



Islamabad POST

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NATO, Russia to hold more talks despite Ukraine tensions

Detailed News On Page-06

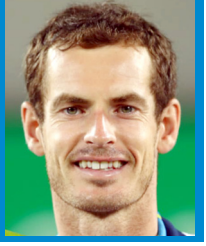
Pakistan views Congo as key African country

Detailed News On Page-08



Andy Murray into Sydney Classic last 8

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

President recovers from Omicron

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi has fully recovered after he tested positive for COVID-19 about six days ago. The president announced he tested negative for the virus because of the grace of Allah. "With the grace of Allah, Al Rahman Al Raheem [and] Al Shafee, and with your prayers, which I believe always have an effect, I have come out of COVID-19 Omicron version, and have tested negative. Alhamdulillah," Alvi wrote on Twitter.

Lockdown party: Boris apologises

NEWS DESK

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson apologised on Wednesday for attending a "bring your own booze" gathering at his official residence during the first coronavirus lockdown as opponents said he had to resign. Johnson admitted for the first time he had attended the party at Downing Street on May 20, 2020, when social gatherings were limited to a bare minimum and said he understood the anger that the revelations had caused. "I know the rage they feel with me over the government I lead when they think that in Downing Street itself the rules are not being properly followed."

Do not want terrorists in Parliament

WEB DESK

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) does not want any lawmakers related to the PKK terrorists in the Turkish Parliament, echoing similar remarks by People's Alliance partner Devlet Bahçeli, who called on the Constitutional Court to ban the pro-PKK Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) over its relations with the PKK terrorist group.

PM gets briefing at ISI HQs

The prime minister appreciated the efforts of the spy agency for national security, stability and prosperity

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan visited the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Secretariat in Islamabad on Wednesday where a comprehensive briefing followed by a discussion on national security and regional dynamics, with a focus on the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, was held. According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the premier was accompanied by key federal ministers while Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa was also present on the occasion. The dignitaries were welcomed by ISI chief Lieutenant General Nadeem Ahmed Anjum, it added. "The prime minister appreciated the efforts of the ISI for national security, stability and prosperity and expressed satisfaction over the professional preparedness to safeguard Pakistan's national interest," the statement said. This is the first time that Prime Minister Imran has visited the ISI headquarters after the appointment of Lieutenant General Anjum as the spymaster in October 2021.

Air Chief calls on PM

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar Wednesday called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. During the meeting, professional matters pertaining to air defence of the country were discussed, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Last month, the National Security Committee (NSC) had approved Pakistan's first-ever national security policy, confirmed Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry. Talking to Twitter, Fawad Chaudhry said that national security policy was approved by the NSC meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan. He maintained that the policy will be tabled in the federal cabinet meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday (tomorrow).



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar Wednesday calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. – DNA

Mirza, Jatoi cases challenge for judiciary

Fawad urges the prosecution and the court to fulfil their responsibility

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry on Wednesday said that high-profile cases of Usman Mirza, Sha-rukh Jatoi and the Lahore-Sialkot motorway

State to pursue prosecution

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government on Wednesday decided to pursue prosecution in the case of the

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany, Bernhard Schlagheck calls on Leader of the House in Senate, Dr. Shahzad Waseem. – DNA

FS lauds services of outgoing Greek envoy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Greece in Pakistan Andreas Papastavrou Wednesday paid a farewell call on Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood here. The foreign secretary appreciated the ambassador's contributions towards strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Greece. He hoped that the momentum generated during his tenure would advance further and also wished him well in his future endeavours. Earlier this week, President Dr Arif Alvi said that Pakistan highly values its ties with Greece and wants to further expand bilateral cooperation in diverse areas of mutual interest. The President made these remarks while talking to the outgoing Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic (Greece), Mr Andreas Papastavrou, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Pak condemns UAE ship hijacking

Such blatant acts endanger world trade

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the hijacking of the UAE-flagged Cargo Vessel "Rawabi" by the Houthis near the port city of Hodeidah, Yemen. A statement from foreign office read "Such blatant acts not only threaten the freedom of maritime navigation but also endanger international trade and security of the region". Pakistan expresses its solidarity with the UAE and calls for immediate release of the vessel and its crew. A ship hijacked by Yemeni rebels in the Red Sea has 11 crew on board from five countries, the UAE told the United Nations Security Council president.

Finance bill to hurt common man: Bilawal

– regrets that suggestions of the Opposition parties had not been included in the federal budget

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD, Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Wednesday said the Supplementary Finance Bill-2021 presented by the government would bring negative impact on the common man. Participating in the debate on the Finance (Supplementary) Bill-2021 aimed at amending certain laws relating to taxes and duties, he said it was the stance of the Opposition from day one to sit

'PM fully alive to masses problems'

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib has said Prime Minister Imran Khan is fully committed to resolve problems faced by overseas Pakistanis. Addressing an event in Islamabad on Wednesday, he said

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Shahbaz, Fazl urge ECP to remain neutral

The JUI chief says PDM will march towards the capital on March 23

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should not make itself "controversial," Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on Wednesday, adding that the commission "should not be enslaved." Addressing a press conference, flanked by the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif, Fazl said: "We don't give Prime Minister Imran Khan and his government



the right to re-colonise an independent state." The JUI chief said that the long

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No additional taxes levied, says Kanwal Shauzab – Page 04

Djokovic is not a victim of Australian government rules – Page 05

NATO, Russia to hold more talks despite tensions – Page 06

Impartial investigations needed in Kazakhstan: UN – Page 07

India starts propaganda to target SFJ, Khalistan – Page 08

French EU presidency priorities; challenges

President Macron has proactively furthered the establishment of a European army to decrease Europe's independence from the US and NATO

NEWS DESK

PARIS: France has taken over the presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) from Slovenia. France will hold the presidency of the Council of the EU for six months from 1 January to 30 June 2022. The presidency of the council is responsible for conducting meetings, determining the agenda, and facilitating dialogues with other EU institutions. French President Emmanuel Macron, in an hour-long presentation at the Elysée Palace, laid out France's priorities during its presidency by encapsulating the motto: "Recovery, power and belonging". France attempts to resolve multiple issues during its presidency across Europe as President Macron aims to foster cooperation in Europe by emphasising on sovereignty and strategic autonomy. President Macron set out the framework for the French presidency in 2017 and, since then, his government has been working towards building genuine Euro-

pean sovereignty, which would focus on Europe's ability to defend its values and interests. In a news conference, President Macron encapsulated his priorities of moving towards a Europe that is powerful and fully sovereign in its choices. The French EU Presidency will be taking place against the backdrop of health, energy, and migration crises, especially amidst rising tensions on the EU's eastern border as the Ukraine-Russia conflict brews. In his speech, Macron highlighted improving European border control to avoid the challenges of migration by reforming the Schengen border-free area by establishing a political steering committee. Additionally, France will also defend the creation of the Emergency Border Support Mechanism for the Refugee Crisis, an instrument created in 2016 to address the humanitarian needs within the EU in relation to the migration crisis. The EU has been dealing with a fresh migration crisis due to Belarus encouraging asylum-seekers to venture into Poland,

Lithuania, and Latvia. Furthermore, Macron also stated the importance of the African continent and has announced an EU-Africa Summit to be held in February in Brussels as France continues its agenda towards taking structural initiatives towards Af-

rica and the Western Balkans. He also showed the desire to launch a new economic and financial deal with Africa beyond the aegis of Europe's Global Gateway initiative. Similarly, the Western Balkans is a region of utmost importance for France and the EU as Macron insist-

ed on protecting the minorities in the region and further accession negotiations between the EU and Western Balkans countries. The region also is a key transit route for irregular migrants trying to reach Western Europe and the route in the past has contributed towards increased criminal activities in the region such as drug smuggling, petty theft, and human trafficking. Earlier in 2021, at the EU-Western Balkan summit, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, the EU is not complete without the Western Balkans, therefore, France during its Presidency aims to further the region's accession talks. President Macron has called for "imagining a new European model" to fight against mass unemployment across the EU and bring economic development to the continent as Macron has announced several European investment plans and new industrial alliances would be launched by March 2022. The new



Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Minister directs inspection of flour mills

PESHAWAR: Khabir Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Atif Khan on Wednesday directed the authorities of the Food Department to ensure inspection of flour mills for provision of quality flour and monitoring of the availability of subsidized flour to people. He issued these directives while presiding over a briefing regarding new and ongoing schemes under the annual development programme organized by the Food Department here. Besides that Secretary Food, Director Food and other concerned authorities also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the provincial minister was given a detailed briefing regarding progress on ongoing and new schemes, said a news release issued here. Speaking on the occasion, the provincial minister directed acceleration of the pace of work on go-down management, supply management, fleet management, inspections management and lab management systems. — APP

WTM fails to stop water leakage

KARACHI: Faisal Moiz Khan, President, North Karachi Association of Trade & Industry (NKATI), while expressing deep concern over the while expressing concerns over non-prevention of water leakage in the industrial area and continued negligence on the part of the WTM staff of the Karachi Water & Sewerage Board, and demanded from the MD KWSB that measures should be taken to eliminate water leakage in the North Karachi industrial area, also ensure to supply of water to the industries as per the production requirement. In a statement, Faisal Moiz Khan pointed out the leakage of water in the industrial area, and said that continuous flow of water is continuing in many places in area. Due to which abundant water is being wasted and water supply to industries is being affected. Faisal said, "The WTM has been informed several times in this regard and it has been requested that water leakage be eliminated and water be wasted, but the staff did not pay any attention and so far they have not taken any steps to stop the flow of water, as a result, water supply to industries is being disrupted as per requirement and production process is also being affected", he add. — APP

TEVTA-Facebook program empowering women

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) Ali Salman Siddique on Wednesday said that TEVTA in collaboration with Facebook had launched a historic digital 'Micro-Entrepreneurship' program for around 10,000 women for growing their online businesses. TEVTA, Punjab in collaboration with Facebook/Meta had already trained 3,000 women to access the world and were planning further to train about 100,000 females across the country, he said while speaking to a private news channel. He said providing IT training to youth specially women was the top priority of the government, adding, youth should equip themselves with digital skills so as to be able to compete in the global market. He said TEVTA was actively working in the country to prepare women to enhance their role by getting digital skills and exploiting opportunities for growth. Chairman said this programme will make female trainees "job providers" and not "seekers" as women living in urban and rural parts of Pakistan are no less in talent or skill than male anywhere else in the society. Replying a question, he mentioned that TEVTA Punjab has also recently launched multiple online courses for the youth comprise of Artificial intelligence, e-commerce training, Digital Marketing and Data Analyst. — APP

Nutshell and Martin Dow holds 'The Future Summit'

Governor Sindh Imran Ismail says country's national economy is moving progressively on a higher and sustainable growth

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The country's national economy is moving progressively on a higher inclusive and sustainable growth path on the back of various measures and resultant achievements despite a myriad of challenges. This was expressed by Governor Sindh Imran Ismail, while addressing The Future Summit organised jointly by Nutshell and Martin Dow at a local hotel here on Wednesday. The Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Dr. Raza Baqir, Sohail Aman, (Rtd) Air Chief Marshal; Ali Akhai, Chairman Martin Dow; Ehsan Malik, CEO Pakistan Business Council; Ghias Khan, CEO Engro, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, former Governor SBP and others also attended the summit. Governor Sindh Imran Ismail observed that during the past three years of the incumbent federal government, it had faced numerous economic challenges which were somehow aggravated by the pandemic. However, the federal government has quite successfully progressed from recovery and stabilization of the national economy to its sustainable growth. "The impact of the federal government's timely and appropriate measures is very much visible in the form of



an economic recovery on the back of broad-based growth across all sectors", he maintained. The Governor Sindh said that the national economy of Pakistan already had a volatile growth pattern over the years, marked by regular up and down cycles, which posed challenges in achieving long-term and inclusive growth. "The present government has focused on an economic vision of securing sustainable economic growth

through improved efficiency, ease of doing business, better regulatory environment, enhanced productivity, and increased investment", he added. The Governor Sindh while appreciating the efforts of organisers said that the future summit allowed leading business figures from around the world to present their ideas and effective business strategies in a comprehensive discussion to address economic and business concerns.

The Governor SBP Dr. Raza Baqir also spoke on the occasion. He spelled out the economic outlook from the central bank's perspective, and said that Pakistan remained successful in containing Covid-19 waves that had opened new vistas of prosperity. "SBP's policy support measures during Covid were 'aggressive, protective, flexible and targeted", he added. He cited interventions like Temporary Economic Reform Facility

(TERF) that had helped shore up industrial productivity in a demand depressed environment. The Principal Loan Extension Programme and Rozgar Scheme to Prevent Layoffs, provided timely loan relief and working capital to businessmen, as well as the worker class. He also mentioned about the current account and fiscal deficit state in detail with the help of slides along with the timely decisions/steps of the government.

Govt, SBP recommends ban on crypto currency in report to SHC

KARACHI: In their report submitted to the Sindh High Court, the federal government and the State Bank of Pakistan have recommended a complete ban on the crypto currency while the court has sent the report to the ministries of law and treasury for the perusal of all legal aspects involved in this business. The Sindh High Court on Wednesday heard a case regarding regularizing the crypto currency business in Pakistan. During the hearing, a report from the federal government and State Bank was submitted to the court which recommended a complete ban on crypto currency in the country. According to the report, nobody could be allowed to indulge in digital money business as it was illegal. The court ordered to send the report to the treasury and law ministries so that both the ministries took into the consideration all legal aspects of the crypto business. The Sindh High Court has directed the ministries to decide about the legal position of the digital money business in three months. Justice KK Agha said in case of outlawing the business, the government should also apprise the court. And in case of regularizing it, a legal framework must be prepared. — DNA

KP Tourism Week in full swing at Pakistan Pavilion in Dubai Expo

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Week titled 'Investment Opportunities in Tourism Sector' is in full swing at Pakistan Pavilion, Dubai Expo featuring musical performances, traditional dances, truck art, wood carving, gem stones. Speaking at the opening ceremony of KP Tourism Week at Dubai Expo, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ministry of Tourism Secretary Amir Sultan Tareen said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a land of opportunities for the investors in tourism sector, adding that government is providing peaceful environment for the investment opportunities through public-private partnership under one window vision, said a statement issued here on Wednesday. "KP government has incentivized tax regime and created investment friendly environment for the international investors in the tourism potential pro-

jects of KP", said Amir Sultan Tareen. He said that there are three prominent valleys in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Hazara valley, Swat Valley and Chitral valley. He said that God has gifted all the beautiful areas including lakes, rivers and mountains in the province. Tareen said that the most important thing for the government was to develop tourism infrastructure in the province. He said that the government has taken short and long term steps for the promotion of sustainable infrastructure development. Secretary Tourism said that under long term initiative, steps were taken by initiating public-private partnership projects. He said that KP Integrated Tourism Development Project (KITE) will improve tourism enabling infrastructure, enhance tourism assets and strengthen destination management for sustainable tourism development

in the province. Speaking on Heritage Tourism Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Director Directorate of Archeology and Museum KP Dr. Abdul Samad appreciated the fantastic opportunity to speak about Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's rich cultural heritage at the Expo referring to it as the "cradle of civilizations". "Gandhara was presented as a hub of religious tourism at the Expo", he added. He said, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the only place in the world where we have complete cultural profile from caves era to modern times which was started from stone-age. He said that for the first time, we have selected archeological sites in the province for conservation and development to promote multi-culturalism of KP. He said that KP is not just sacred place for Muslim but also sacred place for people of different religions. — APP

KP PAC seeks details of 356 mini, micro dams

PESHAWAR: Public Account Committee (PAC) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly here on Wednesday sought details of all 356 mini - micro dams constructed in the province and revenue generated from these dams. The committee, chaired by Acting chairman Idrees Khan, also sought details of the government vehicles allotted to the government officers and recovery of the vehicles from retired officers of administrative department. The meeting discussed audit paras for the year 2017-18 of Energy and Power department and kept three audit paras pending while seeking details of the mini-micro dams constructed in the province and the number of dams made operational so far. The committee members raised objection that no revenue could be generated from these dams. The department replied that these dams were constructed for development purpose rather for revenue generating. — APP

Man kills ex-wife's husband

FAISALABAD: A man stabbed to death his ex-wife's husband over marriage issue, in the precincts of Sadr Jaranwala police station. Police said on Wednesday that Rabia Bibi had got divorce from her husband Naveed Khalil, resident of Chak No.64-GB and solemnized court marriage with Ghulam Murtaza of the same locality. In a fit of grudge, Naveed called Ghulam Murtaza in fields outside the village and stabbed him to death with a sharp edged weapon and fled the scene. On information, the police rushed to the spot and took the body into custody. A case has been registered against the accused. — APP

Minister assures to resolve basic problems of Mardan city

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government, Elections and Rural Development (LG,E&RDD) Faisal Amin Gandapur Wednesday said that Mardan is the second largest city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after Peshawar and assured to resolve all the issues on priority basis. He said this while presiding over a meeting held at the Local Government Secretariat Peshawar to review the problems faced by the people regarding the Local Government Department in Mardan. The meeting was attended by KP Food Minister Muhammad Atif Khan and other MPAs from Mardan Abdus Salam Afridi, Tufail Anjum, Malik Shoukat Ali and Zahir Shah Toru. KP Secretary Shakeel Ahmed Mian, Special Secretary Hafiz Mutasim Billa Shah, Director General Local Government, Secretary Local Council Board, heads of Mardan Development Authority, WSSC and mega project KPCAP also attended. — APP



PESHAWAR: SAPM on E-commerce, Senator Aon Abbas Buppi in a meetings with Business Community of Kyber Pakhtunkhwa at Sarhad Chamber of Commerce. — DNA

FESCO issues shutdown notice

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued power shutdown schedule for Thursday due to necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the schedule, power supply from Ghag, Scarp, Sudh Niaz, Rakh Bhang, Dabb Kalan, Azadpur, Shorkot Road, Sadiq Nehang, Shorkot City and Sultan Bahadur feeders linked with 132-KV Shorkot City grid station will remain suspended from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. while al-Awan, Muneer Shaheed and Lundianwala feeders originating from 132-KV Lundianwala grid station will observe shutdown from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday (January 13). Similarly, electricity supply from Marzi Pura, Raza Abad, Subhan Abad, Kashmir Road, GM Abad, Aminpur, Langrana, Qadir Abad, Madina Abad, Ahmad Abad, Faiz Abad, Sidhupura, Sindh, Rehman Abad, Shahbaz Pur, Khurdpur, Lyallpur Oil Refinery, Parokianwala, Elyas, Sadiq Abad and Masha Allah feeders linked with 132-KV Narwala Road grid station will remain suspended from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. whereas Gulberg and Bashir Abad feeders originating from 132-KV Gojra grid station, new Factory Area feeder linked with 132-KV Chenab Nagar grid station will observe load shedding from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on January 13. — APP

Afridi asks overseas Pakistanis to lobby for Kashmir dispute in host countries

"Future belongs to Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan is working hard to revive the country's economy but it would take some time to clear the 70 year's mess"

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Shehryar Khan Afridi Wednesday urged overseas Pakistanis to lobby for Kashmir cause in their host countries. He expressed these views addressing participants of the first-ever overseas Pakistanis convention 2022. The event was held under the aegis of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir in collaboration with the Overseas Pakistanis Global Foundation (OPGF) and Graana.com. "Future belongs to Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan is working hard to revive the country's economy but it would take some time to clear the 70 year's mess," he said. Afridi said, for the first time in history of Pakistan, overseas Pakistanis were hosted by the government and provided help to resolve their issues. He said that all the stakeholders were united to support and facili-

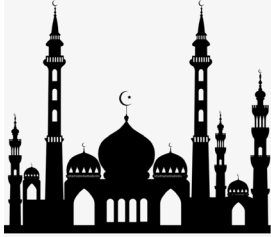


itate the oversee Pakistanis irrespective of their political leaning. He said that officials from all the government departments attended the Overseas Pakistanis Convention to help resolve their issues. He said that the participation of federal ministers and government officials reflects the commitment of the government for overseas Pakistanis. Addressing the audience, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said that Prime Minister Imran Khan fulfilled his pledge to facilitate overseas Pakistanis for obtaining succession certificates, getting their ID

cards and passport and registering their votes. He said that the Overseas Pakistanis sent remittances of US\$ 3 billion through Roshan Digital Accounts. He said that the government had created social safety network to help the poor meet challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Minister for Science and Technology Shibli Faraz said that Prime Minister Imran Khan has a special vision to facilitate the Overseas Pakistanis. He said that the PTI government is committed to facilitate the overseas Pakistanis who are an assets of the country. Dr Abdullah Riar, General Secretary of the PTI Overseas Pakistanis chapter, sharing his views on PTI's role in boosting and organizing overseas Pakistanis said that price hike was a global phenomenon and Prime Minister Imran Khan was working days in and days out to help the country pull out of economic crunch situation. He said the image of Pakistan has been transformed for better over the past three years. Chairman

Emarat group and Graana.com Shafique Akbar said that OPVS is the most advanced system to online verify land to help property business. He said that Pakistan could become fastest developed country in the world if overseas Pakistanis come and invest on Pakistan. He said that US\$ 25 billion dollars has been invested in Pakistan. He urged overseas Pakistanis to replicate good experiences they learned overseas. Senior Hurriyat leader Ghulam Mohammad Safi said that genuine struggle for right of self determination cannot be confused with terrorism. He lauded Chairman Kashmir Committee Shehryar Khan Afridi for raising awareness on Kashmir among overseas Pakistanis. Senior officials of State Bank, SECP, NADRA, FBR, Passport, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and others briefed the overseas Pakistanis on steps taken by the PTI government to facilitate Pakistanis living abroad.

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:46 am
Zohr.....	12:16 pm
Asr.....	03:41 pm
Maghrib.....	05:19 pm
Isha.....	06:47 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Wapda Rawalpindi.....	111-309-309

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....	9209224
Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking interest in dolls during an exhibition held at PNCA in collaboration with the Japanese embassy. The exhibition will continue till January 25. – DNA

No additional taxes levied, says Kanwal Shauzab

Kanwal said the government has spent resources on the welfare of common people and today, the economy stands at the record growth level

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, Development and Reforms Kanwal Shauzab Wednesday said PTI during its 3 years' tenure, had not imposed any additional taxes on common man and all economic indicators show positive trajectory due to the prudent policies of the present government.

Talking to a private news channel, she criticized that dark chapter of bad governance, corruption and politics of revenge had ended, adding, PTI-led government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was taking more concrete steps to improve the country's economy. She said the government under Ehsaas program, provided relief to poor segments of the society, adding that no additional taxes



were levied which is unprecedented in the history of Pakistan. Kanwal said the government has spent resources on the welfare of common people and today, the economy stands at the record growth level. She also strongly criticized the PML-N for damaging the country's economy in its tenure, adding, Sharif family promoted their businesses rather than serving the interests of masses and ap-

pointed their favorites in all public departments. She alleged that PML-N government in Punjab had broke all records of corruption and plundering of public money in development projects. She claimed that nobody could raise a finger on the character and transparency of Prime Minister Imran Khan and PTI-led government has been supporting textile as well as agriculture sector, which create jobs and increase exports.

Senate body discusses G 14 illegal settlements

Reviewing details of ongoing NCL projects the committee was informed that currently NCL was mainly engaged with projects related to the PAEC, Chashma and Gilgit

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works was informed that the Estate Office had so far vacated around 2,800 properties from illegal occupants. The committee that met here with Haji Hidayat Ullah in the chair recommended that the department must look into developing high rise buildings as opposed to single and double unit houses to maintain overload effectively. Discussing details of the Estate Office's criteria for allotments and measures being taken to vacate illegally occupied property; the committee was informed that accommodations were strictly allocated on the basis of merit. It was asserted that as per Supreme Court directions relaxation of rules under Rule 29A of the Accommodation Allocation Rules, 2002 would not often be exercised, except in the case of hardship. Deliberating over issues pertaining to illegal sites in G-14, allocated for the Federal Government Housing Authority (FGEHA) and acquired under the Land Acquisition Act; the body stressed the need for cutting off all amenities to discourage the activity and proceed the work on property site at fast pace. It was claimed that the main reason for allowing amenities to such sites was the political pressure by local Members of the National Assembly who have been provided SDG funds to upgrade living standards of the local populace. Showing serious concern, a sub-committee was formulated to probe the matter in detail which would be headed by Senator Saifullah Abro. Reviewing details of ongoing National Construction Limited (NCL) projects the committee was informed that currently NCL was mainly engaged with projects related to the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Chashma and Gilgit. Seven in number, the total value of these projects amounts to Rs1821.00 million. It was revealed that currently NCL, due to numerous factors was bearing accumulated losses worth millions of rupees. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ayub Afridi SAPM Overseas Pakistanis giving souvenir to Ambassador of Jpana Mitsuhiro WADA. Matters pertaining to export of manpower to Japan came under discussion. – DNA

MNAs ask Govt to revisit finance bill

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers in the National Assembly on Tuesday urged the government to revisit the finance supplementary bill-2021. They were of the view that the bill would cause further inflation and affect the general public due to increase in the prices of various items of daily use. The tax exemptions should be kept intact to provide relief to the common man in getting basic necessities of life, including milk, other edibles, she added. – APP

Ambassador of Oman calls on IIUI President

ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Mohammed bin Omar bin Ahmed Al Marhoon, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman here on Wednesday called on Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, President, International Islamic University (IIU). In the meeting, matters pertaining to educational cooperation and mutual interest were discussed. During the meeting, President IIUI said that the University is ready for educational cooperation and reiterated his resolve that IIUI would keep disseminating messages of peace and promotion of knowledge. He said that IIUI is keen to expand its educational ties with all institutions of the world, especially with the varsities of Islamic world. Briefing the Ambassador about the faculties and departments of the University,

he also told the Ambassador regarding recent MoUs of IIUI signed with other institutions across the world. The Ambassador appreciated role of IIUI in promotion of education and said that International Islamic University Islamabad is one of the prestigious institutions of the Muslim world. On the occasion, both agreed to take further steps for expanding mutual cooperation. – DNA

ICCI calls for maximizing exports under GSP Plus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has called upon all stakeholders to accelerate efforts for maximizing exports under EU's GSP Plus regime to improve the health of the economy. He said that Pakistan was holding GSP plus status till the end of 2022 for duty free access for its products into the EU market and its extension beyond 2023 was very important for Pakistan's export oriented industries, economic growth and expansion of the job market. He said this while addressing a roundtable conference on "Increased Economic Participation of Women Workers and GSP Plus Status" organized by ICCI in collaboration with Trust for Democratic Education & Accountability (TDEA) and Women Workers Alliance (WWA). Presidents of various

key Chambers of Commerce and Industry were also present at the occasion. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that Pakistan has secured additional exports in the range of Euro 1 billion to 1.5 billion per annum since 2014, which was not an impressive performance and stressed that our export sector should make more

strong efforts to maximize exports to EU countries. He emphasized that the government should address key issues of exporters and further facilitate them in promoting exports under the GSP Plus regime in order to strengthen Pakistan's position in the EU market. He said that the European Commission was reported-

ly attaching six new conventions, mostly related to greater accessibility for people with physical disability, eradication of child labour and environmental safety for extension of GSP Plus regime. Therefore, all stakeholders have to put in their best efforts for compliance of all conventions to take maximum benefit of this facility. He hoped that the roundtable would create more awareness in the participants about GSP Plus and how to maximize its benefits for Pakistan. He was optimistic that the event would also educate the participants about how a better collaboration between women workers and employers could help to further strengthen Pakistan's position in the EU market under the GSP Plus regime. Rukhsana Shama, Deputy Team, Lead Trust for Democratic Education & Accountability (TDEA) deliberated on the introduction and objectives of GSP Plus and how it was important for economic growth of Pakistan.



Pak to host Asia Open Taekwondo C'ship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Taekwondo Federation would host the 4th Asia Open International Taekwondo Championship in Islamabad from November 1 to 4, this year. According to President Pakistan Taekwondo Federation Lt Col (R) Waseem Ahmed, top male and female athletes from various countries would feature in the extravaganza. "Young people mostly aged 17 and above will participate in Senior Male and Female Khyrougi Event. Pakistani National and International Referees will also be part of this event along with International Referees for the smooth conduct of this prestigious championship," he said. Waseem said Pakistan Taekwondo Federation would deliver the Asia Open International Taekwondo Championship in sincere spirit and genuine warmth in our beautiful federal capital. "The first-ever mega event being given to Pakistan Taekwondo speaks of dedication, continuous hard work and remarkable performance of our athletes, officials and office," he said. He said such events were beneficial for the professional development of the officials and athletes. "These events improve the organizational skills of National Sports Federations, ultimately creating a better image of the beloved country," he said. Waseem also requested for the support of all stakeholders including the government, sponsors, media and Sports Lovers for the success of the championship.

China-funded 1.2 MGD ROD Plant to be set up

ISLAMABAD: 1.2 Million Gallon per Day (MGD) Reverse Osmosis Desalination (ROD) Plant will be set up at Gwadar with a Chinese grant of more than Rs 2 billion to resolve the water shortage in the area. Federal cabinet has approved the 1.2 MGD ROD Plant for Gwadar. The project will be completed with the help of China. It is aimed at providing fresh potable water for the people of the Gwadar city. Originally, the federal government had approved the development scheme for desalination of water based on a 50:50 % cost-sharing formula by the federal and Balochistan's provincial governments respectively. The federal government had also released its funding of Rs 138 million in 2006-2007 but the project could not be installed. Later the cost of this project was revised upwards to Rs 978 million which went up further as the plan is being implemented. The population of Gwadar city has no reliable and sustainable access to drinking water for a very long time. Their main source of water is Ankara Dam which due to frequent droughts is unable even to meet the drinking water requirements of the city's population. The current water requirement of the Gwadar City is 4.2 MGD per day while supply from the government source is 2.0 MGD. Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry contended that the water project will eliminate the shortage. "The people of Gwadar will have access to clean water now," he added. – APP

Transgender call for implementing right act

ISLAMABAD: Transgender community on Wednesday demanded implementation of transgender rights act. The act aims to provide security and inclusion in society with dignity. Talking to APP, an expert of Transgender law Nayab Ali said that around 76 transgenders were killed and they should be provided justice. She added that the only support for transgender community is to provide by their peers. In the absence of medical care that is sensitive to their needs, relief usually comes from community members looking after them using traditional methods and wisdom. – APP

Briefs

National economy on growth trajectory

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PTI Member National Assembly (MNA) Aliya Hamza Wednesday said the national economy was on the growth trajectory due to prudent economic policies introduced by the government. Participating in the National Assembly debate on Finance (Supplementary) Bill-2021, she said the country's economy made a significant progress that was evident from the fact that the listed business gained 59 percent profit despite economic slowdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic. She said the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate stood at 3.98 percent in the last fiscal year, and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government was confident of achieving the 5 percent GDP growth rate this year. Contrary to it, Aliya said the growth rate of India, United Kingdom, United States of America and Iran remained in minus ranging from -3.7 percent to -10 percent. She said Pakistan Stock Market posted record profit of Rs 250 billion and debt-to-GDP ratio was coming down gradually; and its all credit went to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan who saved the country from economic collapse. She said all economic indicators including exports, revenue collection, remittances, industrial growth, and agriculture growth were moving in the right direction.

AFI provides shelter to more than 1000 orphans

RAWALPINDI: Anjum-Faizul Islam (AFI) is home to more than 1000 orphan children, out of which a majority belonged to downtrodden areas of Baluchistan, KPK, Gilgit-Baltistan, Sindh, AJK and different cities of Punjab. President of AFI, Professor Dr Riaz Ahmed said this while talking to a group of journalists who visited the orphanage on Wednesday. He told the reporters that AFI was founded by the Father of the Nation Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1943, was the biggest shelter for the orphans who not only have boarding facilities but also have educational, skill development, health care, healthy meal, the teaching of Islamic education and all other facilities sans any government support.

"This orphanage was established on the behest of Quaid e Azam in 1943 to accommodate Muslim children who lost their parents in Bengal riots and were retrieved from there and lodged at that time in a rented house (Rs. 7 per month rent) in Committee Chowk Rawalpindi", he added. Dr Riaz said AFI has six centres, including a head office at Faizabad, Trunk Bazar Raja Bazar, New Campus GT Road Mandra, Pakkah Ghoh, Dobairan Kalan and Kalrian in Kalar Syedan. - APP

Police shift emergency wings

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police has shifted all emergency wings to safe city project to give a quick and timely response to citizens in case of any mishap or crime in the federal capital. The decision was taken following the instructions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Muhammad Ahsan Younas, said police spokesman on Wednesday.

He added that Safe City Project involves with public safety solution designed to provide local authorities with a wide range of modern products and rely on a series of Internet of Things (IoT) devices intended to improve policing efforts. It enables to gather all the facilities under one roof to provide ease & swift assistance to curb crime efficiently and swiftly. The vision of the project is secure, peaceful and crime free capital city Islamabad, he added. The spokesman said the mission of the project was to improve policing effort to counter crime and terrorism by utilizing High technology based security surveillance system. He said Islamabad police safe city project was facilitating the citizens without any discrimination that too under supervision of capital police chief. - APP



MURREE: Roads and its surrounding covered with snow due to heavy snowfall. - APP

World cannot continue to ignore Afghanistan

The Afghan women did not seek western rights, they sought Islamic rights. Pakistan was not a nation that would forsake the lives that were left at its doorstep and would help the refugees in every capacity possible

DNA

ISLAMABAD: There was a lot more to Afghanistan than a land that has been destroyed as the rest of the world silently watched during the last forty years, said Ms Shandana Gulzar Khan, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Commerce. She was addressing a gathering at Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad. Ms Khan said that it was ironic but the phrase 'the more things change, the more they stay the same' was apt to describe the evolving situation in Afghanistan. The dilemma with Afghanistan, she added, was that

every country so far had treated it as its personal fiefdom and by those standards, the countries that were a part of the problem could certainly not be the cure. That said, she insisted that in order to deal with the Taliban, now in charge of Afghanistan, it was important to realise that for negotiations to result in successful/sought results, the party at the other end had to be accorded due respect. Additionally, it was critical to agree on what exactly the world leaders were aiming to cater for the Afghan people. If human rights meant women rights, she categorically stated, the Afghan wom-

en did not seek western rights, they sought Islamic rights. Iterating Pakistan's commitment to assist the Afghan brothers and sisters, she said that Pakistan was not a nation that would forsake the lives that were left at its doorstep and would help the refugees in every capacity possible. Dr Jochen Hippler, Country Director Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung while commenting on the role of regional powers in ensuring security in Afghanistan said, that it was vital to take note of the internal dynamics of Afghanistan and more so, the internal dynamics of the Taliban. He said that ideologically

and politically, Taliban were not really state-builders. They were rather a force that symbolised resistance against the status quo. By those standards, he added, the Taliban were in fact a coalition of coalitions. Working towards building a system that was not only inclusive of but also responsive toward the Afghan locals, in addition to focusing on the internal dynamics of Taliban, determining the inherent antagonisms and fissures within, were of critical importance if one were to truly assess Taliban's willingness and competence to build a formal state. Tarik Farhadi, Economic Advisor to Former Afghan Government, highlighted

the region's experience with power politics and iterated how Pakistan had inadvertently been at the receiving end of every occurrence in Afghanistan. He said, that now that the Taliban were in power, it was critical to search for a point of co-existence. In that, he added, there was a dire need to move towards geo-economics and foster viable trade and economic relations to facilitate the well-being of the region. Political stability in the post-US withdrawal Afghanistan lies at the heart of ensuring regional integration for South Asia, said TaimurShamil, Senior Research Fellow at Islamabad Policy Research In-

stitute (IPRI). He added that a politically stable Afghanistan meant not only a country based on representation from all segments of society but also a country where rule of law, particularly women rights prevailed. Brigadier Saleem Qamar Butt, Strategic Analyst, said that the Taliban were a reality and had to be accepted as such. He added that the SCO had an incredible role to play, now more than ever, to bind the region as one. That said, the interim government in Afghanistan had an equal part to play in creating a conducive environment for the SCO and other regional organisations to perform effectively, he said.

Telenor empowers over 200,000 youth

ISLAMABAD: With its longstanding commitment to empower societies, Telenor Pakistan has trained over 200,000 students and 4,000 teachers on the safe use of the internet through its Safe Internet Program in 2021. As a responsible service provider, Telenor Pakistan believes in not only connecting people but also equipping them with the tools needed to excel in the online space by organizing in-person and digital training sessions in public and private educational institutions across the country.

Through its Safe Internet Program, Telenor Pakistan has taken leaps in its journey to make the internet a safer and inclusive space for all. More than 200,000 students, and 4,000 teachers from a total of 441 public and private schools from across Pakistan have been trained under the program. The Safe Internet Program was also expanded to include marginalized segments of society through its partnership with Deaf Reach since individuals with hearing impairment are heavily dependent on technology for their daily communication. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Chinese ambassador Nong Rong in a meeting with National Security Adviser Dr. Moeed Yousaf. =DNA

RCCI ICS 2022 Chambers Summit ends on a high note

RAWALPINDI: International Chambers Summit 2022, being organized by the RCCI at a local hotel in Islamabad ends on a high note. At the conclusion of the International Chambers Summit, RCCI President Nadeem Rauf while giving briefing said that the business community has reservations

about the mini-budget. The Prime Minister of Pakistan also attended the Presidents Conference. He was also informed of the concerns and suggestions were made. We are grateful to Razzaq Dawood, advisor to the PM on Commerce and Investment who listened to the trader's issues in detail

and took suggestions. Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Asim Malik, Vice President Talat Awan, newly elected President of FPCCI Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, former President, Anjum Nisar along with the Chambers Presidents from all over Pakistan were also present during the briefing. - DNA



Pakistan in extensive economic crisis

MURTAZA AYUB

PAKISTAN'S economy is facing multiple challenges soaring prices of essential commodities such as oil, gas, wheat, and sugar and usually high shipping charges on its foreign trade. And regionally struggling with the economic and financial fallout of situation in Afghanistan and domestically it is trying to come to grips with a falling rupee value and lack of resources to keep the prices of electricity, gas, and oil. Before analyzing what else the government can do to overcome this shock, it is essential to investigate the origin of the challenge. Its first

component consists of a quicker than expected recovery of industrial production in major economies amid COVID-19. Increased global situation for energy and other commodities as a result of this recovery has, in turn triggered a hike in prices of fuel. The impact of high commodity prices has been compounded by their expensive landing costs in Pakistan. And then the depreciating value of the rupee against the US dollar is making Pakistani imports further expensive. The PTI administration has found itself left with no option but to go back to the IMF with request for resumption of the \$6bn loan programme blocked since March. As per the report, Pakistan's gross external financing require-

ment stands at \$23.6 billion in 2022-23. The development comes despite the very conservative estimates accessed by the IMF. Pakistan is now reportedly trying to make a last-ditch effort to strike a staff-level agreement with the IMF to adjust the gap of external financing requirements. According to World Bank report Pakistan has joined the list of top ten nations with the largest foreign debts. However, with the suspension of program loans from World Bank and Asian Development Bank now, Pakistan is further at risk of economic crisis. With the 2023 elections in sight, the government was reluctant to introduce the unpopular measures

suggested by the global lenders. The strict programme conditions, especially the ones related to electricity pricing and tax reforms, were also seen as a major obstacle to the government's plan to grow a shrinking economy in time for the next elections. The IMF open and constructive discussions with Pakistan's finance team including Shaoukat Tareen seem to be yielding the desired results. The Sixth review of the programme is expected to be over soon with the IMF releasing two outstanding tranches amounting to \$1bn once it completes the validation of the data on power and gas tariffs and tax collection shared by Pakistan. The IMF deal is crucial for Paki-

stan to sustain its external sector in the short to medium term since the growing trade gap is fueling the current account deficit and bringing the already meagre foreign exchange reserves under massive stress. But it is bad news for ordinary people. Besides making electricity a lot more expensive, the IMF is likely to force Pakistan to implement measures to boost income, consumption, and import taxes to pull up its revenue target but also abolish or reduce all kinds of subsidies and hike interest rates. The brunt of these inflationary actions will affect directly low-middle-income families already struggling with finances. - The writer is a student

Citizens advised not to invest in illegal schemes

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on Wednesday advised the citizens not to invest in illegal housing schemes. According to Chairman, Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Tariq Mehmood Murtaza, the citizens should check status of the housing societies from the Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate, RDA or visit the RDA website rda.gop.pk to know the status of the housing projects before any investment.

He informed that the staff of the Directorate of MP&TE along with police and Elite Force was regularly conducting operations against illegal housing schemes. The site offices of the illegal housing projects were also being sealed while the booking offices were being demolished, he added.

Under a campaign launched against illegal housing societies advertisements were also get published in national dailies for awareness of general public, he added.

He informed that the authority was conducting regular operations against rules violators including plazas, shops, schools and other illegal land use encroachments. The Chairman said that the department imposed fines and commercialization fee was also collected from various residential cum commercial buildings owners for constructing illegal residential cum commercial buildings without approval of map/No Objection Certificates (NOCs). He said that the authorities concerned had been directed to take strict action against encroachments, illegal and unauthorized constructions and commercial activities without any discrimination.

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Admin allows trucks to enter Murree

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi district administration on Wednesday allowed heavy vehicles carrying petrol and food items to enter Murree. According to a district administration spokesman, the administration had issued directives to Traffic Police Murree to allow the trucks carrying petrol and food items to enter Murree.

He said that entry timing for 10-wheeler trucks would be after 11:00 p.m. He informed that Assistant Commissioner, Murree had sealed 15 hotels in Murree on complaints of overcharging. The administration taking action on the complaints of overcharging which were received on social media and Murree Control Room, sealed the hotels on Abu Dhabi, Guldana, upper Jhika Gali and Bank Roads, he added. - APP

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Free poultry training course from Jan 17

RAWALPINDI: Poultry Research Institute (PRI) would start a week-long, free poultry training program at Murree Road, Shamsabad here from Jan 17. According to PRI Senior Research Officer, the training program would remain continued till Jan 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. timing. The interested people can contact on 051-9292172 and take prospectus from PRI office to apply for the course. The applications can be submitted till Jan 17 in the office of Director PRI. - APP

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IGP listens public complaints

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas while listening public complaints during khuli kacheri directed all police officials to resolve the public complaints on priority. The IGP said that the purpose of holding these khuli kacheries is to resolve public issues immediately and purely on merit. The IGP while listening public complaints strictly directed all zonal officers to take immediate and strict action against land grabbers. "No one would be allowed to grab property of any citizen" he added.

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Elite criminals

ONE of the purposes of prisons is deterrence. Demonstrating accountability against crime and punishment against the criminal is essential to curbing further criminal activity in society. However, if the accountability against the criminal looks like luxury, and some prisoners are enjoying the benefit of a better lifestyle on no legitimate basis, then the whole purpose of deterrence against crime is wasted.

According to reports, Shahrukh Jatoi, convicted in the murder of Shahzaib Khan in December 2012 in Karachi, who was supposed to be serving a life sentence at the Central Jail Karachi, has allegedly been living a "luxurious life" at a private hospital in the Gizri area of Karachi for the last seven months.

This is no small crime that Jatoi was convicted for. He had been handed a death sentence by the Anti-Terrorism Court in 2013. The death sentence was converted into life imprisonment by the Sindh High Court, but it was on the basis of qisas and diyat laws, not on the gravity of the offence, which had shook the country and prompted a national dialogue on the damaging privileges enjoyed by rich accused/criminals. The recent report of Jatoi getting access to luxuries and private services inside jail too shows the darker reality that just a conviction was not enough to set a precedent against this heinous VIP culture and elite criminals being given an easier hand.

There is an important discussion to be had on prisoner rights; however there is a problem when there is a clear disparity of treatment between the convicted prisoners belonging to the elite, and those from less advantaged backgrounds.

Medical reasons always allow for a visit to the hospital, but why are some prisoners being afforded a private hospital rather than a public one? This incident must be taken as a sign for the government to look into this system of two laws that have developed, that have become a menace in our justice system.

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Aiding education

WITH a \$63 million education package aimed at setting up basic infrastructure, sponsoring training and encouraging Afghan students to resume school, Pakistan is playing its part in supporting a democratic Afghanistan. Education is a basic right and it is good to see the country become not only an advocate for it but an active contributor towards the cause. However, given the outright ban on the entry of girls in secondary and higher education institutions, the government should consider some terms attached to this generous package to neutralise the growing disparity.

Just a few months ago, top officials from the Taliban government announced that girls would be banned from going to secondary schools and higher level institutions, until a new education policy is drafted in 2022. The last time such a restriction was implemented was in its rule from 1996 to 2001 and it is worrying to see that some semblance of the same policy is being introduced slowly once again. Given that they vowed that girls in particular would be given their inalienable educational rights and now that the new year is before us, some progress on this front is vital. Pakistan's education package includes the construction of the Allama Iqbal Open University campus in Kabul, 3000 scholarships and free training programmes for teachers; amongst all this, there seems to be no provision for girls who are suffering the most under the rigid Taliban rule. We have been fortunate enough to be in a position to help out but there is still more that can be done. Attaching terms to such aid, like the compulsory enrolment and attendance of girls in school are bound to put pressure onto the Taliban government.

A clear message must be sent across that it is unacceptable to discriminate against half of the population—education is a basic right that the interim government in Afghanistan must protect. It really has to live up to its promises if it wants to earn the status of a legitimate government by the international community.

Djokovic is not a victim of Australian government rules

Mark Kersten

For the past decade, Australia enthusiastically implemented a zero-tolerance approach towards asylum seekers trying to reach its shores

THE furore over whether Novak Djokovic will or will not be allowed to compete in the Australian Open has pitted the Serbian tennis star and vaccine sceptic against the government of Australia. But Djokovic is no victim and the government is no hero.

The focus – and noise – surrounding the battle of Djokovic versus the Australian government is a distraction from the plight of thousands of asylum seekers who have been denied entry into Australia and who are herded onto island prison camps run by private security firms. When it comes to Australia and migration, we should be focusing on their plight, not that of rich and privileged sporting stars. For the past decade, Australia enthusiastically implemented a zero-tolerance approach towards asylum seekers trying to reach its shores. In brief, Australia captures undocumented people who reach the country as well as those attempting to enter via boat. It then transports them to privately operated processing centres in third countries, most notoriously Nauru and Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, with whom Australia has agreements. Once in detention, asylum seekers have three options: return to their original state (irrespective of harms they may face in doing so); find a third country that will accept them; or stay on in the camps in the hope of having their claim processed by Australia. If detained asylum seekers

choose to remain, they may be imprisoned at these centres indefinitely. As the government admits: "There is no limit in law or policy to the length of time for which a person may be detained."

None of this saves Australia a dime. Expenditures for its offshore detention facilities run in the billions of dollars each year and the average cost to detain an asylum seeker in one of the island facilities costs Australia about twice that of an onshore detainee.

The conditions in the camps can be deadly. Consider the story of Reza Barati, who made it to Australia in 2013. The 23-year-old Iranian Kurd's arrival on Australian soil came just days after the adoption of the Regional Resettlement Arrangement between Australia and Papua New Guinea, which permits Australian authorities to transfer asylum seekers like him from Australia to Manus Island. Just six months after his transfer, he was killed by guards during a riot.

Reza Barati was "nothing more than an ordinary youth with the kind of dreams that every single young man from every single culture has for his future". But he died at the hands of private guards hired by Australia to control the detainees. Witnesses claimed that at least 13 guards kicked Barati in the head. One dropped a large stone onto Barati's head while he lay on the floor. Two private security guards from Papua New Guinea were eventually convicted of Barati's murder; guards from Australia and other countries have never been prosecuted for their involvement.

Not all abuses in offshore detention centres are as blatant as Barati's death, but they are no less devastating. In 2017, Nai Jit Lam, UNHCR's deputy regional representative in Canberra, travelled to Manus Island and he called what he saw there "a man-made and entirely preventable humanitarian crisis" and "a damning indictment of a policy meant to avoid Australia's international obligations". According to a former migrant detention manager: "In Australia, this facility couldn't even serve as a dog kennel. The owners would be jailed."

On Manus and Nauru, detained children draw self-portraits of themselves in cages, tears pouring down their faces. Some refugees re-

main for years, in an encampment that looks more like an open-air Guantanamo Bay than a migrant processing centre. Human rights groups have described an "epidemic of self-harm" on the island as well as an institutional failure to prevent violent attacks on asylum seekers by the local population.

In 2020, the ICC prosecutor replied that while the violations did not meet the court's gravity threshold and the court could not proceed with an investigation, Australia's regime of offshore detention centres constituted "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment" and other possible crimes against humanity.

Thanks to the work of advocates, in 2017, Australia was also ordered to pay compensation to asylum seekers held in its offshore detention centres. The decision came in response to a class-action suit on behalf of 1,905 asylum seekers on Manus Island who alleged negligence and illegal detention on the part of Australia. Further class actions are proceeding through Australian courts. Djokovic may have run afoul of Australia's border-crossing rules due to legitimate COVID-19 control measures, but what he went through is not even a fraction of what asylum seekers trying to make it to Australia have suffered. In a twist of irony, Djokovic was held in a Melbourne hotel where some asylum seekers have spent years, in what his mother called prison-like conditions. Djokovic could leave; these migrants cannot. Around the world, people on the move face horrific conditions as a direct result of the policies of states who see them as a scourge to control through private security companies and a nuisance to push away into offshore camps with deplorable conditions. Australia's migrant detention centres are embodiments of this violent, discriminatory, and illegal approach.

More asylum seekers likely suffer and die because of these draconian policies than any inherent danger in migrating itself. It is these people who are the real victims of the Australian government. They deserve our attention and compassion, not the Djokovic of the world.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Uniformity of Education in Pakistan

M Anwar Farooq



No doubt, Pakistan is one of the growing nation-states. In such a scenario, creativity, integration of knowledge, research and analytical approach of thinking becomes important

SOCRATES said that education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel. Education is the process to facilitate learning to acquire knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits and personal development. Commonly the methods used to educate people are teaching, training, storytelling, discussion, demonstration and direct research. The role of education in nation-building is unquestionable and it is a valuable investment in the development of human capital. Historically, education always contributes to the economic, social and moral development of any nation and it is a premier right of every person in society. No doubt, Pakistan is one of the growing nation-states. In such a scenario, creativity, integration of knowledge, research and analytical approach of thinking becomes important. So it is the need of time to equip students with analytical & critical thinking skills and to familiarize them with the technology and modern methodologies in perspective of national development. In the modern system of education, the curriculum has core importance. It is basically a candid and planned sequence of instructions that determines the goals, methods, materials and assessment techniques. A good curriculum creates and reflects culture & identity in a pellucid way. It helps educators to develop a compatibility with modern trends, innovative technology and enable them to impart required skills to the students. Consistent teaching and learning are not possible without a proper curriculum. It helps teachers to set measurable goals of learning for their students. In Pakistan, there is a wide gulf among different social classes due to the difference in Urdu and English-medium schooling. Now, English is not just a language to learn knowledge but many people consider it a status symbol. It is necessary to bring the nation out of such complexes because no nation could rise until it relied on its original values and morals. For this purpose, the government of Pakistan has designed a national curriculum framework, under which the 'Single National Curriculum' would be developed and implemented in three phases. It was claimed that the national curriculum framework is multidimensional and it would address the existing issues related to ideological, academic, socio-cultural, emerging trends and evaluation paradigms. It is considered as one system of education for all, in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction and a common platform of assessment which will ensure fair and equal opportunity to

receive a high-quality education for all students, social cohesion and national integration, alleviation of disparities in education content across the multiple streams, equal opportunities for upward social mobility, equity in education, holistic development of children in the light of emerging international trends & local aspirations and smooth inter-provincial mobility of teachers & students. In the curriculum development, the special emphasis had been laid on the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as an inspiration of ethics and morality. The minorities would also be taught about their religions. The national curriculum framework is designed with an aim to achieve national goals of education, to formulate a candid national education policy, to design an effective curriculum, to candidly define learning outcomes, to increase the flexibility to cope with the local or regional needs within the broader perspective of national policies & needs and to provide an instrument for accountability in education. The national curriculum framework will also address the issues like school modals, learning environment in schools, medium of instructions and teaching languages, teacher training, assessment & examination, feedback mechanisms, Information sharing and harmonization, etc. No doubt, the national curriculum framework is an outstanding step to revolutionize the educational horizon in the country.

On the other hand, it is a historical fact that in Pakistan it is easy to formulate such frameworks & policies but the most difficult step is the implementation. During the implementation phase, one has to face many ground realities that hurdle the change. For the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework, it is necessary to upgrade the infrastructure and facilities in all government schools. Such developments in schools would require huge funds which are difficult to manage in the prevailing economic situations of the country. On the other hand, private schools are also bound to follow the single national curriculum but those schools are free to teach any additional material or even additional subjects. It is also allowed that private schools can use any book that is consistent with the curriculum. It is a fact that the infrastructure and educational facilities in private schools are much better than the government schools. The ability to avail the modern educational resources is incomparable between the students of government and private schools. The question is that how the objectives of 'National Curriculum Framework' and 'Single National Curriculum' could be achieved with all these differences? How it is possible to bring uniformity in the paradigm of education with all the above-described differences? No doubt, for developing countries like Pakistan, it is the need of time to design and implement a uniform education policy for all. It would help to bridge the class differences as well as would provide the capable workforce for the state affairs.

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COVID-19 pandemic is far from over

Dr. Theodore Karasik



The nature of omicron's spread affects labor pools because of the requirement to isolate those who test positive

WE are now into the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic and many are saying "enough is enough," sharpening the political divides over public health. But with skyrocketing numbers of cases thanks to the highly infectious omicron variant, there are still many requirements if we are to even begin contending with the magnitude of change required to move past the COVID-19 years.

The recent increase in cases serves as a reminder that the pandemic is not yet over. In January 2020, when the first data was released, there was one statistic that stood

out: The last contact tracing will occur in 2027. That date still holds as to when a credible international health body can declare the COVID-19 pandemic to be over.

The nature of omicron's spread affects labor pools because of the requirement to isolate those who test positive. This can affect, for example, airline employees' working time and rotation of schedules. How the virus evolves over the next several months and years will determine what the end of this global crisis might look like.

There is evidence to suggest that certain measures may remain necessary as the virus wave caused by omicron continues to spike around the world. The attitudes of the opposing sides on what to do next need to step back and reassess their colliding positions. The more arguments that occur, the longer the fallout will be. The evolutionary progress of the original COVID-19 virus is ongoing and there is no true end in sight because of causal factors.

More than 800,000 COVID-19 deaths have occurred in the US, surpassing the estimated 675,000 deaths that occurred in the country during the great influenza pandemic of 1918. The current pandemic reduced global economic growth by about 3.2 percent in 2020, with trade declining by 5.3 percent, while an estimated 75 million people entered extreme poverty and 80 million more are undernourished compared with pre-pandemic levels. Although the COVID-19 and 1918 influenza pandemics stand alone in terms of morbidity and mortality, evidence

suggests the frequency of infectious disease emergencies will increase sharply in the future. More than 100 countries ordered lockdowns to slow the spread of COVID-19, shutting down commercial and leisure activities to preserve health system capacities. Now, not every country or locality is facing the same pathogen circumstances. Testing requirements, lockdowns or limits on movement are occurring on every continent and are continuing to impact trade logistics. With the supply chain lags comes inflation, with food and other daily necessities the first to rapidly increase in price. By the end of this year, a growing economic downturn in key markets, combined with the continuation of the virus in some manner, is going to be an ongoing challenge.

Will the pathogen ultimately morph into another common cold (for some of the vaccinated) or a new variant that is more threatening, such as influenza or even worse? The global vaccination push has already administered nearly 10 billion doses and has shifted the evolutionary landscape of modern medical logistics and care, but it is not clear how the pathogen will behave in the future. Overall, the pandemic timeline becomes important if one thinks about how global public healthcare has been ramped up to contend with vaccine delivery and mitigation programs. The entire system now faces a requirement for sturdiness based on the longevity of the pandemic. For now, the pathogen is under the control of humankind and not vice versa.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

State to pursue...

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harassment of a couple by prime accused Usman Mirza, and others, after the victim declared she no longer wished to pursue the case. The decision to the effect was taken at a meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Law and Justice Barrister Dr Faogh Naseem on the special directive of Prime Minister Imran Khan. According to Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice Barrister Maleeka Bukhari, the high level meeting was held at the Ministry of Law and Justice. The prime minister had directed that the state should pursue cases of abuse and harassment of women.

Mirza, Jatoi cases...

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gang-rap were challenges for the justice system. "Why aren't these cases being heard on the daily basis," the minister questioned in a tweet. "The prosecution and the court should fulfil their responsibility," he added. Fawad maintained that it is the state's duty to bring these cases to a logical conclusion. The minister was responding to a tweet of media person Maria Memon in which she said the state should be the plaintiff in such cases because "the whole society has been psychologically affected by the terror of this incident!" She was referring to the report published, which mentioned that the victims in the couple harassment case retracted their statement against the accused, including the main suspect Usman Mirza.

PM fully alive to masses...

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all Pakistani missions across the globe are strictly directed to timely address issues of Pakistani diaspora living abroad. He said government has completed the legislation process to provide right of vote to Pakistanis living in different countries in the world and they will be given this right in next general election to ensure their inclusion in decision making process. The Minister of State said overseas Pakistanis are our heroes as they are playing a vital role in sending foreign remittances to the homeland and highlighting the Kashmir issue at International forums. He said government also approved projects of worth 1000 billion rupees in construction industry. He said applications of worth 260 billion rupees have been received by the banks while 120 billion rupees of loans have been approved and 40 billion rupees have so far been disbursed for construction of homes.

Finance bill to hurt...

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together and evolve consensus and initiate dialogue on the national economy. He said it was unfortunate that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had not responded positively to the offer of the Opposition parties. "Opposition leader in the National Assembly had offered national economic dialogue and national economic policy, while Asif Ali Zardari had also offered dialogue on the country economy," he recalled. He regretted that suggestions of the Opposition parties had not been included in the federal budget that was passed in June 2021. Bilawal said it would have had a better impact if the stance of Opposition parties had been presented before the International Monitoring Fund (IMF). He claimed that during the last three years, inflation, unemployment and poverty had increased, and disagreed with the government's point of view that the country's economy was booming despite all odds. Bilawal recalled when the federal budget was passed; the government had assured that there would be no mini budget in the fiscal year 2021-22. He also criticized the government for ending the tax exemption in what he called the proposed 'mini budget.' "The common people will bear the impact of these measures."

NATO, Russia to hold more talks despite tensions

Ukraine has the right to decide its future security arrangements on its own, and that NATO would continue to leave its door open to new members

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Wednesday that the military organization and Russia have agreed to try to schedule more meetings, despite tensions over Moscow's military buildup near Ukraine.

Speaking after chairing a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council, Stoltenberg said both parties had "expressed the need to dialogue and explore a schedule of future meetings." But Stoltenberg said any talks about Ukraine would not be easy.

"There are significant differences between NATO allies and Russia on this issue," he told reporters. He underlined that Ukraine has the right to decide its future security arrangements on its own, and that NATO would continue to leave its door open to new members. "No one else has anything to say, and of course Russia does not have a veto," he said.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman reaffirmed Wednesday that any European country should have the right to join NATO if it wants to, despite Russia's insistence that the military organization stop inviting new members in, particularly Ukraine. "I reaffirmed the fundamental principles of the international system and of European security: Every country has the sovereign right to choose its own path," Sherman tweeted, as senior NATO



and Russian officials met to try to bridge seemingly irreconcilable differences over Ukraine's future. Russian President Vladimir Putin is demanding that NATO stop accepting any new members. The NATO-Russia Council is the first meeting of its kind in over two years. The forum was set up two decades ago but full meetings paused when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014. It has met only sporadically since, the last time in July 2019. The talks come during a week of high-stakes diplomacy and a U.S.-led effort to prevent preparations for what Washington believes could be a Russian invasion of Ukraine. Moscow denies it is planning an

attack. Still, its history of military action in Ukraine and Georgia worries NATO.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko and Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Fomin were stern-faced before the talks. There was no public handshake, although the Russian delegation fist-bumped officials from the 30 NATO member countries inside the meeting venue. Sherman led the U.S. team at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

With around 100,000 combat-ready Russian troops backed by tanks, artillery and heavy equipment massed near Ukraine's eastern border, Wednesday's gathering has taken on great significance, yet it still seems des-

tinued to fail. "These are completely unacceptable proposals," Estonian Defense Minister Kalle Laanet told public broadcaster ERR on the eve of the talks. Estonia, like its Baltic neighbors Latvia and Lithuania, relies on U.S. security guarantees provided by its membership in NATO.

Putin says Russia's demands are simple, but key parts of the proposals contained in the documents that Moscow has made public — a draft agreement with NATO countries and the offer of a treaty between Russia and the United States — won't pass muster at the 30-country military organization.

NATO would have to agree to halt all membership plans, not just with Ukraine, and scale down its presence in countries like Estonia close to Russia's borders. In exchange, Russia would pledge to limit its war games, as well as end aircraft buzzing incidents and other low-level hostilities.

Endorsing such an agreement would require NATO to reject a key part of its founding treaty. Under Article 10 of the 1949 Washington Treaty, the organization can invite in any willing European country that can contribute to security in the North Atlantic area and fulfill the obligations of membership. "It has become crystal clear that not a single ally inside the NATO alliance is willing to budge or negotiate anything as it relates to NATO's open door policy," Julianne Smith, the U.S. ambassador to NATO, said Tuesday. "I cannot imagine any scenario where that is up for discussion."

French EU presidency...

FROM PAGE 01

model would also focus on adapting a simplified and transparent framework, particularly a banking union in Europe. France aims to rethink the budgetary framework of Europe, especially after dealing with the fourth wave of COVID-19. Under the new model, France has outlined digital transformation as a top priority as it hopes to successfully conclude the EU's Digital Market Act (DMA) and the Digital Services Act (DSA). The new European growth model also promotes environmental ambitions as Macron promises adoption and implementation of a carbon adjustment mechanism also known as carbon tax, which would allow European industries to preserve their competitiveness. The new model also serves as an inspiration to compete against China and the United States as France aims to decrease Europe's dependency in the technology sector, and Macron pushes Europeans to create genuine technological sovereignty in Europe to make the continent a digital powerhouse. One of the other major priorities under the French Presidency is furthering progress on the EU defence policy as France, since 2017, has made considerable progress on European defence by leading the initiative by establishing a European defence fund and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) under the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). PESCO is notably perceived by other EU member states as complementary to NATO. The EU currently is working on a European Strategic Compass (a white European defence and security paper), a document that lists out the EU's defining ambitions for security and defence for the next decade and the document would operationalise the EU's strategic autonomy and allow Brussels to tackle Europe's security responsibilities directly. The document is likely to be adopted in the first half of 2022 coinciding with the French Presidency. President Macron has proactively furthered the establishment of a European army to decrease Europe's independence from the US and NATO. The issues on rule of law have divided Western and Eastern Europe and Macron perceives rule of law as a non-negotiable. Leaders in Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia in their respective ways have altered the power over media and judiciary with Poland even ruling primacy of national laws over the EU laws and major threats to the effective functioning of the rule of law will arise in 2022 under the French presidency of the EU. Hungary will hold a parliamentary election; Slovenia will be tested in the upcoming elections in the first half of 2022; and intense competition between Warsaw and Brussels over multiple issues will pose a major challenge for France and the EU. The French presidential elections scheduled for April 2022 will be a major turning point in European affairs despite downplaying the interference of the French presidency of the EU with the French presidential race. President Macron is yet to declare his intentions to run for a second term, however, Valérie Pécresse from the Les Républicains party has clinched her party's nomination as a presidential candidate against Macron's La République En Marche. Pécresse is surging in polls conducted by Politico despite the presence of Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour; however, Macron remains the frontrunner in the presidential race. The results of the upcoming French presidential elections could sway the European governance for this decade either towards pro-European or Eurosceptics as the leading candidates in the French presidential elections have made migration a central focus. European political affairs will begin a new chapter after Angela Merkel's resignation and Macron currently possessing greater political leverage on the EU level, however, the French presidency of the council of the EU coincides with surging COVID-19 cases with widespread restrictions across the continent. Macron's attention in the coming months will be greatly divided between domestic and European issues. Merkel's departure now allows Macron to fulfil his pro-European ambitions, which he has been championing since he arrived in 2017. The EU now attempts to find a face to represent the bloc and Macron is a leading candidate alongside Italy's Mario Draghi; however, both Macron and Draghi face elections in the first half of 2022.

- Courtesy: ORF

Shahbaz, Fazl...

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march announced against the government has become inevitable and the PDM will march towards the capital on March 23 in a bid to oust the PTI-led government.

He, however, added that the long march plan will be finalised during the all-party session scheduled to be held on January 25. "The government does not realise the grievances of the common man," he said, adding that the "entire nation will participate in this anti-government march." Shedding light on the agenda of the meeting which is to be held on January 25, he said that the anti-government alliance parties are considering options for "the immediate dismissal of the incumbent government." "We appeal the coalition parties of the government to think in the national interest of Pakistan and about common people," Fazl said, adding that the PDM wants to keep Pakistan's have a "free economy."

Speaking on the occasion, the PML-N president said that in the 74-year history of Pakistan, "the PTI government is the most incompetent one to ever come to power" adding that the country is undergoing the "most difficult period." Shahbaz mentioned that during his meeting with Fazl, both of them also discussed the no-confidence motion and this issue will be further highlighted in the meeting later this month.



MADRID: Secretary General of the UNWTO, Zurab Pololikashvili, received Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi upon his arrival at UNWTO head quarter. - DNA

Not isolating after Covid infection was 'error'



SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic knew he'd tested positive for COVID-19 when he attended a newspaper interview and photo shoot in Serbia last month, saying Wednesday he made an "error of judgment" and should have immediately gone into isolation.

In a statement posted to his social media accounts, the tennis star also blamed "human error" by his support team for failing to declare that he had traveled in the two-week period before entering Australia.

Upon arrival, his visa was revoked and then later reinstated in an ongoing saga over whether he should be allowed into the country despite not being vaccinated against COVID-19. The news that Djokovic would be allowed into the country provoked an initial outcry and the dispute has since overshadowed the lead-up to the Australian Open. Djokovic acknowledged the lapses when he sought to clarify what he called "continuing misinformation" about his movements after he became infected last month — though he did not spell out what inaccuracies he was referring to. The statement was posted while the men's tennis No. 1 was in Rod Laver Arena holding a practice session, his third on the tournament's main court since being released from four nights in immigration detention.

The nine-time and defending Australian Open champion remains in limbo before the year's first tennis major starts next Monday. The stakes are particularly high since he is seeking a men's record 21st Grand Slam singles title. He won a legal battle on procedural grounds Monday that allowed him to stay in the country, but he still faces the prospect of deportation because his exemption from COVID-19 vaccination rules has been questioned. That decision is entirely at the discretion of Australia's immigration minister if deemed to be in the public interest for health and safety reasons.

Deportation could result in sanctions ranging up to a three-year ban from entering Australia, a daunting prospect for a player who has won almost half of his 20 Grand Slam singles titles here.

Court documents detailing Djokovic's positive test sparked speculation over the star player's attendance at events in his native Serbia last month. Further questions also were raised about errors on his immigration form that could potentially result in the cancellation of his visa.

On the form, Djokovic said he had not traveled in the 14 days before his flight to Australia, despite being seen in Spain and Serbia in that period.

In his statement, Djokovic described recent commentary as "hurtful" and said he wanted to address it in the interest of "alleviating broader concern in the community about my presence in Australia."

The 34-year-old Serb said he'd taken rapid tests that were negative and he was asymptomatic before he received his positive result from a PCR test he undertook out of an "abundance of caution" after attending a basketball game in Belgrade on Dec. 14. He received the result late Dec. 17, he said, and scrapped all his commitments except a long-standing interview with L'Equipe newspaper.

Anti Covid vaccine protesters try to storm Bulgarian parliament

WEB DESK

SOFIA: Protesters opposing COVID-19 restrictions in Bulgaria clashed Wednesday with police as they tried to storm the Parliament in the capital of Sofia.

A heavy police presence prevented protesters from entering the building and some were detained. Several people, including police officers, were injured during the clashes. Eventually, the protesters were pushed back and police cordoned off the building. The violence erupted at a protest rally against mask and vaccine mandates organized by a nationalist group that is fiercely opposing the Bulgarian government's anti-epidemic measures.

"The aim of the protest is to remove the restrictive measures and especially, first of all, the unconstitutional green certificate," Kostadin Kostadinov, leader of the Vazrazhdane party, said ahead

of the protest.

The nationalist group, which holds 13 seats in Parliament's 240-seat chamber, has won support among opponents of coronavirus restrictions.

The nearly 1,000 protesters, who waved national flags and sang patriotic songs, remained at the square in front of the National Assembly, saying they planned to stay there until their demands for abolishing the mandatory face masks and green vaccination status passes are met. Bulgaria, which is facing a new surge in infections, is the least vaccinated country in the 27-member European Union, with only a third of its population fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Speaking from his home, where he is quarantined for contacts with an infected person, Prime Minister Kiril Petkov called for calm and invited representatives of the protesters to his office on Friday to discuss their demands.



Pakistan Currency Devaluation - PKR / USD

JALAL AHMAD & HASSAN JAVED

THE Pakistani Rupee has depreciated 9 times in the past 11 years against the US Dollar. Since the last appreciation in CY16, the local currency has dropped by 69% from PKR 104,5985/USD to PKR 176.79. This makes it one of the highest devaluations of the currency in the country's history. The only other higher devaluation occurred when Dhaka fell and Pakistan's currency was devalued by 58 percent from Rs4.60 to Rs11.10 against the US dollar in 1971-72.

Experts say this massive devaluation of currency under the PTI government fueled inflationary pressures, adding that two major factors contributed to the price hike. First, the prices of food and commodities as well as fuel prices skyrocketed in the international market, and second, the depreciation

of the exchange rate by 30.5 percent also led to higher inflation

Some studies conducted by economists suggest that 10 percent devaluation of the currency raised the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation by 0.6 percent. As a result, the 30.5 percent depreciation resulted in increasing inflationary pressures by approximately two percent. This indicates that from the inflation standing at 11.5 percent on a monthly basis, nearly two percent comes through depreciation of the exchange rate.

Pakistan Joined the IMF programmed so it was left with no other option but to ensure implementation on the forced depreciation. "The main problem lies with our policies as it also triggers panic and uncertainty, economic analysts believed that the high demand for the greenback as well as the rise of petroleum prices in international markets are among the key factors of devalua-

tion of the local currency. Any rising of the prices of such inputs through devaluation, would raise industrial costs and reduce the intensity of capacity utilization. It examines that currency devaluation has positioned Pakistan lose heavily both as seller and as a buyer and has to made no good substitute for remedial changes in economic policies and development planning. There are so many reason behind currency devaluation, in Pakistan industry are heavily dependent on imported raw materials for industrial goods and capital goods and components, and their access too many advance countries are blocked by quotas and tariffs. There are so many factors that cause currency's crises to occur, i.e. economic, political, corruption, etc.

The surge of the U.S. dollar was also attributed to the influence of Pakistan's negotiations with the International Monetary Fund about releasing a tranche of loan for the Asian country, Muhammad Ali Kemal,

economic policy advisor at the sustainable development goals division under the country's Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

The effect of devaluation of output growth in less developed countries has a played important role in the economic and political agenda's of developing countries for several decades during which devaluation has been one of the most frequently used policy tools under both IMF-regulated and independent stabilization program's in these countries. Whether devaluation of the currency affects national income positively or negatively has also received considerable attention among academic researcher's.

A hard and struggle phase for Pakistan economy, Government is trying to get economy on the right track and hope that in the leadership of PM Imran Khan Pakistan economy find it's right track.

- The writers are students of SZABIST

Briefs

Landmark rape trial of Greek sailing coach begins

ATHENS: The landmark trial of a Greek sailing coach accused of raping a minor opened in Athens on Wednesday, a year after an Olympic champion effectively launched the #MeToo movement there by speaking out about her experiences. The case is one of many that came to light after former Olympic sailing gold medal winner Sofia Bekatorou broke the taboo on speaking out on such matters in December 2020. Bekatorou, who is a witness at the trial, did not speak to reporters as she arrived at the courthouse on Wednesday. Triantafyllos Apostolou, 38, who outed himself in a newspaper interview last year, allegedly raped an 11-year-old athlete in 2010. Bekatorou has said that she herself had been subjected to "sexual harassment and abuse" by a senior federation member after trials for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. She was 21 years old at the time. Her revelations led to other women speaking up about being assaulted, and more than three years after it started in the United States, the #MeToo movement was born in Greece. Over the past year, allegations of sexual assaults suffered by female athletes, students, journalists and actresses have been pouring in. Some of those speaking out say they were still minors when the assaults happened. With the consent of the woman concerned, Bekatorou brought it to the attention of prosecutors in January 2021. - APP

Over 4,000 Fijians in evacuation centers

SUVVA: Around 4,630 people were taking shelter in 162 evacuation centers across Fiji after TD03F, which later developed into Tropical Cyclone Cody, brought incessant heavy rain and floods over the last couple of days. The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) said on Wednesday that 115 evacuation centers were open in the Western side of Viti Levu, the country's main island, 42 in the central division while five are in the northern division on Vanua Levu, the second largest island of Fiji. The NDMO was trying to get schools decontaminated and ready for school resumption soon, said Fiji's Minister for Disaster Management Inia Seruiratu. He said that they were focusing on the safe return of evacuees to their homes first. Seruiratu said for electricity and water supplies, the restoration was in the hands of the service providers who were working around the clock to restore it. Meanwhile, the Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) was currently carrying out the initial damage assessment for roads that sustained damages during the flooding. - APP

Passenger breaks into plane cockpit

DNA

NEW YORK: A passenger broke into the cockpit of an American Airlines jet at an airport in Honduras and damaged the plane as it was boarding for a flight to Miami before being taken into custody, the airline said on Tuesday. Crew members intervened and the man, who was not immediately identified, was arrested by local authorities, American Airlines said in a statement. There were no reports of injury. ABC News reported that the suspect ran down the jetway and into the cockpit, damaging flight controls and attempting to jump out an open window as a pilot tried to stop him. "We applaud our outstanding crew members for their professionalism in handling a difficult situation," American said in its statement. The damaged aircraft, a Boeing 737-800 carrying 121 passengers and six crew members, was grounded at Ramon Villeda Morales International Airport in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, the airline said.



TEHRAN: Ali Alizada, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Iran met with Amin Hossein Rahimi, Minister of Justice of Iran. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest. - DNA

Impartial investigations needed in Kazakhstan: UN

Under international law, people have the right to protest peacefully and the right to express their opinions, says Ms Throssell

NEW YORK: As the death toll from the recent unrest in Kazakhstan mounts to 164, the UN Office for Human Rights (OHCHR) has requested "prompt, independent, impartial investigations" into the killings, and whether "unnecessary and disproportionate use of force was made by security forces". Close to 10,000 people are now estimated to be held in detention following the riots. "We understand that the Ministry of Interior has announced that some 9,900 people are in detention as of the 11th of January. Now, this is clearly a huge number," OHCHR spokesperson Liz Throssell, told reporters at the

United Nations in Geneva (UNOG) on Tuesday. "Under international law, people have the right to protest peacefully and the right to express their opinions. And they shouldn't be detained simply for expressing their opinions", Ms Throssell added. "All those arrested and detained solely for exercising these rights should be released immediately", she said. She said damage and destruction around the country's largest city of Almaty had been widely witnessed and reported, and although the UN has no clear breakdown of who is being detained, "clearly there will be some people who have been arrested and are likely

to be charged," the OHCHR spokesperson said. She said that "at the same time, of course, we also have to stress clearly that there were also armed individuals who were taking to the streets of Almaty and other parts of Kazakhstan". Ms Throssell stressed that all detainees should have access to a lawyer, as part of their basic human rights. "What is very important for us is that the ombudsman, the Kazakh ombudsman, is able to fulfill fully her mandate related to what is called the national preventive mechanism, and that relates to torture, by visiting places of detention", she said. According to news agen-

cies, protests began on Sunday when the government lifted its price cap on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), a popular fuel for cars and heating - although that hike was later reversed. Unrest appeared to spread rapidly to include longstanding political grievances. A state of emergency, which was declared in several areas of Kazakhstan on 5 January (including in the main city of Almaty and the capital, Nur-Sultan) has been extended to the whole country. A week after the start of the riots that shook the country, calm is gradually returning to Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan. A day of mourning was observed

throughout the country on Tuesday, while the telephone network, Internet and public transport are gradually being restored, OHCHR said. Meanwhile, UN independent human rights experts on Tuesday, called on the Kazakhstan authorities and security forces to "halt their unrestrained use of force, including lethal force" directed at protesters and called for independent and human-rights based investigations into how the Government used force in recent days to quell protests. In a statement, the Human Rights Council-appointed experts said they were profoundly concerned that Kazakhstan's President

reportedly gave orders to security forces and army to "open fire with lethal force" against protesters he described as "bandits and terrorists". The Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights, Fionnuala Aolain, who carried out an official visit to Kazakhstan in May 2019 - including to Aktau and Almaty - both areas where protests took place - said that Kazakhstan's overly broad use of the word "terrorism" in this context against protesters, civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists and political parties, appeared to be aimed at instilling fear and was deeply concerning. - APP

China, Kuwait to intensify co-op

WEB DESK

BEIJING: China and Kuwait on Wednesday agreed to strengthen the docking of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with Kuwait's Vision 2035 and intensify efforts to make a five-year plan on bilateral cooperation. The consensus was reached during talks between Wang Yi, Chinese state councilor and foreign minister, and Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, Kuwait's foreign minister and minister of state for cabinet affairs, who is in China at Wang's invitation. Proposed by China in 2013, the BRI comprises the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and aims to build trade and infrastructure networks connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation on agriculture and food security and expand cooperation in high-tech fields such as new energy, 5G telecommunications and smart cities, according to CGTN. They also agreed to continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic together and deepen exchanges and cooperation in areas such as health, education, youth affairs, local affairs and sports. Wang described Kuwait as one of the friendliest countries to China, noting that Kuwait was the first Gulf Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with China and sign a deal with China on BRI cooperation. He expressed appreciation for Kuwait's friendly policy to China and its support for China's efforts in defending its sovereignty, security and development interests.

439 suspects identified in paedophile probe

BERLIN: More than 400 suspected paedophiles have been identified in Germany as part of a probe into a huge child pornography network linked to the city of Bergisch Gladbach, investigators said on Wednesday. A total of 439 suspects have been identified and 65 children have been freed from the clutches of paedophiles since the network was uncovered in October 2019, the Berg special investigation group said. "We have suspects from all walks of life" including "high earners and highly educated people" as well as "ordinary people", said investigation group leader Michael Esser. "They went about their work quite normally and there were no indications in the working environment that such acts had been committed," Esser said. Most of the children were abused by a member of their own family, the investigators said. The victims were aged between under a year old and 17, with the youngest rape victim just three months old at the time of the crime. The Bergisch Gladbach case was opened in 2019 with the arrest of a suspect known as Joerg L. - APP



NUR-SULTAN: President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev received CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas at Akorda Presidential Palace. - DNA

Indonesia launches Covid-19 booster campaign

NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: Indonesia opened its coronavirus booster campaign to the public Wednesday as the country records rising infections driven by the Omicron variant. The free shots will be given to the elderly and at-risk residents as a priority, but will be available to everyone who received their second dose six months prior, President Joko Widodo said on Tuesday after announcing the decision. The boosters will be administered as half doses - which a local study confirmed was sufficient protection against the virus - due to supply shortages, said health minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin. Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country with more than 270 million people, has struggled to procure enough vaccines

for its residents since the onset of the pandemic. Elderly Indonesians lined up at vaccination centres in Jakarta Wednesday for their boosters in hope of better protection against the highly contagious Omicron variant. "I must get this shot because I have a lot of activities," said 84-year-old Hardini in Jakarta after receiving her third shot. "I am still playing tennis, running. If I don't have immunity then I could infect people or I could become sick." Indonesia is administering half doses for all of its approved vaccines, of which there is no precedent elsewhere in the world, Covid-19 taskforce spokesperson Siti Nadia Tarmizi told AFP. Indonesia uses Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and China's Sinovac for Covid-19 inoculations. Some countries, including the United States, are injecting half a dose of Moderna as a booster.

Mini Budget likely to influx inflation, says President UBG

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The UBG leadership and President United Business Group Zubair F. Tufail identifying some of the harsh and irritant measures as proposed in the Finance Supplementary Bill 2021 has urged Shaukat Tareen Federal Finance Minister, Abdul Razzak Dawood Federal Commerce Minister and Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to amend and make them business friendly with the view to incentivize local and foreign investment, enhance industrial and agricultural production, establish import substitution industry, make indigenous goods competitive against the foreign products in both global and local markets as the local market is flooded with foreign smuggled goods. As an instant, the UBG leadership elaborated that the proposed measures to

withdraw the ST exemptions would severely affect every segment of the society particularly the zero-rating sector and levying ST on various export oriented industrial sector would have a devastating effect on our exports, which after a long time had started gaining momentum. They lamented that the main brunt of Rs 375 billion taxation measures proposed to be imposed through amendment in Income Tax, ST and Federal Excise Acts would have to be borne by the existing minuscule number of the taxpayers as no significant measure was proposed to identify new and potential taxpayers and bringing them in tax-net. Moreover, withdrawal of pharmaceutical and capital machinery import related Sales Tax exemptions would further deteriorate health condition of a common man and slow down industrial process in the country respectively.

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Briefs

Iran loses vote at UN over unpaid dues

UNITED NATIONS: Eight countries that include Iran, Venezuela and Sudan have lost their right to vote at the United Nations because of unpaid dues. A total of 11 countries are behind in their payments, Secretary General Antonio Guterres said Tuesday in a letter to the General Assembly. AFP obtained it on Wednesday.

Under the UN charter, a member country's right to vote is suspended when its arrears equal or exceed the amount of dues it should have paid over the preceding two years.

If the outstanding debt is deemed to be "due to conditions beyond the control of the member," the assembly may let that country continue to vote. For 2022 this is the case of the Comoro Islands, Sao Tome and Principe, and Somalia, Guterres said. The eight countries that have lost their right to vote for now are Iran, Sudan, Venezuela, Antigua and Barbuda, Congo, Guinea, and Papua New Guinea, he said.

He spelled out the minimum amount each must pay to recover their vote. For Iran, for instance, it is just over \$18 million while Sudan needs to come up with nearly \$300,000 and Venezuela around \$40 million.

Last year Iran also lost its vote over unpaid dues. It said it could not pay even the minimum amount because of US economic sanctions. After months of negotiations Iran was granted an exemption - it was allowed to access money blocked by the US Treasury - and got back its vote in June in time for the election of new members of the Security Council. The UN's operating budget approved in December is around \$3 billion. Its budget for peacekeeping operations, which is separate and was passed in June, is around \$6.5 billion. - APP

Covid variants threaten global growth: WB

DNA

WASHINGTON: Global growth will slow down over the next two years in the face of "fresh threats" from COVID-19 variants and rising inflation, debt and income inequality, according to the World Bank's latest report.

While economic growth experienced a strong rebound in 2021, it is expected to decline markedly from 5.5 per cent last year to 4.1 per cent in 2022, and drop to 3.2 per cent in 2023. Given the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to disrupt economic activity in the near term, according to the Global Economic Prospects report.

Furthermore, notable deceleration in major economies, including the United States and China, will have an impact on external demand in their emerging and developing counterparts. "The world economy is simultaneously facing COVID-19, inflation, and policy uncertainty, with government spending and monetary policies in uncharted territory.

Rising inequality and security challenges are particularly harmful for developing countries," David Malpass, President of the World Bank Group, said. "Putting more countries on a favorable growth path requires concerted international action and a comprehensive set of national policy responses."

The slowdown will coincide with a widening divergence in growth rates between advanced and emerging or developing economies. By 2023, all advanced economies will have achieved a full output recovery, the report said, but output in emerging and developing economies will remain four per cent below its pre-pandemic trend.

US felicitates Pak on vaccinating 100m citizens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States has congratulated Pakistan on vaccinating 100 million citizens including children with at least one dose of anti-coronavirus vaccines. The US Embassy in Pakistan has officially admired the achievement of Pakistan mentioned by Federal Minister Asad Umar in a tweet. On the Twitter account, the US Embassy said, "Congratulations to Pakistan on vaccinating 100 million people with at least one dose." It further stated, "The U.S. is proud of its role in donating 42.6 million vaccine doses to Pakistan so far in our ongoing partnership." Yesterday, Asad Umar has said in a tweet that Pakistan has vaccinated more than 100 million people who have received at least one dose. Pertinent to mention here that this week, the United States has donated an additional 4.9 million Pfizer vaccine doses via #COVAX to Pakistan. The United States has now donated more than 42.6 million total vaccine doses to Pakistan.

India starts propaganda to target SFJ, Khalistan

Indian media including the Hindustan Times reported that several arrests had also been made inside India to quell the movement

ISLAMABAD: India has launched a massive propaganda to malign the Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) and with objectives to get it banned in the United States after a series of successful Khalistan referendums. According to foreign media reports, Indian authorities had also arrested Jaswinder Singh Multani, a prominent member of SFJ, allegedly for his involvement in a blast in a Ludhiana court, and for hatching a conspiracy to target locations in Delhi and Mumbai from Belgium. The SFJ had also distanced itself from the incident.

Indian media including the Hindustan Times reported that several arrests had also been made inside India to quell the movement. On the other hand, the US administration in a report in December last year, had refused to accept the Indian narrative of labeling the Khalistan movement as terrorism as the US government did not include any pro-Khalistan

Christians facing attacks in Narendra Modi's India

ISLAMABAD: A sharp increase in attacks on religious gatherings, churches and educational institutions of Christian community has been witnessed in India ever since fascist Narendra Modi came into power in 2014. A report released by Kashmir Media Service, said 2021 ended as the most violent year in the history for India's Christian community. It said that 486 incidents of violence and hatred were recorded against the members of the community in Modi's India, last year. The report pointed out that the members of Christian community faced attacks on many occasions by the RSS-inspired groups across India. "Right-wing Hindu groups are using forced conversions as a pretext to attack Christians. Attacks against the Christian community in India in the last quarter of 2021 reached alarming numbers. Violent crimes against Christians in India rose to 486 in 2021 from 279 in 2020," the report said. It said the Indian authorities are turning a blind eye to violent attacks on the Christian community. It said police are working hand in glove with Hindu extremists as FIRs were registered in only 34 of the 486 cases of violence against minority community, last year. The report pointed out that since BJP came to power, attacks on Christians, Muslims and other minorities have increased manifold in India. It deplored that the BJP is fulfilling the Hindutva dream of RSS to purge India of minorities and make it a Hindu Rashtra. - DNA

group on India's wish list posing any terrorist threat. A spokesman of the Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) told US media that "the latest US report on terrorism affirms what the SFJ has been reiterating that Khalistan is a political opinion and its peaceful advocacy is not terrorism." Earlier in December 2020, after SFJ organized pro-farmer demonstrations outside Indian consulates in USA, Canada, UK and other countries, NIA booked Pannun and other foreign-based activists, among others, on the charges of "undertaking terrorist acts".

SKF leaders in their comments opined that although India always labeled the Khalistan movement as militancy and extremism and equated it with terrorism, the pro-Khalistan diaspora groups like them had been pushing back against the Indian state narrative by lobbying with the western governments that "Khalistan is a political opinion and not terrorism". - APP

FM Qureshi departs on completion of two-day Spain visit

DNA

MADRID: Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi Wednesday departed here for Islamabad after completion of his two-day visit to Spain. Ambassador of Pakistan in Spain Shujaat Rathor and Spanish envoy in Islamabad Manuel Durán Giménez-Rico and senior officers of the foreign ministry saw off the foreign minister at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport.

The foreign minister paid the two-day visit to Spain at the invitation of his Spanish counterpart Jose Manuel Albares. During his stay, Qureshi met his counterpart, presidents of Spain's Congress of Deputies and Foreign Relations Committee, Spanish trade minister and members of the Spanish parliament. During the interactions, the foreign minister discussed the bilateral ties, multifaceted cooperation in trade, investment and tourism besides the regional and global matters. Besides addressing a joint press stakeout along with his counterpart, the foreign minister also interacted with think tanks, journalists and appreciated them of the objectives of this visit, improving bilateral relations and regional situation.



RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Sikabwe Asinda Fall, Commander of the Terrestrial Army Congo called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. - DNA

Pakistan views Congo as key country in Africa: COAS

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa Wednesday said Pakistan viewed Congo as a key country in the African continent and appreciated its role towards regional peace. He expressed these views during a meeting with Commander of the Terrestrial Army

Congo Lieutenant General Sikabwe Asinda Fall, who called on him here at the General Headquarters, an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and scope of military cooperation to include defence, training and security between the two countries were discussed during the meeting. The COAS emphasized that

the Pakistan Army was committed to play its part in establishing peace under the United Nations (UN). "We have rendered numerous sacrifices for this noble cause." The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of Pakistan armed forces and their role in the UN peacekeeping operations in Democratic Republic of Congo. He also vowed to enhance cooperation in various fields between the two militaries.

Kim Jong-un oversaw third hypersonic missile test

NEWS DESK

LONDON: North Korea says it has conducted another hypersonic missile test, under the watch of its leader Kim Jong-un. State media said the missile fired on Tuesday had successfully made a turn before hitting its target in the sea some 1,000km (621 miles) away. It marks North Korea's third reported test of a hypersonic missile, which can avoid detection for longer than ballistic missiles.

Mr Kim's presence could indicate the technology has improved, say analysts. The latest ramp-up in testing would appear to support Mr Kim's stated New Year goals, where he vowed to bolster North Korea's defence capabilities. It came as six countries - including

the US - issued a joint statement condemning last week's apparent test, urging the North to cease its "destabilising actions" to the region. South Korea's military initially downplayed the hypersonic missile claims but later said it demonstrated "improvement" from previous tests, said news site Yonhap. North Korea state outlet KCNA praised the test, saying the "superior manoeuvrability" of the missile had been "strikingly verified through the final test-fire".

Their report claimed the glide missile had made a 600 km (375 mile) "glide jump flight," followed by 240 km of "corkscrew manoeuvring" before hitting its target. The closed-off nation first reported conducting a hypersonic missile test in September 2021. Unlike ballistic missiles, which

travel in a largely predictable parabola, making them vulnerable to interception, hypersonic weapons can traverse laterally, close to the earth's surface and hit a target in a much shorter flight time. In addition, hypersonic weapons can also achieve more than five times the speed of sound - or about 6,200km/h (3,850mph). All these features make them harder to track and intercept.

According to the BBC's Security Correspondent Frank Gardner, these hypersonic missiles are also worrying as they also leave nations guessing whether they are carrying a conventional high explosive warhead or a nuclear one.

North Korea joins a small number of countries, including the United States and China, in attempting to develop hypersonic missiles.

Pakistan facing bankruptcy due PTI govt: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday has said that Pakistan is facing bankruptcy due to ineffective policies of PTI government. Talking to media, the PML-N leader said that PM Imran Khan has nothing except tall claims and speeches. The concerned authorities were lost at the time of blizzard in Murree, he criticized. Ahsan Iqbal further said that Imran Khan is making us the slave of IMF by accepting their conditions. Earlier, the PML-N leader said that the scrutiny committee report in illegal funding case had exposed true face of Imran Niazi. Talking to media persons, Ahsan Iqbal said that Imran Khan was wearing makeup of honesty; however, it has been washed away by the committee's report. The PML-N leader said that the incumbent government has devastated the economy and now SBP is being given under control of IMF. - DNA

World must support Taliban govt: Experts

National webinar on the topic of "Afghanistan's Humanitarian Crisis: Int'l Recognition and Regional Challenges discusses ongoing situation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A national webinar on the topic of "Afghanistan's Humanitarian Crisis: International Recognition and Regional Challenges", was organized by Pakistan House, an Islamabad-based think tank. In his welcoming address Muhammad Athar Javed, Director General Pakistan House stated that the world community must provide necessary economic support to the Taliban government so they can resolve the issues of Afghan people. The looming humanitarian and security challenges can generate more complexities as far as the peace in South Asia is concerned. Pakistan is playing a key role and hosted an emergency OIC conference to speed up the economic support process to the Taliban government. The West along with Russia, China and other regional countries can play a timely role in sustaining a peaceful Afghanistan.

In his keynote address, Lt. General Naem Khalid Lodhi (R), former Defence Secretary remarked that the countries with desire to destabilize Afghanistan again will not succeed and Taliban with the support of regional and international stakeholders will override the humanitarian crisis, however the situation in Afghanistan grows increasingly dire, Pakistan has

informed India that it will allow the transportation of wheat and life-saving medicines from India to Afghanistan through its territory this was a good decision. Afghan Infrastructure is badly collapsed economically and militarily. Speaking at the webinar, Mr. Imtiaz Gul, Executive Director, (CRSS) said that the European countries trying to assist Afghanistan financially Germany pledged \$400 Million and proving salary to Afghan teachers. International organizations are trying best to tackle humanitarian crisis. The UN Security Council adopted a resolution on 30 August calling for "enhanced" humanitarian assistance. Making that happen will require an urgent increase in donor funding, easing of sanctions, regional cooperation on air bridges for aid delivery and perhaps most difficult persistent attention from Western governments that may prefer to move on from defeat in Afghanistan. Multiple restrictions have been implemented on Afghan society including women that needs to be removed by the Taliban government. So they able to align themselves with rest of the world.

Brig Ishaq Khattak (R), Academic and Afghan expert said that thousands of displaced people in Kabul have been sleeping in the open air, and only a minuscule portion of them escaped during the international airlift that ended on 30 August. Prior to the Taliban takeover, India had been influencing decision making process and also became Afghanistan's biggest regional donor which was primarily aimed to establish anti-Pakistan entities inside Afghanistan. With the Taliban government, it is hoped that New Delhi will only focus on humanitarian aspect to support Afghanistan. Mr. Hassan Khan, Anchor, Khyber TV and senior Afghan expert remarked that unprecedented numbers of civilians were killed and injured in the early months of 2021.

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Petition of Shehbaz Sharif, Hamza fixed for hearing

DNA

LAHORE: The petition on money laundering case of Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz's president (PML-N) Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N representative Hamza Shehbaz has been fixed for hearing. According to details, under the presidency of Chief Justice Lahore High Court (LHC) a two-membered bench will hear the petition. The petition was filed on the behalf of Advocate Pervez Amjad.

The petitioner claimed that the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) investigation was illegal and pleaded for the removal of FIR No. 20/39. Moreover, it has also been requested that FIA should stop investigation until the final decision has been announced while the institutions including NAB have been made the defendants.

It was stated in the petition that FIA had started the investigations with a bad intention. No proof of any unnamed accounts has been discovered. Earlier today, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and Opposition Leader in National Assembly (NA) Shehbaz Sharif had challenged the inquiry of money laundering case being carried out by Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in Lahore High Court (LHC).

According to details, Advocate Pervez Amjad filed the plea and made FIA party. The petition mentioned the investigations are based on dishonesty and that FIA has failed to unearth any benami bank account of Shehbaz Sharif. The plea further appealed the court to bar FIA from holding investigation until the final verdict of the case. Earlier, FIA had submitted details of 45 bank accounts of Shehbaz Sharif, his sons Hamza and Salman Shahbaz in money laundering case.

China helps Pakistani student return home

DNA

BEIJING: China, in a vivid example of the sincere mutual cooperation and love between the Chinese and Pakistani peoples, extended huge financial assistance to a Pakistani student who developed serious health issues, including brain hemorrhage, during his PhD studies at Tianjin University. Ali Husnain from Skardu, Gilgit-Baltistan, was diagnosed with viral encephalitis caused by the Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV1), which rarely attacks human brain. The university took a prompt action to admit Ali Husnain to a hospital and regularly updated the Embassy of Pakistan, Beijing and his father back in Pakistan about his health condition in detail.

After initial recovery from the life-threatening disease, the student has been shifted to Pakistan on a Pakistan International Airlines flight on request of his father. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Wednesday that the provision of medical treatment to the ailing Pakistani student was another vivid example showing the bond of friendship and mutual assistance between the Chinese and Pakistani peoples.

"It once again proves that the iron clad friendship between China and Pakistan is deeply rooted in the hearts of the two peoples and boasts a strong vitality," he said during his regular briefing here at the International Press Center (IPC). He observed that after the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the students from many countries, including Pakistan, insisted on studying in China. The Chinese government and schools, he added, had always been concerned about their safety and health, and would continue to provide them with assistance within their capacity. In his letters to the presidents of Tianjin University and Tianjin First Central Hospital, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Moinal Haque expressed gratitude and appreciation for the excellent care extended to the Pakistani student.

Jahangir holds meetings with PTI lawmakers

DNA

KARACHI: Estranged leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Jahangir Tareen has landed in Karachi and held meetings with different PTI lawmakers, citing sources. Jahangir Tareen held a meeting with PTI Member of National Assembly (MNA) Faheem Khan at his residence and held discussions on party affairs. Later, he met another PTI MNA Alamgir Khan and a Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Abbas Jafri in the metropolis. He extended condolence to PTI lawmakers over the demise of Alamgir Khan's father and Abbas Jafri's mother. It may be noted here that PTI MNA Faheem Khan is one of the two PTI MNAs who carried out a sting operation against Ali Haider Gilani in March 2021. PTI MNA Faheem Khan and Muhammad Jameel had been filmed in the leaked video showing Ali Haider Gilani buying votes for the Senate election. Earlier in the month, Jahangir Tareen had been seen attending the wedding ceremony of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) central leader Khawaja Saad Rafique's daughter.