and two justices of the Lahore High Court (LHC). Justice Umar Ata Bandial will take the oath of the CJP office on February 2. The Supreme Court judges retire after reaching the age of 65 years while the high court judges leave the office at 62 years. After Justice Gulzar's retirement on February 1, the next will be Supreme Court's Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmad who will retire on March 5, Justice Maqbool Baqir on April 4, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Mandokhel on July 13 and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah on August 13. Lahore High Court's Justice Sardar Ahmad Naem will hand his robe on June 30, 2022, and Justice Chaudhry Masood Jahangir will retire on December 2. There was one seat of judge vacant at the Supreme Court while 12 seats were vacant at the Lahore High Court at the moment. - DNA

CPI inflation rises 12.28% in Dec (YoY)

ISLAMABAD: The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based monthly inflation increased by 12.28% on year-on-year (YoY) basis during the month of December 2021 against the corresponding month of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Saturday. The average CPI-based inflation rate during the period July-December 2021-22 over same period of the preceding year was recorded at 9.81%. On month-on-month (MoM) basis, it declined by 0.02% when compared to previous month (November), according to PBS data. According to breakup figures of PBS, the Urban CPI recorded an increase of 12.74% on year-on-year basis while it was increased by 0.3% on month-on-month basis. On the other hand, the CPI inflation Rural, increased by 11.61% on year-on-year basis in December 2021 as compared to same month of the preceding year. On month-on-month basis, it declined by 0.5% in December 2021 as compared to November, 2021. Top few commodities (urban) which recorded decrease in December compared to same month of the preceding year included tomatoes (28.90%), chicken (14.34%), eggs (8.19%) and condiments & spices (2.63%). - DNA



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Muree Road. - APP

Pakistan, India swap lists of nuclear facilities, prisoners

The Indian government has also provided a list to Islamabad of 355 Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails. Of these, 288 are Pakistani nationals while 73 are fishermen

ISLAMABAD: Maintaining a 31-year practice, Pakistan and India on Saturday exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral agreement that prohibits the two sides from attacking each other's atomic facilities. According Foreign Office Spokesperson this exchange has been made, in accordance with the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities

between the two countries signed on 31 December 1988 and ratified on 27 January 1991. The two countries exchanged the list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations between Pakistan and India. This was done simultaneously through diplomatic channels in Islamabad and New Delhi. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of Indian Nuclear installations and facilities to a representative of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. Pakistan has provided a list of 628 Indian prisoners languishing in Pakistani jails to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. The lists included 577 fishermen and 51 Indian nationals. The Indian government has also provided a list to Islamabad of 355 Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails. Of these, 288 are Pakistani nationals while 73 are fishermen.



KHANPUR: A young girl enjoying parasailing at Khanpur Dam, which is located at an hour drive from Islamabad. - DNA

Lok Virsa, museum attracts large number of visitors

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage - Lok Virsa Heritage Museum is attracting a large number of visitors particularly students of various educational institutions from across the country. Executive Director Lok Virsa Talha Ali told APP that the museum is up-graded and renovated which was presenting history and living traditions of people of the country both from the main stream and remotest regions. Talha Ali said that main objective of the museum is to educate and edify present and future generations, adding that most museum in the country were archaeological which were a throwback from colonial times. The Executive Director said that the Heritage Museum is the first state museum of ethnology in the country which presents the history and living traditions of the people. According to Lok Virsa, the museum has a covered area of 60,000 sq. ft. featuring exhibit halls, making it the largest museum in the country. The entry fees for the local adults are Rs. 50, students Rs. 20 and foreigners Rs.800. While entry is free for children under seven years of age. The museum remain open from Tuesday to Sunday 10 am to 7 pm On Friday, 10 am to 7 pm with 12:30 pm to 2 pm break. While on Monday the museum remained closed. - APP

Int'l World Braille Day to be marked on Jan 4

ISLAMABAD: International World Braille Day will be marked on January 4 across the globe including Pakistan day focuses in helping blind and visually impaired people to read and write. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world use this day to create awareness about the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals and to encourage businesses and governments to create economic and social opportunities for the blind. NGOs and disability organizations hold competitions and public outreach events. Braille is a code that uses bumps and indentation on a surface to represent letters, which can be recognized by touch. Visually impaired people read and write using the Haüy system which embossed Latin letters on thick paper or leather. This was a complicated system that required much training and only allowed people to read, not write. - APP

170 profiteers arrested

RAWALPINDI: Under a special campaign launched by Rawalpindi district administration against profiteering and hoarding, fines amounting to over 1.4 million were imposed while 170 violators were arrested. According to a district administration spokesman, strict measures were being taken against profiteers and hoarding. He informed that 170 profiteers were arrested in the district during special campaign launched in December against the violators.

11 First Information Reports were also lodged besides imposing fines amounting over Rs 1.4 million on the rules violators. He said the Assistant Commissioners had been directed to continue their raid to control the prices of food items. He informed that the administration was conducting raids against hoarders and profiteers and strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against the violators. He said fines were imposed on the violators in seven tehsils of the Rawalpindi district during December. The administration had constituted teams to check profiteering, hoarding and rate lists of daily use items while on the recommendations of the teams, several cases were also registered. - APP

Hunerkada announces admissions in F&D courses

ISLAMABAD: Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts has announced admission in Fashion and Design courses. Hunerkada announced registration in 3, 6 months & 1-year programme. The classes would be conducted from Monday to Thursday, said a statement. Director of Hunerkada Amina Shah, said that Hunerkada is one of the oldest art institute in capital city that offered degree and short-term courses in Fine Arts and Design and has produced over 300 graduates in last decade. It has also trained more than 3,000 young enthusiasts in its short courses. For further details, interested students can contact: (051) 2211152-53 or WhatsApp +923156993443 Or Visit: 217-B, Margalla Road (North) F-10/3, Islamabad. - APP

'Ode to the Modern Masters' continues

ISLAMABAD: 'Ode to the Modern Masters' continue to attract large number of people at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). According to PNCA, collection includes art pieces by the internationally renowned names like Sadequain, Shakir Ali, Abdul Rehman Chughtai, Zahoor ul Akhlaq and many others which is a great asset of our country. The exhibition is a great initiative of PNCA, Ministry of Heritage and Culture Division has presented a collection of sculptures, ceramics, engraving and drawings by famous artists including Akram Dost Baloch, Abbas Shah, Amin Gulgee, Anjum Ayaz, Elizabeth Dadi, Fauzia Aziz Minallah, David Alesworth, Jamil Baloch, Mian Salehuddin and Rabia Zuberi from the Permanent Collection of PNCA. - APP

Pak - a promoter of religious, spiritual tourism

UN chief Antonio Guterres said the opening of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor was a practical example of Pakistan's desire for peace

ISLAMABAD: India's Hindu Yatees had become frequent visitors to important temples in Khayr Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. In addition to 87 Hindu pilgrims from India who arrived in Pakistan on December 18 to perform religious rites at Katas Raj Temple, another 200-member worldwide Hindu delegation would be arriving in Pakistan on January 1, 2022 through Dubai and Wagah border, to go to their sacred locations and historic sites together with Samadhri of Shri Param Hans Ji Maharaj/Teri Temple in Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After opening of Kartarpur Gurdwara, the facilities extended for Hindu pilgrims showed that Pakistan was a minority friendly country and believed

in promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and harmony. Pakistan had already opened a 1,000-year-old Hindu temple in eastern city Sialkot for "worship" for the first time since partition. Meanwhile, Hindu yatees who visited the Krishna Mandir in Lahore appreciated the steps taken by Pakistan's Evacuee Board for the care and renovation of their Gurdwaras. In January 2021, a 126-year-old Shiv temple in Pakistan's Sindh province opened for worshippers after renovation and its administrative control were handed over to local Hindu organization. Pakistan issued visas to more than 90 Indians to visit two prominent Hindu temples in December against the backdrop of ties be-

tween the two countries being at an all-time low. A group of 44 Indian yatees visited Shadani Darbar in Sukkur, a temple that was more than three centuries old, to mark the 312th birth anniversary of Shiv Avtari/Satguru/SantShadaram Sahib. 47 Indian yatees/pilgrims visited Katas Raj temple, also known as Qila Katas, in Chakwal district of Punjab. Pakistan remained committed to preserving sacred religious places and extending all possible facilitation for the visiting pilgrims of all faiths. Pakistan had decided to relax its mutually laid limit with India of 10 days advance intimation before the arrival of Sikh pilgrims to visit Kartarpur in November 2021 as a sign of respect for the religious

sentiments of the Sikh Yatees given India's last-minute decision to open the Kartarpur Corridor. Minority Rights Group International (MRG) noted that opening the Kartarpur Corridor was a symbol of peace and respect between religions and deserved applause. UN chief Antonio Guterres said the opening of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor was a practical example of Pakistan's desire for peace. Pakistan was a moderate and tolerant society and warmly welcomed tourists of other faiths. Pakistan was a safe country for tourists especially for spiritual and religious tourism. There were ancient and historical religious sites of other faiths for tourists and government of Paki-

stan was fully committed to protect and preserve them. Pakistani people were friendly to tourists and government fully support besides facilitating the foreign visitors. Pakistan was promoting religious vibes in the region by facilitating various ethnic communities. Pakistan had opened different religious sites in the country to allow minorities to perform their religious obligations. Pakistan was the only country in South Asia where minorities were living in a peaceful way protected by the government. There were certain quarters in the region that deliberately and continuously tried to malign Pakistan over flimsy grounds vis-vis minorities issue.

Briefs

PIAF greets Mian Anjum for victory in FPCCI polls

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Association Front (PIAF) has felicitated Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar for the historic victory of his group in the elections of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry for 2022. PIAF senior vice chairman Nasir Hameed and vice chairman Javed Siddiqi in a joint statement said that the Businessmen Panel (BMP) has clinched the victory in the annual elections of the country's apex trade body, retaining almost all the main seats for third year in a row through a tough battle with the United Business Group (UBG).

Nasir Hameed congratulated Irfan Iqbal Sheikh for his election as FPCCI president, who bagged 189 votes whereas his opponent got just 159 votes.

He said that BMP victory with thumping majority clearly reflects the confidence of business community in judicious policies being followed by this group leadership. He hoped that the BMP would now push the government to initiate long-term economic planning for the betterment of business community of Pakistan, as they have the ability to change the fate of Pakistan and transform it into a prosperous country.

He added that on the association seats Nadeem Qureshi, Shabbir Hussain, Engineer M A Jabbar and Shaikat Ali Omerson, all from the BMP, were elected while on Federal capital area seat Amin Ullah Baig of BMP, on Punjab province seat Khalil Ahmed of BMP and on KPK seat Umer Masood Ur Rehman of BMP were elected, which is a huge success for the Businessmen Panel and deserve appreciation for their efforts.

Indonesia bans coal exports in January

JAKARTA: Indonesia, the world's biggest exporter of coal used in electricity generation, on Saturday said it has banned January exports of the fuel in a move aimed at safeguarding its domestic power supply. Rising demand for electricity in the country risks widespread blackouts unless more supplies are diverted to power stations, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said in a statement. Indonesia exports the majority of its coal but mandates that producers must set aside minimum amounts to supply the nation's power plants. The decision comes against a backdrop of surging demand, as post-pandemic economic growth across the world drives electricity needs that cannot be met from less-polluting alternatives. The International Energy Agency last month said global demand for coal, the world's biggest source of greenhouse gases, hit a record in 2021 and would be sustained into 2022, threatening plans set out at last year's COP26 climate change conference to cut emissions. - APP

Kazakhstan increases export of wheat

NUR SULTAN: Kazakhstan exported 4.02 million tons of wheat from January through September 2021, which is by 18.1 percent more than in the same period of last year. Trend reports citing Kazakhstan's statistics. According to the statistics, Kazakhstan exported 430,819 tons of wheat in September 2021, which is by 17.8 percent less than in the same month of last year and by nine percent more than in August 2021. Kazakhstan exported 48,856 tons of corn from January through September 2021 while 1,434 tons in September 2021, which is by 90.3 times and 4.8 percent less than from January through September 2020 and September 2020, respectively. Moreover, Kazakhstan exported 30,569 tons of barley in September 2021, by 58.3 percent less compared to the same month of 2020. Some 710,430 tons of barley were exported during the first nine months of 2021, which is by 4.8 percent more than in the same period of last year. - APP

US Capitol riot investigation body prepares to go public

"The full picture is coming to light, despite President Trump's ongoing efforts to hide the picture," said Wyoming Republican Liz Cheney, the committee's vice chairwoman and one of its two Republican members

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: US House committee, investigating Capitol siege on January 6 last year, is preparing to go public. The committee has interviewed more than 300 witnesses, collected tens of thousands of documents and traveled around the country to talk to election officials who were pressured by Donald Trump. In the coming months, members of the panel will start to reveal their findings against the backdrop of the former president and

his allies' persistent efforts to whitewash the riots and reject suggestions that he helped instigate them. The committee also faces the burden of trying to persuade the American public that their conclusions are fact-based and credible. But the nine lawmakers - seven Democrats and two Republicans - are united in their commitment to tell the full story of Jan. 6, and they are planning televised hearings and reports that will bring their findings out into the open. Their goal is not only to show the severity of the riot,

but also to make a clear connection between the attack and Trump's brazen pressure on the states and Congress to overturn Joe Biden's legitimate election as president. "The full picture is coming to light, despite President Trump's ongoing efforts to hide the picture," said Wyoming Republican Liz Cheney, the committee's vice chairwoman and one of its two Republican members. While the fundamental facts of Jan. 6 are known, the committee says the extraordinary trove of material they have

collected - 35,000 pages of records so far, including texts, emails and phone records from people close to Trump - is fleshing out critical details of the worst attack on the Capitol in two centuries, which played out on live television. They hope to fill in the blanks about the preparations before the attack, the financing behind the Jan. 6 rally that preceded it and the extensive White House campaign to overturn the 2020 election. They are also investigating what Trump himself was doing as his supporters fought

their way into the Capitol. Even as the committee works, Trump and his allies continue to push lies about election fraud while working to place similarly minded officials at all levels of state and local government. "I think that the challenge that we face is that the attacks on our democracy are continuing - they didn't come to an end on Jan. 6," said another panel member, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., also chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. Still, the lawmakers hope they can present the pub-

lic with a thorough accounting that captures what could have been "an even more serious and deeper constitutional crisis," as Cheney put it. "I think this is one of the single most important congressional investigations in history," Cheney said. The committee is up against the clock. Republicans could disband the investigation if they win the House majority in the November 2022 elections. The committee's final report is expected before then, with a possible interim report coming in the spring or summer.

EU flag removed from Arc de Triomphe

PARIS: France removed Sunday a temporary installation of the European Union flag from the Arc de Triomphe monument in Paris after right-wing opponents of President Emmanuel Macron accused him of "erasing" French identity. The giant blue flag was raised in place of the French flag on New Year's Eve to mark France's turn at the rotating presidency of the EU Council, which it will hold for the next six months. The arch, a monument to war dead, and other landmarks including the Eiffel Tower and the Pantheon, are also being illuminated with blue lights for the remainder of this week. But Macron's right-wing rivals for presidential elections in spring seized on the removal of the tricolor flag, calling it an affront to France's heritage and its veterans. "Preside over Europe yes, erase French identity no!" tweeted Valerie Pécresse, the conservative candidate who polls indicate could be the main challenger to Macron in the upcoming vote. She urged him to restore the French flag, saying, "We owe it to our soldiers who spilled their blood for it." Far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, who had vowed to file a complaint with the State Council, France's highest court for administrative matters, called the removal of the EU flag "a great patriotic victory," claiming on Twitter that "massive mobilization" had forced Macron to backpedal. - DNA



JHELUM: Cantonment Board Jhelum holds awareness walk on cleanliness campaign. CB starts solid waste management program to clean up the city and dispose of waste. - DNA

Pakistan, China can have joint-film production, says Moin ul Haque

BEIJING: Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Moin ul Haque said that Pakistan's film industry was experiencing a revival and there was a good scope for cooperation including joint productions between Pakistan and China in which the State Production Base of China Film Group Corporation could play an important role. Embassy's emote collaboration between Pakistan and of film and meo of Pakistan, visited the State of China Film Huairou District, Beijing. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador said that screening Pakistani movies this year as part of the celebratory events to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries has generated a lot of interest for collaboration in the film industry. The Ambassador was received by Mr. Lei Zhenyu, Chief Engineer and Manager, and other officials. He was given a tour of the Base and also briefed on its various facilities and services. - DNA



Dutch police scuffle with anti-lockdown protesters

WEB DESK

AMSTERDAM: Riot police with batons and shields have tried to break up a crowd of several thousand who had gathered in the Dutch capital to protest against Covid-19 lockdown measures and vaccinations. The protesters on Sunday violated a ban on holding public gatherings during the latest wave of coronavirus infections. The protesters, in addition to ignoring an order not to hold a march, mostly did not wear masks and broke social distancing rules as well.

Thousands walked along a main thoroughfare, playing music and holding yellow umbrellas in a sign of opposition to the government measures. Amsterdam mayor Femke Halsema issued an emergency ordinance in response, empowering police to clear the central Museum Square. The local government had outlawed the protest, saying police had indications some demonstrators might be planning to attend "prepared for violence." The municipality later issued an emergency order for people to leave the

square, and riot police marched across the grass to clear the area, sending the demonstrators into nearby streets. A small group of demonstrators briefly clashed with riot police as officers worked to clear the crowd from Museum Square. At least one person was detained. Before officers moved in, protesters unfurled a banner that read, "Less repression, more care". A group held a sign that said: "It's not about a virus, it's about control" on one side and "Freedom" on the other. The Netherlands went into a sudden lockdown on December 19, with the government ordering the closure of all but essential stores. Restaurants, hairdressers, gyms, museums and other public places were all closed until at least January 14. Public gatherings of more than two people are prohibited under the current set of restrictions. Like other European countries, the Netherlands imposed the measures in an effort to prevent a fresh wave of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus. The highly contagious Omicron variant could overwhelm the country's already strained healthcare system.

Pakistan records 32 % growth in exports to Canada

CANBERRA: Pakistan's bilateral and political relations with Canada are healthy and cordial which are impacting positively on our bilateral trade relations which have seen a healthy 32 per cent growth in our exports to Canada in the first 9 months of the calendar year 2021. This was said during an online public forum-cum-katchehry arranged by Pakistan High Commission in Canada and hosted by Consul General of Pakistan Toronto Mr. Abdul Hameed here in Canada on the last day of the year 2021. Pakistan's Chargé d'affaires in Canada Mr. Shahbaz Malik, Consul General of Pakistan Vancouver Mr. Janbaz Khan and Consul General of Montreal Mr. Ishfaq Ahmed Akil also addressed the online forum. Addressing the forum, Mr. Abdul Hameed prayed for a continued welfare of the Pakistani expatriates in Canada and North America in the year 2022, and assured them full cooperation and assistance in prompt provision of consular services. He also highlighted the diplomatic, political, educational and commercial engagements and exchanges between Pakistan and Canada which culminated in recent visit by Deputy Foreign Minister of Canada to Pakistan to attend the 4th round of bilateral talks between both the countries. - DNA

Pakistan NAVY ship Tabuk visits Oman during overseas deployment

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship TABUK visited Port Duqm, Oman as part of Regional Maritime Security Patrols in North Arabian Sea. PNS TABUK is part of 25th Destroyer Squadron of Pakistan Navy Fleet and is equipped with latest weapons and sensors to perform maritime operations in multi-threat environment. Upon arrival at Duqm, the ship was received by Defence Attaché of Pakistan at Oman and officials from Royal Navy of Oman (RNO). During the visit, Commanding Officer of PNS TABUK Captain Muhammad Umair called on Central Naval Area Commander of Royal Navy Oman (RNO) and Director of commercial and port operations of Duqm. During the interactions, matters of mutual interests were discussed and enhancement of bilateral ties in all spheres was re-affirmed. Commanding Officer on behalf of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi conveyed good wishes for the people of Oman in general and the RNO in particular. The port visit to Duqm, Oman is expected to further enhance existing close diplomatic ties and cordial relations between the two countries. - DNA



Uzbekistan as SCO chair: Goals and priorities

Mirziyoyev proposed the establishment of an expert forum on information security and to introduce the position of the SCO Goodwill Ambassador. Other priorities include the adoption of a program for industrial cooperation, the preparation of an agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Uzbekistan, as part of its chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, plans to hold more than 80 international events, develop a program for boosting trade inside the region and step up the engagement of member countries in the area of security in 2022. As a priority, Uzbekistan will seek to invigorate economic cooperation and raise the alliance's security potential. Tashkent intends to expand the SCO agenda by including new items, such as the creation of

mechanisms for the development of digital technologies and innovation. In light of the ongoing pandemic, the reinforcement of cooperation in the health area will remain a pressing goal. The country has developed a special roadmap and concept for its chairmanship. "There is no doubt that all the events under the chairmanship of Uzbekistan in the SCO will be held at the highest level," Abdulaziz Kamilov, the nation's foreign minister, said. The next meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council will be held on September 15-16 in Uzbekistan, which, according to Kamilov, raises

an opportunity to unlock the organization's potential in a new way and to strengthen its role and significance. At a summit in Dushanbe in September 2021, Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev outlined the priorities and tasks of the chairmanship. These include efforts to raise the potential and authority of the organization, ensure peace and stability in the region, reduce

poverty and ensure food security. Uzbekistan called for putting together a plan for the development of intraregional trade, which will include measures to eliminate trade barriers, align technical regulations and digitalize customs procedures. Mirziyoyev proposed the establishment of an expert forum on information security and to introduce the position of the SCO Goodwill Ambassa-

dor. Other priorities include the adoption of a program for industrial cooperation, the preparation of an inter-governmental agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism and a program for infrastructure development across the SCO area. In connection with the tensions in Afghanistan, Mirziyoyev noted the need for a unified approach to the situation in this country, and also suggested holding regular high-level meetings in the SCO-Afghanistan format, expressing his readiness to organize the first of them in Tashkent. According to Uzbekistan's coordinator for

Kenya's economy grows 9.9 pct in Q3

NAIROBI: Kenya's economy grew by 9.9 percent in the three months to September 30, compared to 10.1 percent in the second quarter of 2021, the government statistics agency said on Friday. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) said that the economic recovery from the effects of COVID-19 pandemic continued in the third quarter as a result of the gradual easing of containment measures instituted to curb the spread of the disease. "There was a slowdown in the performance of agriculture, forestry and fishing activities in the third quarter of 2021," KNBS said in its latest statistical release. According to the data agency, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors are estimated to have contracted by 1.8 percent in the third quarter of 2021. "The dismal performance of the sector was evident in the significant decline in fruit exports, cane deliveries, tea production and coffee exports," KNBS added. The statistics agency noted that unfavorable weather conditions experienced in most parts of the country impacted negatively on the production of food crops during the quarter under review. - APP



66 cases brought to legal conclusion: Chairman NAB

Chairman directs all the officers of NAB to consider the eradication of corruption as their national duty and perform it with determination, merit, hard work

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal Chairman NAB has said that from out of 179 mega corruption cases, 66 cases have been brought to a logical conclusion as per law. NAB has not only apprehended 'untouchables' for the first time in its history but NAB is pursuing the cases against the corrupt elements in the esteemed courts on the basis of solid evidence and during the current tenure of NAB administration, between October 2017 and November 30, 2021, 1194 accused were convicted by the Honorable Accountability Courts. NAB is determined to bring logical conclusion of mega corruption cases like money laundering, fake account, assets beyond known sources of income, cheating public at large, housing societies and Modaraba cases by utilising all its resources as per law. Out of 179 mega-corruption cases, 66 had already been brought to a logical conclusion, while 94 mega-corruption cases are still under trial in the

learned accountability cases. He said that corruption is the biggest obstacle in the way of development and prosperity of the country. NAB is focal organisation of Pakistan under United National Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). NAB is pursuing the policies of 'accountability for all' aiming to make Pakistan corruption free. NAB is the role model for SAARC anti corruption forum. NAB has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China to oversee China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects being completed in Pakistan. NAB has introduced a Combine Investigation Team (CIT) system to benefit collective wisdom of supervisory officers so that the corrupt elements could not go scot free. NAB has established a forensic laboratory having facilities of digitals forensic, question documents and finger prints' analysis. The performance of NAB has improved with those measures. NAB has devised a comprehensive Quantified Grading System to improve performance. As soon as Justice (retd) Javed Iqbal

assumed office, he fixed a period of 10 months to conclude a case. According to timeframe, complaint verification should be completed in two months time, inquiry and investigations in four months each. NAB has also set up Witness Handling Cells in all regional bureaux. As a result of this move, NAB is pursuing its cases in the courts on the basis of solid documentary evidence. The overall conviction rate in NAB cases is 66 percent. NAB Chairman has directed all NAB officers to redouble their efforts to make Pakistan corruption free. He directed all the officers of NAB to consider the eradication of corruption as their national duty and perform it with determination, merit, hard work and transparency. Credible national and international organizations like Transparency International, PILDAT, World Economic Forum, Mashaal Pakistan, etc have expressed full confidence in NAB's initiatives. According to the results of a survey conducted by Gallup & Gilani Pakistan, 59 percent Pakistanis expressed their satisfaction over the NAB's performance.



KARACHI: Federal minister for Information and Broadcasting, Fawad Chaudhry talking to media persons. – DNA

Israel attacks Hamas positions in Gaza

Israeli air attacks hit 'rocket manufacturing site, military posts' in the besieged Gaza Strip

NEWS DESK

GAZA: Israel's military said it launched air attacks on Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip, a day after rockets fired from Gaza landed in the Mediterranean Sea. The Israeli military said the attacks late on Saturday hit a rocket manufacturing facility and a military post for Hamas. "As fireworks lit up the skies to celebrate NewYear2022 around the world, a different type of fire came from Gaza-terrorist rocket-fire toward Israel," the Israel military said in a tweet on Sunday. "In response, we just struck Hamas sites in Gaza, incl. a rocket manufacturing site & military posts used for terrorist activity." It was not clear whether the rockets

from Gaza on Saturday were meant to hit Israel, but Gaza-based groups often test-fire missiles towards the sea. Hazem Qassem, a spokesman for Hamas, told Al Jazeera that some of the areas targeted by the Israel strikes include agricultural lands. "Our resistance will continue to perform its duty to defend our people and liberate our land and sanctities," Qassem said. "We will stick to our right of resistance until achieving the goals of our people with liberation and return." There were no reports of casualties from Saturday's attack. No sirens were sounded and Israel's Iron Dome rocket interception system did not deploy, the army said in a statement. Apart from a single incident in September, there has been no cross-border rocket fire since a cease-

fire ended an 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in May. The ceasefire, brokered by Egypt and other mediators, has been fragile. Hamas says Israel did not take serious steps to ease the blockade it imposed on Gaza with Egypt's help when the group seized control of the coastal enclave in 2007. More than 260 Palestinians, many of them civilians and children, and 13 Israelis were killed in the May assault on Gaza, during which Israel carried out relentless air raids across the coastal enclave, prompting Gaza fighters to fire rockets towards Israeli cities. Israel keeps Gaza under blockade, tightly restricting movement out of the territory that is home to two million Palestinians. Egypt also maintains restrictions on the enclave. Both cite threats from Hamas for the restrictions.

UK corona cases top 13 mln

LONDON: Britain has reported another 162,572 corona-virus cases in the latest 24-hour period, bringing the total number of corona-virus cases in the country to 13,100,458, according to official figures released Saturday. Britain also reported a further 154 corona-virus-related deaths. The total number of corona-virus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 148,778, with 11,918 COVID-19 patients still in hospital. The data on Saturday did not include Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland due to differences in reporting schedules over the New Year weekend. The latest figures came as British Health Secretary Sajid Javid said further restrictions must be a "last resort" and Britain will now have to "live alongside" the virus in 2022. The health secretary, writing in the Daily Mail, said England "welcomed in 2022 with some of the least restrictive measures in Europe." "Curbs on our freedom must be an absolute last resort and the British people rightly expect us to do everything in our power to avert them," he said. "So I've been determined that we must give ourselves the best chance of living alongside the virus and avoiding strict measures in the future." Javid added that it was "inevitable that we will still see a big increase" in COVID patients over the next month, warning that the pandemic is "still far from over." – Agencies

Jahangir, Farooq agree to work together



KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s estranged leader Jahangir Tareen met Farooq Sattar during his stay in Karachi and discussed the political situation of the country and governance issues. "Tareen and Sattar also decided to hammer out a national agenda for solution of problems and working together to achieve it," sources said. Farooq Sattar's meeting with Shehbaz Sharif was also came under the discussion. The two leaders also decided to remain in touch in future, according to sources. "Seeing Sindh especially Karachi in this condition is painful," Tareen said. "Economic problems have aggravated. All people have to come forward for national security and stability," he said. Farooq Sattar said that he was ready to meet to any person on any fora and place. "I have held meetings with Ishratul Ebad and Shehbaz Sharif for the sake of welfare and progress of people," Sattar said. "I am ready to share my agenda of national development with all persons," he added. Dr Farooq Sattar, an ex-convenor of the MQM, in October last year called on former Sindh governor Dr Ishratul Ebad in Dubai. In their meeting, they had agreed to play a constructive role in the politics of the country, particularly in Karachi, besides forming a political front, media reports said. – DNA

Muslims suffering from Islamophobia in India

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Rising wave of hate crimes against Muslims is being witnessed in Modi's India as Muslims suffer from hate speeches, physical attacks and Islamophobia in the country. A report released by Kashmir Media Service Sunday said that recently Hindu leaders called for genocide of Muslims at hate speech conclave in Haridwar, adding attacks by Hindu extremists against Muslims and other minorities have intensified under Modi-led fascist Indian government.

It said, hate speeches, crimes against Muslims and other minorities are motivated by Hindutva ideology. The RSS-BJP leaders are using hate speeches to demonize Muslims and other minorities in India, it deplored. The report said, discriminatory measures against Muslims are clear manifestations of Islamophobia in India as Hindu religious leaders are asking Hindus to take up arms against Muslims. It added that seventy-six lawyers of the Indian Supreme Court have written to Chief Justice of India, NV Ramana and sought suo motu cognisance to be taken of the hate speech and calls for ethnic cleansing at two religious events held recently in Delhi and Haridwar. The report maintained that five former chiefs of staff of the Indian armed forces and over a hundred other people, including bureaucrats, journalists and prominent citizens, had written to the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister, Narendra Modi seeking immediate action against Hindu right-wing members for inciting violence.

The recent calls were made in Uttarakhand's Haridwar and Delhi, where the group gave open genocide calls against Muslim citizens of India.

Health card fully available in Lahore: Fawad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Sunday said the health card facility has become fully available in Lahore division. The minister said in next 45 days all the families of Punjab province would be eligible for treatment up to Rs one million annually through health card, he said in a series of tweets. He said with this revolutionary programme the health expense of public would no longer be part of their budget, rather the government would take it's responsibility. Fawad said under this initiative every citizen would be eligible for the medical facility without any discrimination including rich, poor or middle class except people of Sindh. The provincial government of Sindh was not providing this facility to its citizens, he said adding, except that the whole population of the country would be benefited through it.



MULTAN: State Minister for Information & Broadcasting Farrukh Habib offering Fateha with MPA Malik Javed Ansari on the sad demise of his brother. – DNA

Registered family heads to get Sehat Cards

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid on Sunday said that only head of a family registered with Nadra will get Sehat Insaf Card, which will cover the whole family. Addressing medical men in Lahore, Yasmin Rashid urged the family heads to get themselves registered with the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) to avail the health insurance. The minister informed that a help desk has been established in the offices of assistant commissioners (ACs) in every tehsil in this regard. She said the people who have not received health cards yet are the ones who did not get themselves registered. She said all medical facilities covered under the card will be indoor including treatment of major diseases. Dr Yasmin said all details regarding it are available on the dedicated mobile application. The minister said about 133 public and private hospitals in Lahore Division are on the health card panel. On December 14,

2021, Prime Minister Imran Khan had announced the commencement of a programme to provide health insurance for all Punjab citizens. As many as 30 million families in Punjab will benefit from the Naya Pakistan health programme. Every family will be able to get treatment of up to Rs1 million from any private or government hospital in a year. Punjab is the second province to offer the public health insurance after the scheme was successfully launched in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In her presser, Yasmin Rashid also announced 25,000 jobs besides also announcing that Sehat cards would be provided to the entire population in the province until March 2022. She said that people not having NIC would not be able to avail health facilities from Sehat card while B-form of their children will also be necessary to ensure health facilities for the entire family. "We have also developed an application named Naya Pakistan National Sehat Card from where details regarding the health facilities could be accessed easily," she said.

Liquor poured into Kabul canal

NEWS DESK

KABUL: A team of Afghan intelligence agents poured around 3,000 litres of liquor into a canal in Kabul, the country's spy agency said on Sunday, as the new Taliban authorities crack down on the sale of alcohol. Video footage released by the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) showed its agents pouring alcohol stored in barrels into the canal after seizing it during a raid in the capital. "Muslims have to seriously abstain from making and delivering alcohol," an intelligence official said in the footage the agency posted on Twitter on Sunday. It was not clear when the raid was carried out or exactly when the alcohol was destroyed, but a statement issued by the agency said three dealers were arrested during the operation. Selling and consuming alcohol was banned even under the previous Western-backed regime, but the Taliban, known for their austere brand of Islam, are stricter in their opposition to it.

Iran for UN action over Soleimani killing

Request comes amid a week of events planned by Iranian officials on second anniversary of Soleimani's killing on January 3

TEHRAN: Iran has called on the United Nations to take formal action against the United States for the assassination of its top general two years ago. Iran says Qassem Soleimani, the then-commander of the elite Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), was in Iraq's capital Baghdad on a diplomatic mission when his convoy was destroyed by missiles fired from a US drone. In a letter to the UN General Assembly published late on Saturday, the legal department of Iran's presidential office called for "all legal initiatives in its power, including issuing a resolution" to condemn the US government and discourage similar moves in the future. The letter said

US governments have, for years, displayed an "excessive unilateralism" in their actions that has granted them the power to violate international laws and agreements. The missile comes shortly ahead of the second anniversary of Soleimani's killing on January 3. Former US President Donald Trump, who ordered the killing, said at the time that Soleimani was "the world's top terrorist" and "should have been terminated long ago". Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and several others were also killed in the attack. The UN rapporteur for extrajudicial killing in July 2020 concluded in a report that Soleimani's assassination

was "unlawful" and "arbitrary" and violated the UN charter. Last year, Iran requested Interpol "red notices" against dozens of US officials, including Trump who also had an arrest warrant issued by an Iraqi court. Soleimani's killing brought Iran and the US to the verge of war. The IRGC launched 12 missiles at two US bases in Iraq in the largest ballistic missile attack ever against the Americans. No casualties were reported but more than 100 US service members were reported to have suffered traumatic brain injuries. On Sunday, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who had promised "harsh revenge" for Soleimani, said in a speech that the perpetra-

tors of his assassination will be consigned to the "landfill of history" after "they pay their worldly dues". Iranian officials are planning multiple events to mark the second anniversary of Soleimani's assassination and the missile launches against US bases. On Monday, an event is being organised in the capital Tehran, which is expected to be attended by top government and military officials. President Ebrahim Raisi and other top figures are expected to address the televised event. Ending a week of ceremonies will be an exhibition of Iran's missile capabilities on Friday. In Iraq, thousands gathered on Sunday to mark Soleimani's killing. – APP

5 dead, 21 injured in Moscow bus accident

MOSCOW: Five people were killed and 21 were injured in a bus accident south of Moscow in the early hours of Sunday, Russian authorities said. Russia's Federal Road Traffic Inspection agency said the accident took place at around 5:45 am local time (0245 GMT) in the Ryazan region. "As a result of the accident five people died, 21 were injured," the agency said on Telegram, adding that two of the injured were under-age. It said the injuries were of "various severity." The agency said the bus could have hit a pillar by a railroad bridge. The accident took place on a highway near the village of Voslebovo around 270 kilometres (170 miles) south of Moscow, the agency said. There was a total of 49 passengers onboard, according to authorities. – APP