



Islamabad POST

Monday, January 17, 2022

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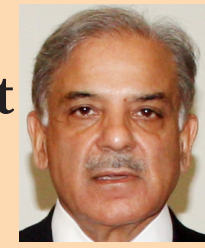
Price Rs. 20

Uzbekistan introduces new 'Mahallabay work system': President

Detailed News On Page-07

Shahbaz says he is PM's worst nightmare

Detailed News On Page-01



Salah strike gives Egypt first win

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Inflation to end before 2023

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Sunday said that inflation was a temporary phenomenon and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government would control it before 2023. "The government is not indifferent to people and well aware their hardships". He expressed these views while addressing a function at Government Primary School Awampura Middle School Upgradation and talking to people during his visit to different Union Councils of his constituency NA-156. He observed that government was striving hard to address public problems. - APP

Ashrafi stresses Ummah unity

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Interfaith Harmony and Religious Affairs Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has stressed unity among different sections of Muslim Ummah to tackle international challenges. Addressing the Paigham-e-Mustafa conference, organised by the Shia Ulema Council Pakistan at Aiwan-e-Iqbal here on Sunday, he said that every member of every sect should respect each other as praying is the way of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad PBUH while using dirty language is the way of Abu Jehel. - APP

Scholarships for 60,000 youth

LAHORE: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said on Sunday that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, now living in the most expensive property in London, was directly responsible for the current inflation in the country. Talking to media here, the minister said that today, Pakistan took only Rs 6 trillion loan from 1947 to 2008 and strengthened armed forces, purchased Gwadar, built the capital city of Islamabad and the country became a nuclear power. He said that loan worth Rs 23 trillion was taken from 2008 to 2018 when the PPP and PML-N were in power. The minister said that Pakistan

Murree Tragedy Probe holds authorities responsible

The committee prepared its report after recording the statements of victims and more than 30 officers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The five-member probe committee formed by the government to inquire about the Murree tragedy has completed its investigation on Sunday and has revealed that the incident occurred due to administrative negligence, media reported citing sources. According to sources, after completing its investigation - which was based on interviews of victims and administrative officials - the probe committee has departed from the hill station to Lahore. The inquiry committee is expected to present its report to the Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on Monday, sources said. The probe committee prepared its report after recording the statements of victims and more than 30 officers from different administrative departments in Murree. The probe has revealed that on the day of the incident, several snowploughs were parked at the same place which led to road blockages, the administrative staff was absent from duty, while a blizzard warning from the metrological department was blatantly neglected, according to sources. On January 8, 23 people had died due to carbon monoxide poisoning while being stuck in their cars as thousands of

Continued on Page 06

Sheikh says his timely visit saved lives

RAWALPINDI: Federal Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Sunday spoke about the Murree tragedy - in which 23 people had lost their lives while being stuck in their vehicles due to heavy snow - and said that had he not visited the hill station following the news to oversee the situation, the toll would have been as high as 30 to 40 instead of 23. Speaking to journalists in Rawalpindi during his visit to inspect the Mother and Child Hospital (M&CH), the minister said that he went to Murree for the sake of humanity and not because he was a minister. Rasheed added the government had to summon the Rangers in Murree because people were not listening to police personnel and were trying to enter the hill station by force. Had the Rangers not been summoned, 500 more vehicles would have entered Murree and that would have led to a bigger disaster, he said. - DNA

Nawaz responsible for inflation: Fawad

Loan worth Rs 23 trillion was taken from 2008 to 2018, Fawad Chaudhry says

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said on Sunday that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, now living in the most expensive property in London, was directly responsible for the current inflation in the country. Talking to media here, the minister said that today, Pakistan took only Rs 6 trillion loan from 1947 to 2008 and strengthened armed forces, purchased Gwadar, built the capital city of Islamabad and the country became a nuclear power. He said that loan worth Rs 23 trillion was taken from 2008 to 2018 when the PPP and PML-N were in power. The minister said that Pakistan

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Shahbaz 'asked for a deal for four people': Gill

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication Shahbaz Gill on Sunday claimed that Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif has "asked for a deal for four people". Addressing a media conference in the city, Gill said to the Sharifs: "However much of a deal

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TAKHT BHAI: Ambassadors and diplomats from various countries visiting Takht Bhayi. Atif Khan KPK Minister for Tourism facilitated the visit. - DNA

Known religious figure killed

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Sheikh Abdul Hameed a known religious figure from Ahli Hadith School of thoughts was killed and his brother seriously injured in an attack at Qazi Kelli Peshawar on Sunday evening. The initial reports reveal that Sheikh Abdul Hameed was boarding on his car along with brother Sheikh Muhammad Rahmat. Some unknown assailants riding on motorbike opened firing with AK 47. As a result both sustained serious injuries. They were shifted to nearby hospital where Sheikh Abdul Hameed succumbed to injuries. The relatives informed that Sheikh Muhammad Rahmat is in critical condition. So far no one claimed responsibility for latest attack against Abdul Hameed.

Diplomats visit archaeological site in KPK

The delegation of ambassadors appreciated the steps taken by Government to preserve archeological sites and promote tourism, especially in Takht Bhayi

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister Atif Khan accompanied by diplomats from different countries and their families visited Takht Bhayi's archeological site in Mardan district. During the visit, Director Archeology Dr. Abdul Samad gave a detailed briefing to the diplomats regarding archeology and its preservation. Deputy Commissioner Mardan Habib Ullah Arif received the foreigners' delegation on arrival. Mr. Leopoldo Ambassador of Argentina, Mr. Suh Sangpyo Ambassador of South Korea, Mr. Manuel Duran Ambassador of Spain,

Mr. Mohammed Karmoune Ambassador of Morocco, and other foreign guests visited the archeological site with their families. Atif Khan briefing the visitors said that Pakistan is a beautiful country; Takht Bhayi is of great importance not only for the world but also for Pakistan. The positive image will be further enhanced and employment opportunities will be created through religious tourism. The delegation of ambassadors appreciated the steps taken by Government to preserve archeological sites and promote tourism. The delegation said it was indebted to the minister for providing them with an opportunity of exploring the grandeur of the place.

Shahbaz says he is PM's worst nightmare

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: PML-N President and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif lashed out at the PTI-led government for the rising inflation in the country and said that he will give the government a tough time because of that. "I am [Imran Khans'] worst nightmare," the PML-N president said. Talking to the media in Lahore on Saturday, Shahbaz said that the country is witnessing record inflation for the first time in history, while poverty and unemployment are also persistently increasing due to the policies of the incumbent government. "It is the result of Imran Khan Niazi's and his government's negligence and corruption," he said.

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- Djokovic loses fight against Australia deportation - Page 08

TTP men in hot waters as noose tightens around them

After mysterious killing of Mufti Khalid Balti (Khurasani), a report regarding alleged food poisoning of banned TTP Chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud also went viral through social media; Haqqani network is already having close links and influence in Pakistan

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR- Pakistani militants associated with banned Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other smaller groups or loyal to independent self-styled commanders are faced with serious situation across the border in Afghanistan as on one hand, the Taliban regime initiated their enrolment and on the other facing worst kind of threats to lives. After the mysterious killing of Mufti Khalid Balti (Khurasani), a report regarding alleged food poisoning of banned TTP Chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud also went viral through social media. So far neither that news was contradicted nor endorsed but such

Three including two children, woman killed in Taliban firing

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: At least three persons including women and two children were killed when Taliban soldiers reportedly opened firing against people in front of passport office at Mehtarlam head quarter

Continued on Page 06

type of reports confirm serious security and logistic issues for all those Pakistani militants who are either reluctant to surrender or to desist themselves from carrying out violent and terror acts in Pakistan. Situation for these Pakistani militants further worsened with mysterious killing of Muhammad Khalid Balti commonly known as Muhammad Khurasani. Banned TTP through a communiqué confirmed killing of Muhammad Khurasani, terming it a serious loss. However, banned TTP neither made public details of attacks which lead to Khurasani killing nor blamed any one organ in this respect.

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'Trade Diversification Policy' boost country's exports: Razak

The adviser said that Pakistan is currently in the process of introducing new markets and new products in addition to traditional markets and traditional export products in which the present government has made great strides despite the Covid-19 period

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood on Sunday said the government has fully implemented the trade diversification policy and is currently seeing an increase in Pakistan's product and geographical exports in the global market. The main objective of the government's Trade Diversification Policy is to introduce new trade products of a country's exports and to create new non-traditional markets at global and regional level to increase domestic exports, Abdul Razak Dawood told APP here.

For the last seventy years, Pakistan exports have depended on the traditional markets of ten countries, and local textiles have relied on only five markets, including the United States, China, European Union, the United Kingdom and Bangladesh, he said.

The adviser said that Pakistan is currently in the process of introducing new markets and new products in addition to traditional markets and traditional export products in which the present government has made great

strides despite the Covid-19 period. The Ministry of Commerce has launched the 'Look Africa campaign' in search of new unconventional markets and did a lot of work on Central Asian markets, which has resulted in good exports.

He said that in addition, new industrial units are being set up to promote product diversification to boost domestic exports in information technology, light engineering including tractors, fisheries and electronics and mobiles. So far, Country's exports of non-traditional products, including information technology, have grown by 60 per cent in the last four months.

Razak Dawood said that the increase in the existing exports was a manifestation of good policy of the present government during Covid-19.

He said that like Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), "We also need to strengthen the our regional bloc in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and increase bilateral trade activities in the regional countries."

He said that the government has re-

duced tariffs and duties on raw materials to zero per cent to increase the country's exports.

These include Textile, Fiber and Jute where tariffs are discounted.

Replying to a question, he said that Pakistan exports to Central Asian Republics (CARs) countries increased to USD \$ 145 million in 2020-21 from USD \$ 104 million in 2019-20.

For six months, from July-December 2021, these exports increased by 173 per cent to USD\$ 134 million from USD 49 million during the same period last year, he said.

The Ministry of Commerce's 'Silk Route Reconnect' initiative is now bearing results, he added.

To increase the trilateral trade Volume with CARs, the Adviser said that the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Transit Trade Agreement was signed in 2021 at Tashkent and both the countries discussed opening banks in each other's country. "We are negotiating Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan", adding, transit trade agreements were also being negotiated. - APP



TAKHT BHAI: KPK Minister Atif Khan briefs diplomats about the archaeological site of Takht Bhai. - DNA

Teacher to play pivotal role in social reforms

ABBOTTABAD: Speaker

Pakhtunkhwa Assembly M u s h t a q A h m a d G h a n i on Sunday said teachers have a great role to bring social reform and to create sense of responsibility among younger generation.

While addressing a Salam Teacher convention organized by Pak Teachers Forum here he said teachers were the architects of the future generation and the incumbent government always focused on the well being of youth, adding, Prime Minister Imran Khan always highlighted the importance and respect of teachers on every forum. The convention was aimed to highlight importance of the role of teachers in reforming society and to encourage teachers. - APP

Police recover 11.2 kg hashish

SWABI: The district police here on Sunday recovered 11.2 kg of hashish and arrested three drug peddlers in separate raids.

In a statement issued by DPO office, the patrolling squad at Maneri area arrested two drug peddlers and recovered 7.2 kg hashish from their possessions. The arrested were identified as Salman and Zar Ali.

Meanwhile, Topi police during snap checking of vehicles at Batakara have checked a rickshaw and arrested a peddler identified as Abubakar after recovering 4 kg hashish from his possession. The cases have been registered while further investigation is in progress. - APP

Development opens up new avenues in KPK

Development of highways and motorways has not only revolutionized tourism, trade and business activities in the province but also help generate job opportunities for unemployed youth

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: Massive turnaround in communication infrastructure projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has brought about positive transformation in lives of the people by stimulating economic growth.

Development of highways and motorways has not only revolutionized tourism, trade and business activities in the province but also help generate job opportunities for unemployed youth. Projects in multiple sectors have improved farm to market access, better education and health facilities, flourished businesses, enhanced agricultural produce and promoted transport and tourism business. Despite hiccups and load of foreign loans, the government successfully completed mega Swat Expressway, Economic Zones and Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) projects besides routine development initiatives to pave way for socioeconomic uplift of the people.

Swat Motorway, a valuable communication project completed by the previous PTI-led government, had brought a positive revolution in transportation, trade and tourism sectors in the province especially in Malakand division.

"It is playing an instrumental role by bolstering tourism and adventure sports in entire Malakand Division, especially in Swat, attracting millions of tourists from across the country," said Latifur Rehman, Spokesperson of KP Tourism and Archeology Department.

"As a result, hotel and transport sectors witnessed a great boom in KPK including Malakand division where revenue generation touched new limits," he said. "During the festivals and peaks tourism seasons, millions of people visit these areas making the local traders and the government to earn billions of rupees."

Following the successful completion of the 81 kilometres Swat Motorway (Phase-I) from Karnal Sher Khan interchange Swabi to Chakdara Lower Dir with an estimated cost of Rs 34 billion, the government has taken a principle decision to construct Swat Motorway Phase-II from Chakdara to Madina to open up the entire Swat district for tourists and adventure sports lovers.

Managing Director, Pakhtunkhwa Highway Authority, Engineer Amir Durran said Swat Motorway Phase-II was a landmark communication project that would be completed with an estimated cost of Rs 38 billion.

KP govt ensuring excellent healthcare facilities

PESHAWAR: The inclusion of Peshawar Institute of Cardiac in International Health Centers is a manifestation of the excellent health policy of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, said Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif.

Talking to media men here on Sunday, he said that the welfare of the people is the first priority of the provincial government.

Revolutionary measures have been taken in many areas, including health care, education, police reform and governance, Muhammad Ali Saif said. Thanks to these revolutionary and people-friendly policies of the KP government under the leadership of Chief Minister Mahmood Khan that is why Peshawar Institute of Cardiology has ranked one of the best health centers in the world. Barrister Saif described the nomination for the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (ISO-9001) certificate, the only state-of-the-art cardiology hospital in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as an honor for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and people.

It is an honor and certainly a historical day for the people of KP that PIC is the first government hospital in Pakistan to be nominated for ISO certification. The Special Assistant for Information paid tribute to the entire management of the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology and hoped that they would continue their work with the same determination and hard work and serve the citizens as well as brighten the name of the province. - APP

Exclusive talk on "Leadership in Changing Times" held at IoBM



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Tariq Khan, the author of 'Leadership in Changing Times', was in conversation with Javid Ahmed, at the Institute of Business Management (IoBM), Karachi on Saturday. Present on this occasion were Talib Karim, President IoBM; Khalid Jawed Khan, Attorney General for Pakistan, along with corporate executives of Pakistan. IoBM's Rector, Deans, HoDs, faculty, management, and students were also present. The fire-side chat explored various dimensions of the book especially the topics such as leadership, innovation, adapting to change to name a few. Tariq Khan said that rigid leaders are forgotten soon while adaptive leaders are remembered for changing the environment with time. When talking about cognitive flexibility with adaptive leadership, he said that healthcare is a prime concern in changing times

and in the current post-pandemic era. When discussing women in leadership positions, he said that Pakistan will reach new heights of success when women's empowerment is encouraged in all fields.

During his speech, Khalid Jawed Khan appreciated Tariq Khan's endeavors to write an in-depth book on leadership. He said that leaders lead by example and extract the best out of their people. Talib Karim, during his concluding remarks, acknowledged Tariq Khan's initiative to discuss leadership and its various traits. When discussing leadership, Talib Karim appreciated the

Pakistan government's stance on fighting Covid-19 and the effectiveness of implementing rules in such uncertain times.

Tariq Khan is the Founder and CEO, Global Diversity Marketing; Adjunct Professor, Marketing and Leadership, New York University, and Chairman, Board of Trustees, Stratford University, Virginia, U.S.A. The moderator of the session, Javid Ahmed is Head of Strategy and Accreditation, IoBM; Consultant and Trainer, Strategic Planning and Market Creation. The event was moderated by Dr. Asima Faisal, HoD, Health and Hospital Management Department, IoBM.

Pakistan on the verge of financial crisis

Despite putting very conservative estimates assessed through the IMF, Pakistan's gross external financing requirement stands at USD 23.6bn in 2021-22 and USD 28 billion in 2022-23

MUHAMMAD KHALID KHAN

PAKISTAN'S GDP growth is expected to reach a four-year high of 5-6% in the financial year ending June 2022, but the nation is on the verge of a flexibility catastrophe, with the requiring gross external financing of USD 51.6 billion inside a two-12 months period (2021-2023) on the way to satisfy its needs.

Despite putting very conservative estimates assessed through the IMF, Pakistan's gross external financing requirement stands at USD 23.6 billion in 2021-22 and USD 28 billion in 2022-23. Pakistan has been plagued by financial crises in the past too, including massive inflation, current account and trade imbalances, decreasing foreign reserves, and currency devaluations. It is once again confronted with a mixture of these issues. Now Pakistan's economy is going to face a three-dimensional challenge: internationally, it is trying to grapple with rising prices of basic natural resources such as oil, gas, wheat, and sugar, as well as unusually high shipping cost on its foreign trade; regional basis, it is struggling with the economic and financial repercussions of an extremely volatile situation in Afghanistan; and domestically, it is trying to come to terms with a falling rupee value and a lack of resources to keep electricity, gas, wheat, and sugar prices stable.

It is critical to investigate the source of the problem. The first is a faster-than-expected recovery of industrial production in major economies during Covid-19. As a consequence of the increased worldwide need for energy and other commodities as a result of the recovery, fuel prices have risen. The

effect of rising commodity prices has been exacerbated by Pakistan's high landing expenses. Then there is the rupee's depreciation versus the US dollar, which makes Pakistani imports even more expensive. It is important to note that the present price increase is influenced by a number of other variables. Seasonal supply changes, for example, impact the cost of perishable food commodities such as vegetables and fruit. In previous recent days, a hike in the minimum support price of wheat (almost by Rs10 per kilograms in Punjab and Rs15 per kilograms in Sindh) had an inflationary effect on end customers.

While worldwide prices of commodities drive inflation, regressive domestic policies haven't helped matters. According to a World Bank paper co-authored by Daud Khan, Namash Nazar, and Willem Janssen, Islamabad has "systematically penalized the production of high-value products by focusing support on wheat and sugarcane." As a result, Pakistan continues to import horticulture items, dairy products, and cotton to support the domestic textile sector, despite having a large number of animals performing below potential, according to the authors.

Many people believe that the rupee should be strengthened in order to make imports cheaper. This, nevertheless, does not work because some factors for instance, the rupee's strength or weakness is heavily influenced by the state of the economy as well as currency exchange inflows and outflows. Maintaining the rupee artificially strong will drain our little foreign currency reserves, which we need to fund our current account deficit, if economic growth is slow and foreign exchange outflows are greater than inflows, as is the case with Pakistan these days.

DC directs officers to pass on all possible relief to masses

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commission Abbottabad Tariq Salam Marwat Sunday directed all the district administration officers to facilitate the masses in the provision of services and pass on all possible relief in the wake of rising inflation and take strict action against violations. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting of administrative staff to review their performance. All the officers apprised DC about their performances while Tariq Salam Marwat also addressed the issues of citizens, law enforcement and various services including speedy resolution of revenue court cases, improvement in general administration, price checking, access to remote areas, ease of driving and armament license, market and rate checking. DC directed strict implementation of price list issued by the district administration, action on illegal profiteering and arbitrary increase in meat including chicken meat prices. He also ordered the officers for daily basis monitoring of the price-fixing in order to solve the problems of the citizens. - APP



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Isha.....	06:51 pm



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Water Tanker Service	
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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: A woman taking interest in various handmade clothes during an exhibition titled Embroidering Dream, held at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA

Ali Awan slams opposition

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Capital Development Authority (CDA), Ali Nawaz Awan on Sunday warned the opposition not to mistake the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government as weak and instead of negative politics they should come forwards for 'issued based politics.

Talking to a private news channel, he lashed out that he has never before seen such an 'incompetent', weak and 'sluggish' opposition, adding, the government had no threat from the failed opposition. Opposition parties were indifferent to politics of public interest and they might go to any extent for point score the issues involving human lives, he added. Awan said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, led by Prime Minister Imran Khan, would complete its five years tenure, adding that conspirators had faced defeat before and they would meet the same in future. – APP

Police arrests 46 beggars

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police kick-started crackdown against professional beggars and as many as 46 beggars arrested from different areas. On the orders of SSP Operations Wasim Riaz, the Beggar Squad comprising ASI Muhammad Asif and ASI Matiullah along with their respective teams took action against professional beggars and arrested 46 beggars in different areas. On the occasion, SSP Operations Wasim Riaz said that the special beggar squad was working hard to end this menace. – APP

Police arrests 4 on racing

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested four accused for racing luxury cars and performing drifting on roads in the jurisdiction of Rawat Police station here Sunday, police spokesman said. The vehicles used by the accused were also seized by the police. They were identified as Zia, Safiullah, Salar and Shehryar. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. – DNA

President apologizes to aged taxpayer over FBR injustice

Apologizing to the senior citizen Mr. Abdul Hamid, the President said that our heads should hang in shame for the inconvenience caused by FBR to the senior citizen

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has expressed dismay over the treatment of an 82 years old taxpayer by FBR and directed its Chairman to look into the entire system of irresponsibility and corruption and take punitive action against the entire chain of decision makers involved in the case. He took exception to the decision of FBR against a senior citizen that refused him to refund a paltry sum of Rs 2,333 on frivolous grounds and dragged him into unnecessary litigation spanning over a year. Apologizing to the senior citizen Mr. Abdul Hamid

Khan, the President said that our heads should hang in shame for the inconvenience caused by FBR to the senior citizen. Mr Abdul Hamid Khan (the complainant), a senior citizen of 82 years of age, had claimed a refund of Rs 2,333 on his income tax return for the year 2020 and submitted requisite documents of advance tax deduction of the PTCL and cell phone company bills on 19.10.2020. The complainant e-filed refund application on 19th October, 2020 followed by representation to FBR Chairman on 24th December, 2020. The Unit officer of FBR rejected his refund claim, on 29.01.2021, on the grounds

that the applicant had failed to furnish the original certificates required for authentication. The complainant then took up the matter with the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) to seek redressal of his complaint. The FTO investigated the matter and ordered FBR on 02.06.2021 to revisit the impugned order, dated 19.01.2021, and pass a fresh order, under section 170(4) of the ordinance, after providing the complainant the opportunity for hearing as per law. It further ordered to identify and initiate disciplinary proceedings against the official who passed the impugned order in derogation of the law and pro-

cedures and dragged the ageing taxpayer into unnecessary litigation as well as report compliance within 45 days. Consequently, FBR filed a representation with the President against the original order of FTO on 24.06.2021. President Dr Arif Alvi rejected the representation of FBR. He said that the complainant had admittedly furnished copies of advance tax as per certificates collected by telephone authorities. In case the Unit Officer was not satisfied with the copies of certificates, he could have not only got the same verified from the PTCL and Cell Phone Company but verification was also possi-

ble through online system. He observed that it was the responsibility of the duty officer to get the deduction of tax verified from the deducting authorities irrespective of certificates being original or copies/system generated, if the same were not reflecting in the system for one or the other reason. The President termed the failure of the officer to verify the bills from PTCL and the cell phone company through the online system as shirking from responsibility and an act of maladministration. He upheld that the act of the officer was a mockery and travesty of law, procedure and instructions of FBR. It appeared that un-

lawful treatment was meted out in the instant case with a view to irritate and humiliate the ageing pensioner. While rejecting the representation of FBR, the President said that this must be the most pitiful and shameful use of bureaucratic authority and regretted that the FBR official had wasted the time of his department, the Tax Mohtasib and the President of Pakistan over a paltry sum of Rs 2,333 and the matter had lingered for over a year. He also deplored that no one in the long chain of bureaucrats in FBR deliberated over the issue to take note of the unfairness, pettiness and superfluosity of the matter.

11,000 brick kilns converted on Zig Zag technology

ISLAMABAD: All 11,000 traditional brick kilns, running on smog-causing fossil fuels, in the entire Punjab province, had been converted 100 percent on the new environment friendly zig-zag technology in a period of six months. The new technology would help reduce breath-chocking carbon emissions by 60 percent and help save energy by 30 percent, said spokesperson Ministry of Climate Change, Muhammad Saleem Shaikh here on Sunday. Talking to APP, he said the zig-zag kiln technology had been established to embellish fuel efficiency, energy savings, and lessening in emissions by 60 percent as compared to traditional brick kilns. The owners of remaining brick kiln owners,

who had not yet installed the pollution control technology, had now submitted affidavits with Pak-EPA Islamabad to convert their kilns to environment-friendly zig-zag technology. "Conversion of the all traditional brick kilns to new Zig-zag technology in Punjab province has helped reduce air pollution by about 15 percent", he commented. The spokesperson said converting the traditional brick kiln system to modern technology was a difficult task which required investment and training. He said many kiln owners were not ready to take the risk, but efforts and hard work of their representative organization had helped improve about 11,000 kilns in Punjab. The climate change ministry was striving that all other

provinces, where air pollution has become a leading cause of re-mature deaths and various health diseases, should also follow the suit to fight environmental degradation and protect public health. There were around 20,000 traditional brick kilns in the country, which use mainly coal, rubber and shoe soles as fuel, emitting lethal back carbon emissions into the atmosphere, he said. Most of them were located around urban areas and contribute significantly to air pollution. Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency Islamabad, the EPD, Punjab and NEECA is working closely with the All Bricks Kiln Owners Association of Pakistan to introduce environmentally friendly and cost-effective brick kiln technology. – APP

NA, Senate sessions to resume today

ISLAMABAD: Both Lower and Upper Houses of the Parliament will resume their scheduled business after a two-day break on Monday at 4 pm. According to the agenda shared on the website of the Senate, both the houses will take up motions and legislative business. The Senate will also discuss three resolutions including, "The Senate of Pakistan is cognizant of the fact that artists from the entertainment industry in Pakistan have been facing the issue of rightful and just payments of royalties for a long time that tantamount to misuse of copyrights. This House recommends that the Federal Government may take initiatives to empower the Copyright Board regarding fixing of the royalties for licensing and assignment of work." – APP

Citizens violate ban on 'plastic bags'

ISLAMABAD: The citizens of the federal capital, after observing few months' strict compliance, are openly violating the ban imposed on single use plastic bags amid reduced enforcement of the restriction by the civic agencies. Shopkeepers and individuals are openly using polythene or plastic bags for packaging and dealing of groceries, eatables and other items as observed in different areas of Islamabad. Noushad Khan, a vegetable seller in sector I-8 of the city said that there was strict implementation and enforcement of the ban in its early days, but with the passage of time 'the restriction has eased down.' Fayyaz, an owner of a small hut in sector G-7, told APP that the customers demanded to have the items handed over to them in a plastic bag. "If I don't do that, the other shopkeepers will, and I shall end up losing my customers." He further said that if the government really wanted to stop usage of plastic bags, then it needed to stop its manufacturing. During a visit to various markets of the federal capital, it was observed that there were some, who were not openly disregarding the ban, but secretly carried plastic bags and produced them on demand of the customer, commonly, in the Weekly Bazaars. – DNA

600 mln saplings to be planted during spring: Malik Amin Aslam

The step had been taken to make the approval to convert agricultural land for housing project, a difficult task so that the agricultural land could be protected, he added

RANA FARRUKH

RAWALPINDI, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam said over 600 million saplings would be planted during spring plantation campaign this year. He said the government had set a plantation target of one billion trees for all the provinces this year. The SAPM said directives had been issued by the government that no agricultural land could be converted into housing societies. Earlier, the approval for establishing a housing society was given at commissioner level but now, the provincial cabinet would approve new housing projects. The step had been taken to make the approval to convert agricultural land

for housing project, a difficult task so that the agricultural land could be protected, he added. He said there was no master plan for any city. After 1960, no master plan was formulated for any city. On the directives of the Prime Minister, the master plans of 80 cities were being devised which would be finalized within five to six months, he added. The master plans would help contain the limits of the cities and there would be no expansion of the cities beyond their limits. The government was encouraging the construction vertically to save agricultural land, he said. About installation of sewerage plants and plantation by the housing societies he said, "The government is going to issue an order for environmental audit of all the housing societies and strict action would be taken against

those violating the rules." He informed that urban Miyawaki Forests were being set up in congested city areas in accordance with ten billion tree tsunami vision of the Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said, "We have established nearly 100 urban Miyawaki Forests in Lahore and more than 100 Miyawaki Forests were also set up in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." Malik Amin Aslam said, "The plantation under ten billion tree tsunami project was being carried out over 9500 sites which will be uploaded on the website so that the citizens could be able to check the plantation activities. The step is being taken to ensure complete transparency for the project." He said more urban Miyawaki Forest projects would also be set up in Rawalpindi to provide the citizens clean and green environment.

سردی آگتی ہے خیال رکھنا!

سردیوں میں آنے والے بھاری گیس بل سے بچنا ہے

تو بس یہ کرنا ہے

گیس آلات کریں سمجھداری سے استعمال
استعمال کے بعد بند کرنے کی سہولت

گیس روٹیں لگائیں ناٹھریوٹس
لے جانے سے پہلے ان کے بند کرنے کی سہولت

گیس سپورٹ کوئلے کے گیزر کا انتخاب
رکھنے کی سہولت اور ہر پختہ کی اجازت

PID/L12130

سونی ناردرن گیس
Sui Northern Gas
Hydrocarbons Limited
پتہ: ایف 10، اسلام آباد

پاکستان سٹیٹ گیس
پتہ: ایف 10، اسلام آباد

Briefs

Changing moods ruining traffic system

ISLAMABAD: Changing moods with growing impatience, haste, arrogance and carelessness have badly affected traffic system in the capital. Despite widening of main arteries and efforts for efficient policing, the situation is not showing much improvement.

Blowing horns where prohibited, parking vehicle at 'No Parking' sign, cutting others way, ignoring lanes, violating signals and attending mobile phone calls in center of the road are general tendencies, we have developed with the passage of time.

Over speeding, wrong overtaking and snaking through heavy rushes often result in serious accidents. This situation needs an early attention of authorities before the federal capital is hit by a total traffic mess.

A few motorists care for others' rights as majority has its own rules and priorities when on road. More often it seems that traffic code has become some forgotten or obsolete dogma for them. The serene generation is phasing out and an anxious and hasty generation is replacing it which is direly needed to be taught of revered traditions and customs.

A driver, when asked, termed this tendency, an outcome of a peculiar mental approach, meant for personal satisfaction. "Mostly, people feel pride in violating rules. They know that they can manage, if stopped on violation," was a comment by a saner commuter, Adnan Ahmed. "Why we tend to violate laws for personal satisfaction. Why we are going far off the ethics." - APP

Experts urge awareness in patient self medication

ISLAMABAD: Health experts Sunday warned that unchecked trend of self-medication with use of antibiotics has a major effect on the people's health which could produce harmful effects on various body organs including kidney, liver and stomach. Talking to PTV news channel, Vice Chancellor Health Services Academy Islamabad DrShahzad Ali Khan said that there is dire need to increase sufficient number of doctors in hospitals, adding, in the mild fever or cough, people use to take medicines without consulting any doctor. He said self medication might also lead to hypersensitivity reactions, skin problems, rashes and allergies etc.

"We need to create more awareness through media and to educate about self medication so that people can stop putting themselves at risk", he stressed. Senior Pharmacist Sardar-ShabirAhmad said people asked for medicines without prescription from any qualified physician adding it has been found that mostly youngsters demands medicines just after reading on internet. - APP

Scrutiny process to be completed till Jan 18

DNA
RAWALPINDI: The scrutiny process of the nomination papers submitted for Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) by-elections will be completed till January 18 while the revised list of the candidates will be posted on January 25 after hearing the objections and appeals on the posted list of the candidates from Jan 20 to 24.

The Returning Officer (RO) of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) Ward 2 by-elections had received total 10 nomination papers of Zain ulAbidin son of Muhammad Ijaz, Rashid Mehmood s/o Muhammad Sharif, ShoukatAyub s/o Muhammad Ayub Khan, Syed Imran Ali Kazmi s/o Syed Qurban-HussainKazmi, Muhammad Qasim s/o Ali Muhammad, Tahir Ayub s/o Abdul Qayyum Malik, Muhammad Aamir s/o Wali Muhammad, Asghar Khan s/o Jan Muhammad, Shoukat Ali Butt s/o Muhammad Rafique Butt and Aamir-Rauf s/o Abdul Rauf.



ISLAMABAD: Women taking interest in various handmade clothes during an exhibition titled Embroidering Dream, held at Islamabad Serena Hotel.- DNA

ICCI calls for withdrawal of hike in electricity tariff

Shakeel Munir said that Pakistan the total debt & liabilities of Pakistan have crossed Rs.50 trillion for the first time in country's history that has the potential to compromise our national security

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the NEPA has approved a massive hike of Rs. 4.30 per unit in the power tariff on account of the Fuel Price Adjustment (FPA) for November 2021, which is not justified as it would put extra burden of Rs.35 billion on power consumers, further escalate production cost and increase inflation leading to detrimental impact on the economy. He urged that the government should withdraw this increase to

save the power consumers and businesses from further troubles. He said that passing on the burden of poor performance of power utilities to the consumers was not justified by any standards. Shakeel Munir said that Pakistan the total debt & liabilities of Pakistan have crossed Rs.50 trillion for the first time in country's history that has the potential to compromise our national security. He said that the best way for Pakistan to get rid of its debt burden was to promote businesses, investment and exports. However, the repeated hikes in power tariffs, POL products and



increase in policy interest rate have made significant increase in the cost of doing business due to which it was becoming difficult for the business community to com-

pete in the international market for exports. He said that electricity was a major input for many industries and making addition of Rs.4.30 per unit in the electricity bills of November would further increase their production cost. He urged that the government should reduce its dependence on thermal power and focus on renewable energy sources including hydro, solar and wind to produce cheap energy that would bring down production cost, reduce inflation and make our exports more competitive in the international markets. Jamsheed Akhtar Sheikh Senior

Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI said that the government was assuring to promote the ease of doing business to facilitate the growth of private sector. However, repeated hike in electricity & gas tariffs and oil prices were creating more difficulties for SMEs and the industrial sector. They stressed that the government should reconsider its approach and take measures to reduce the cost of doing business that would enable the business activities and exports to flourish and the economy would achieve sustainable growth.

ANF seizes over 3094 kg drugs in 41 operations; arrests 36

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan has seized over 3094 kg drugs, arrested 36 culprits including three women, two foreigners besides impounding nine vehicles while conducting 41 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 14.142 Kg Heroin, 1565 Kg Hashish, 1103 Kg Opium, 13.4 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice), 396 Kg Morphine, 1.554 Kg Cocaine, 0.182 Kg Lexotanil Tablets (900 Tabs), 0.025 Kg LSD Stickers (25 Stickers) and 576 Liters Suspected Chemical.

ANF Balochistan recovered 1283 Kg drugs and 576 liters suspected chemical in four operations while arrested three accused, seized a vehicle and a motorcycle. The seized drugs comprised 186 Kg Hashish, 696 Kg Opium, 5 Kg Ice, 396 Kg Morphine and 576 liters suspected chemical. ANF Punjab recovered 1166.17 Kg drugs in 11 operations while arrested 14 accused and seized two vehicles and a motorcycle. The seized drugs comprised 5.37 Kg Heroin, 827.3 Kg Hashish, 330.2 Kg opium and 3.900 Methamphetamine (Ice). - APP



RAWALPINDI: Federal Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed talking to media on Sunday. - DNA

Govt taking steps to redress Overseas Pakistanis complaints

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) has taken various steps to address the complaints of Overseas Pakistanis timely aiming at to facilitate them as soon as possible. An official source told APP here on Sunday, he said Overseas Pakistanis were a valuable asset of the country as they are making great contribution through their receipts, which are playing vital role to strengthen national economy. He said the most of the complaints had been resolved within the stipulated time, adding that he said there were approximately nine million Overseas Pakistanis living across the globe. - APP

Islamabad records highest surge with 366 Covid cases in 3 months

ISLAMABAD: Continuing with the alarming rise, the federal capital had reported 366 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, which was the highest single-day spike in almost the last three months, National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said on Sunday. According to an official of NCOC, as many as 354 cases were reported on Saturday while 299 reported on Friday. He said so far 110,963 cases were reported from the federal capital while 969 deaths were reported from

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) while 107,969 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of the Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued surveillance of different areas of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection. They also started taking action on a violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to the Coronavirus while visiting marriage halls, markets, and petrol

pumps by its inspection teams. The administration had been asked to take action on the violation of SOPs at shops, workshops, and restaurants. The inspection teams had been directed to issue notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops in case of violation of SOPs. Commenting on the situation, an official of the Ministry of National Health Services said that several local-level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. - APP

Private labs to face action for not following SOPs

The official said, "We will not allow anyone to run any such illegal business in the medical field. They are playing with the health of people while deceiving health authorities." He said that IHRA inspections teams had started surprise visits to all such labs and their collection points

ISLAMABAD: Private laboratories had been asked to be ready to face action on not adopting the regulations and appropriate treatment methods for the safe disposal of infectious waste in the federal capital. According to an official of the Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA), the authority had decided to take action against those laboratories in the federal capital which were not following proper procedures for disposal of waste right from handling, collecting, transporting, discarding, and marking till incineration to avoid minimal exposure to others.

"Infectious waste produced at the labs and hospitals is a great threat to the public health and the environment and causes nosocomial infections if waste is not managed well," he said. He said that the authority had also started a crackdown on private COVID-19 testing laboratories in the federal capital on issuing fake results of the infection tests with the support of travel agents. He said, "These laboratories are unlawfully giving wrong PCR test reports of Coronavirus as per the desire of the people with the involvement of some travel agents." He said that it was also observed that some labs had issued COVID-19 reports without receiving nasal or oral swab samples or even issued negative reports to the pos-

itive patients to make their travelling easier with having wrong dealings with travel agents. The official said, "We will not allow anyone to run any such illegal business in the medical field. They are playing with the health of people while deceiving health authorities." He said that IHRA inspections teams had started surprise visits to all such labs and their collection points. He added the authority had suspended the services of three laboratories while further were under observation. "We have started collecting data to take action and seal all such labs with the support of the local administration as we are against this unlawful practice

and our policy is zero-tolerance against such illegal activity." He said, "We are ready to perform our role of policing for legal health establishments also to protect citizens from wrongdoings of the health setups as we have been given mandate with the power to ask from these setups about any illegality with citizens. He added, "We have field teams who conduct visits to personally monitor the standards of health facilities in the federal capital besides completing routine assessments." He said that the main objective of IHRA is to regulate healthcare services and establishments in the federal capital. He said that in order to regulate

these health establishments, the authority was working on standards and after completing its documentation work on these standards, health establishments will be examined to know whether these standards were being observed or not. He said these steps aimed at ensuring that formal or informal and public or private healthcare services to the citizens of the federal capital were at par with the international standards to further internationally recognize these services also. He added after observing these standards, the license will be issued to the eligible setups to operate in the federal capital while the authority will not allow working all substandard setups. - APP

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Pak Navy diver recovers body from Rawallake

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Diver Abdul Rehman-LCD(T) in a daring night diving search and rescue operation recovered the dead body of a lady drowned at Rawal Lake. The Search operation, in the ice cold waters of Lake was conducted immediately on receiving call for assistance from Islamabad police and CDA.

Later, the dead body of the lady was handed over to the family. Pakistan Navy diver's prompt and quick response is a manifestation of organizational professionalism and dedication. Earlier also PN Diving teams stationed at Sailing club locality have performed various successful Search and Rescue operations in Northern areas and at Mangla Dam. The basic aim of deputing Pakistan Navy diving team at Rawal Lake near the sailing club is to provide assistance to civil authorities and counter any emergency situations. - APP

BEOE launches online foreign jobs portal

ISLAMABAD: Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE), Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD), has launched an online foreign jobs portal www.beoe.gov.pk/foreign-jobs, to facilitate overseas job seekers.

An official source told APP here on Sunday that the decision has been taken for the interest of overseas job seekers to reduce the load of unemployment in the country. To a question, he said that job seekers could easily search details of overseas job opportunities with Licensed Overseas Employment Promoters as some mafias were looting the innocent youth in the name of jobs in foreign countries.

He said recently, the Ambassador of Kuwait had hold a meeting with Advisor to the Prime Minister on OP&HRD Muhammad AyubAfridi and discussed bilateral relations and matters of mutual interests. The Advisor has appreciated the step of Kuwaiti government for opening work visa for Pakistanis. He asked the Ambassador to enhance the job quota for Pakistanis youth as Pakistan has potential manpower to meet Kuwaiti market requirements. - APP

Offenders involved in kidnapping Imam Masjid held

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested three pro-claimed offenders for kidnapping, torturing and brutally injuring a Masjid Imam in the jurisdiction of Cantonment police station here Sunday, informed police spokesman. Those arrested were identified as Danish, Anas and Obaidullah. The perpetrators also made a video of the violence and advertised it on social media. The accused kidnap and torture Imam Masjid in 2021. City Police Officer CPO SajidKayani appreciated the performance of police team adding that strict action must be taken those involved in mischievous activities. - APP

Squad set up to facilitate tourists visiting Murree

RAWALPINDI: As many as 200 personnel of the Tourist Guide Force comprising District and City Traffic Police were operating to facilitate the tourists visiting Murree hill station. According to police spokesman, City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Sajid-Kayani has assigned the force to help and facilitate the tourists. The CPO said Rawalpindi Police and district administration including the Tourist Guide Force were working together to help visitors in Murree. He urged that the tourists should contact 051-9269200 in case of any problem, emergency or guidance. - APP

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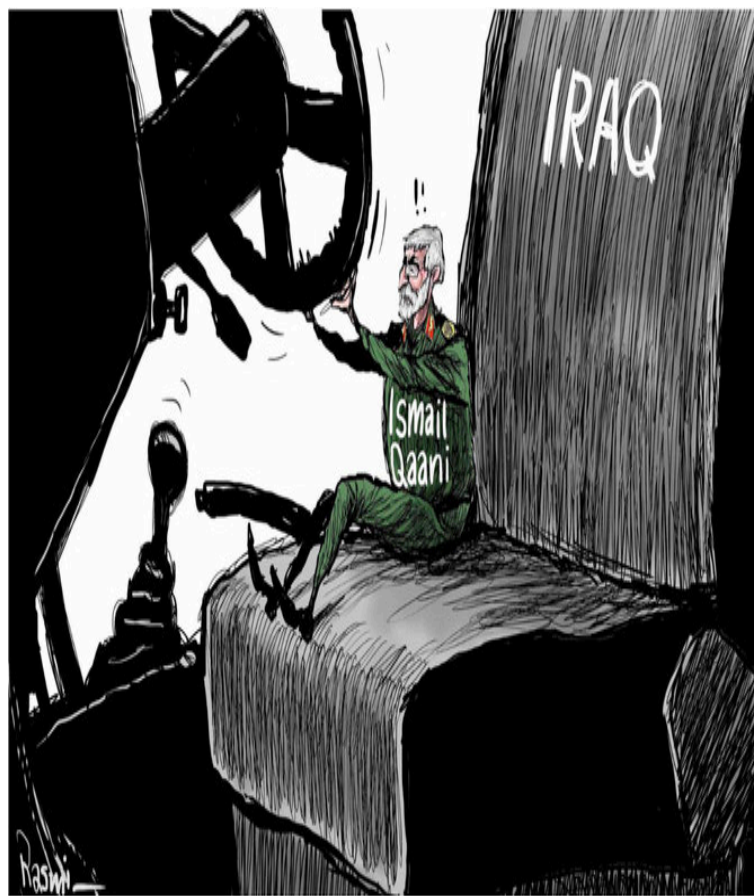
Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 214

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National Security Policy

THE government's announcement of its citizen-centric National Security Policy (NSP) comes at a time when it is arguably needed the most. The past few years have seen our economy reel from both imported and homegrown inflation, alongside rapid devaluation of the Rupee and a perennially skewed trade balance.

This is why the NSP's focus on economic security and welfare of the public is certainly something that is becoming more of an urgent need with every passing day.

The government has only released portions of this policy to the general public, but that is understandable considering that issues of hardcore security should be kept closely guarded. Beyond the economy, the document looks to frame a comprehensive and all-encompassing strategy in both traditional and novel lines of defence.

Threats from India naturally entail a focus on both internal and regional security, but the policy goes a step further and recognises the new spheres of conflict, in the realms of cyberspace and even space security.

It is clear that the state is looking to expand its capacity to stave off threats in these varied spheres, which naturally requires investment. However, what is admirable here is that there will be a greater focus on indigenisation than ever before, which is needed if Pakistan is to become more self-reliant in matters of both economy and defence.

Another important aspect of the NSP is that it will be reviewed regularly by the National Security Committee (NSC) to both monitor progress and allow for any trajectory changes when needed. For decades, we have been our own worst enemy in terms of the reactive approach to policymaking that successive governments have employed. It is hoped that consistent reviews and properly charted milestones will help in changing tack and becoming more flexible and proactive in determining how to get Pakistan to put its best foot forward, for the economy, human development and defence.

Avoiding superspreaders

WITH as many as 96 food stalls to cater to the thousands that have poured into the Beach View Park, Karachi Eat is an event that seems to be undisturbed by the ongoing fifth wave. The fact that such a large event is taking place in a city where the positivity ratio has surpassed 31 percent is perplexing. Without any official federal limitations imposed, it is up to the provincial government to take a stand.

For weeks, the government has been stressing that all efforts are going towards ensuring that Pakistan does not reach a point where a national lockdown is needed because of the immense strain it will have on the economy. Similarly, another objective is to keep schools open for as long as possible amidst the new Omicron wave. These are very high aims considering the kind of social events that are being held uninterrupted and the lack of government regulation regarding the implementation of safety protocols. Karachi Eat is one such event where individuals of all ages have collected to try out all sorts of cuisines. Even though the organisers are being careful about maintaining social distance, checking vaccination cards and enforcing a strict policy of wearing a mask, the nature of the festival is such that there is bound to be some exposure. People are likely to group together at stalls and tables, without their mask, which means that some transmission may be possible especially when there are hundreds in attendance from across the city.

This is the point where we must be careful and the provincial governments must assume responsibility. They are well within their rights to take autonomous action regarding imposing restrictions on social gatherings of this magnitude even when no such federal policy has been enacted. Without this initiative, the burden on the economy, hospitals and countless families is bound to increase and these very governments will find themselves seeking solutions for a problem that could have been prevented much earlier. We have reached the highest number of daily cases since September last year and with the way things are going, the situation will only get worse unless the authorities take action.

Balochistan's RekoDiq: Re-Negotiations

Dr M Ali Hamza



High deposits of Gold and copper is the actual reason of Reko Diq significance, but popularity of Reko Diq is associated with Reko Diq case

PAKISTAN is rich in natural resources and this is no exaggeration by any means. Consider gold and copper for a while. Historically, a substantial quantity of Gold was sent to the Greeks as tax after Alexander came to know about this wealth in our part of the world. But where is the treasure? and answer is: Reko Diq, one of the largest copper and gold mines in the world: having estimated reserves of 5.9 billion tons of ore grading, 0.41% copper and gold reserves amounting to 41.5 million oz. High deposits of Gold and copper is the actual reason of Reko Diq significance, but popularity of Reko Diq is associated with Reko Diq case. Let me give you a context. An agreement, generally known as CHEJVA (Chagai Hills Exploration Joint Venture Agreement) was signed between Australian mining company BHP Billiton and the government of Balochistan back in 1993. The purpose of agreement was to allow BHP Billiton to explore the existence of copper and gold deposits at the RekoDiq Mine, conduct feasibility study, and later the company would extract copper and gold. BHP Billiton had 75% of share and rest was with

the government of Balochistan. In 2000, BHP handed over its contract to another Australian company: Mincor Resources, and one another company TCC (Tethyan Copper Company) procured the project in 2006. Right after TCC took control of the project, a lawsuit was filed in Balochistan high court against the agreement; claiming it to be illegal and contrary to the provisions of Pakistani law. However, the claim was discarded by the High Court and CHEJVA was declared legal and valid, but the ripple did not fade out.

In 2010, TCC completed the feasibility study and shared the findings with government of Balochistan. Later, in 2011 TCC submitted a Mine Lease Application to receive a formal permission for excavating the copper and gold; as per the agreement. The lease application by TCC was turned down by the provincial government. It was realized after almost 2 decades that the agreement conditions are not in favor of the people of Balochistan, therefore Govt. of Balochistan asked to revise the condition, for instance i) performing smelting and refining in Pakistan as opposed to the original agreement where smelting and refining would be done outside Pakistan, ii) increase royalty rates, iii) review financial model, iv) hiring more local population in the project. In fact the then political leadership (today's PML-N) was not good enough in calculating good negotiations or they must have calculated the transaction to their bank accounts well. However, TCC refused to revise the conditions, took the matter to ICSID (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes); the World Bank Group, and demanded \$11.43 billion in damages for such unanticipated and abrupt termination of the agreement. Moreover, in 2013 SCP (Supreme Court of Pakistan) declared the CHEJVA agreement as void, and called it contrary to public policy. SCP further stated that TCC has no legal rights to start excavation in Reko Diq.

In 2017, the ICSID passed a verdict in favor of TCC and approved a legitimate expectation of receiving the mining lease, and found no wrongdoing in CHEJVA. Furthermore, ICSID found that Pakistan had breached Fair and

Equitable Treatment (FET) standard, and committed an unlawful expropriation under the Australia-Pakistan Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT). It is vital to understand that many developing nations are vulnerable to BIT. Big corporates and multinational businesses enjoy all the support and resources, and use international settlement institutions like ICSID to take advantage and unusual benefits. These corporate giants challenge the sovereignty of institutionally weak nations. This monopolistic economic behavior needs to be corrected if we are seriously interested in the growth of the entire globe; otherwise MDGs or SDGs are no more than Machiavellian promises. Getting back to the case, ICSID also overruled dozen allegations of corruption made by the government of Pakistan against TCC. One of a popular case was against former Chief Minister Balochistan; Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani, having been offered a bribe of \$1 million by TCC. In December 2020 Pakistan initiated an active negotiating with TCC to reach an out-of-court settlement of the dispute. PM Imran Khan constituted a committee to steer the negotiations that is comprised of: (i) Minister for Finance; (ii) Minister for Law & Justice; (iii) Attorney-General for Pakistan; (iv) Chief Minister of Balochistan; (v) Director General Military Intelligence; and (vi) Any person the Committee wishes to co-opt. As a result of these negotiations in May 2021, BVI unfreeze the PIA assets in RekoDiq award case. There is high possibility of good news soon that the RekoDiq project is going to resume with revised conditions in the best interest of Balochistan and its people. If this happens the present Govt. will have a complete right to claim that they have saved \$6 billion damages to be paid from national treasury and reinstated the image of a country among international investors. But what about the people who dragged Pakistan into poorly negotiated agreement. This is vital to the progress of Pakistan that inadequate financial deals particularly with international investors have to be vet thoroughly, because there is no sense in crying over spilt milk.

—The writer is an academician, columnist and broadcast journalist. He can be reached at mali.hamza@yahoo.com

Kazakhstan, like Ukraine, spotlights swapping of rule of law

James M. Dorsey

China's brutal crackdown on religious and ethnic expressions of Uighur identity has sparked public dissent in Kazakhstan and Turkey and forced the two governments to perform a delicate balancing act to not always successfully avoid the People's Republic's wrath

WHEN a Russian-led military force intervened earlier this month, it did more than help Kazakh President Qasym-Johart Toqayev restore and strengthen his grip on power following days of protest and violent clashes with security forces. The intervention brought to the fore a brewing competition for spheres of influence in Eurasia between perceived Russian and Turkish worlds whose boundaries are defined by civilization and /or language rather than a nation state's internationally recognized borders. It is a competition that also impacts China, whose troubled Turkic north-western province of Xinjiang borders Kazakhstan. Although not incorporated in the Turkey-led Organisation of Turkic States (OTS), the group, which also includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan, recently signalled its affinity to China's Turkic Muslims.

China's brutal crackdown on religious and ethnic expressions of Uighur identity has sparked public dissent in Kazakhstan and Turkey and forced the two governments to perform a delicate balancing act to not always successfully avoid the People's Republic's wrath. Countering perceptions that the Russian-led intervention in Kazakhstan boosted Moscow's security primacy in Central Asia and weakened Turkish aspirations, widely respected Russia scholar Dmitri Trenin suggested that salvaging Mr. Toqayev was the best of President Vladimir Putin's bad options. "In order to preserve stable relations with an important ally, partner, and neighbour, official Russia has often turned a blind eye to the rise of ethnic Kazakh nationalism and reports of de facto discrimination against ethnic Russians in the country. Toqayev is by no means Moscow's client, yet allowing him...to be toppled would, in Moscow's thinking, allow the forces of ultra-nationalism to come to the fore," Mr. Trenin said. Kazakhstan and other Central Asian nations, seeking to balance their relationships with Moscow and Beijing in the wake of the United States' abandonment of the region with the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, see Ankara as a potential hedge.

Led by authoritarians who fear anti-government protests at home, Russia and Turkey had a common interest in beating back a popular revolt in Kazakhstan. As a result, standing aside as Russia stepped in may have best served Turkey's interests. Despite its close military ties with Ka-

zakhstan, a Turkish intervention may have upset the delicate management of the Turkey-Russian relationship. The relationship is fraught with disputes in which the two countries are often on opposite sides of the divide.

While Turkish support for Mr. Toqayev may not have gone down well with Kazakh protesters, it is not likely to have put much of a dent in Turkish soft power in Central Asia that is built on linguistic and ethnic affinity, the popularity of Turkish music and cinematic productions, and investment in glitzy shopping malls. Turkey also benefits from being a player that has successfully challenged Russia in regional conflicts such as the Caucasus, where it backed Azerbaijan in its 2020 war with Armenia, and further afar in Libya and Syria.

In a rivalry for dominance of the Black Sea, Turkey has also backed Ukraine and forged close defense ties with the embattled country. Home to a large Crimean Tatar Diaspora, Turkey has vocally supported the Turkic community on the Ukrainian peninsula that Russia annexed in 2014.

Finally, Turkey has at times, albeit intermittently, taken China to task for its brutal crackdown on ethnic and religious expression of Turkic Muslim identity in Xinjiang. China sees the projection of a Uyghur ethnic, cultural, and religious identity as a mortal threat.

Turkish assertiveness seemingly emboldened Central Asian members of the Organisation of Turkic States, the formal Turkic equivalent of Mr. Putin's notion of a Russian World that defines its frontiers defined by the geography of Russian speakers and adherents to Russian culture rather than international law. Central Asian members of the organisation, a brainchild of the now embattled former president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, joined Turkey at its recent summit in November in Istanbul in sending subtle and less subtle signals to both Russia and China as well as Iran, countries with Turkic-speaking minorities.

Raising the stakes further, 19 Uighur exiles have filed a criminal complaint with a Turkish prosecutor against Chinese officials, accusing them of committing genocide, torture, rape, and crimes against humanity. Turkey is home to some 50,000 Uighurs, the largest community outside of China. Long a supporter of Uighur religious and cultural aspirations, Turkey has been careful not to allow the groups' plight to rupture its relations with Beijing. Responding in October to assertions by China's deputy ambassador to the United Nations, Geng Shuang, that Turkey had illegally invaded north-eastern Syria and was depriving Kurds of water, Turkish representative Feridun Siniroglu thundered that his country would not be lectured by "those who violate international human rights law and international humanitarian law."

It was a war of words in which the kettle was calling the pot black. It's not human rights, violated with abandon by all the region's players, that are at stake. What is at stake is an international order based on legally defined nation-states that civilisational leaders like Messrs. Putin and Erdogan seek to rejigger with the law of the jungle that allows them to shift state boundaries at will in geopolitical jockeying.

—Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar and a Senior Fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute.

Palestinians deserve more than this pointless 'summit'

Yossi Mekelberg



It is the choreography of these meetings as much as what is discussed that is intriguing, and raises the question whether there is more to these meetings than meets the eye

WHEN it comes to the Palestinian issue there seems to be a division of labor in Israel between the "bad cop," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, and the "good(ish) cop," Defense Minister Benny Gantz. The first doesn't miss an opportunity to insist that as long as he is at the helm there

won't be any peace process, and he publicly snubs Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas altogether. Gantz, on the other hand, has already met Abbas twice, including a rare meeting in Israel, when the latter came to see him at his home after more than a decade without visiting Israel. It is the choreography of these meetings as much as what is discussed that is intriguing, and raises the question whether there is more to these meetings than meets the eye.

Realistically, the path to peace based on a two-state solution is strewn with insurmountable hurdles, and the talks between Abbas and Gantz were more about taking measures aimed at preventing the situation between the two sides from exploding rather than discussing any long-term solution. For the Palestinian leadership, there is very little room for maneuver. On the one hand it needs to prevent a major confrontation with Israel that would surely lead to many casualties and much destruction, and possibly the collapse of the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, the survival of its leadership is dependent on its relations with the Israeli authorities, and for the latter to ease the economic pressures and the other hardships that the Palestinian population suffers daily would be a lifeline, even if a short-term one. For Abbas, the dilemma is that he has overstayed his welcome in power, this month completing 17 years of a four-year term. He

thus lacks popular legitimacy, and should an uprising erupt in the West Bank it would be directed as much against him, his authority and his government, as against the Israeli occupation.

Israel is by far the more powerful party in this forced partnership, but its political fragility doesn't allow it to form a coherent and long-term strategy toward its Palestinian neighbors in the West Bank and Gaza. Its behavior may look at first glance like part of a grand plan to continue the occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza until the Palestinians give up on their aspirations for self-determination. Meetings between high-level politicians naturally create high expectations, and when they don't even come close to these expectations, especially in a situation that is extremely volatile to begin with, it gives traction to those who support a return to alternative means, including armed struggle. The meeting between Gantz and Abbas only highlighted the schism between the two sides in their understanding of the severity and urgency of the situation. And without a coordinated Israeli-Palestinian plan to improve conditions in the West Bank and Gaza, one that has the active support of the international community and a clear horizon for a just solution that will lead to peace, the situation is most likely to lead only to violent confrontation.

—Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Murray hopes for no repeat of Djokovic saga 'mess'

MELBOURNE: Andy Murray hopes the "mess" which has resulted in tennis world number one Novak Djokovic being told he is to be deported from Australia ahead of the Australian Open will not be repeated. Former world number one Murray told the BBC in Melbourne "the situation has not been good all round for anyone" and regretted Djokovic had been held in a detention facility. Murray was speaking after Djokovic lost his last-gasp bid to avoid deportation from Australia on Sunday. It ended a sensational legal battle over his coronavirus vaccination status and dashed his dream for the moment of an unprecedented 21st Grand Slam singles crown. An "extremely disappointed" Djokovic said he would comply with a unanimous Federal Court ruling that upheld the government's right to rip up his visa over fears he is stoking anti-vaccine sentiment. "There are obviously going to be a lot of questions about what has happened here and the situation has been in," said Murray. "Novak is someone I have known since we were 12 years old, he is someone who I respect and have competed against. — APP

TTP men in hot waters...

FROM PAGE 01
A journalist from across the border in Afghanistan informed me that Emirate Islami Afghanistan (Taliban regime) has constituted a commission for settling all issues according to requests/suggestions of Pakistan. The commission's tasks are included to convince 1) Pakistani militants for surrender through reconciliation, 2) to convince them for disassociating from violent and terror acts in Pakistan and 3) to live with peace in any part of Afghanistan. However, through such steps, the journalist said that Taliban are also interested in collection of data of all those Pakistani militants, sheltering or scattered throughout Afghanistan. Besides others, the Emirate Islami Afghanistan Commission for negotiation with Pakistani militants is dominated by Haqqani network. And the Haqqani network is already having close links and influence in Pakistan. On such grounds, some of the hardcore Taliban militants are reluctant to come on table for talks, and in return, such type of Pakistani militants is faced with issues of survival. The Afghan journalist confirmed that there are serious rifts within the banned TTP on the issues of their links with Emirate Islami Afghanistan and also on the questions pertaining to peace talks and surrender to Pakistani authorities. Earlier, peace talks between banned TTP and Pakistan through Afghan interior minister Siraj Ud Din Haqqani (Chief of Haqqani network) concluded without any result when Taliban announced ending of month-long ceasefire on December 9th last. Banned TTP was interested in release of its five top commanders included ex-spokesman Muslim Khan and Malik Mahmud from Swat and Abdul Wali from Bajaur. However, the authorities became helpless in honouring banned TTP demands when activists from civil society organizations came out on roads. During the negotiation process, Pakistan had to free around 102 Taliban militants from different internment centers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Earlier a number of top Pakistani militants like Mullah Fazal Ullah, Mangal Bagh and several others were killed across the border in Afghanistan. Prior to empowering the Taliban, Pakistani militants like Fazal Ullah and Mangal Bagh were targeted through US drones but now a large number of banned TTP and other groups militants have been found mysteriously dead in scattered areas of Nangarhar and Kunar provinces of Afghanistan adjacent to Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Muhammad Khurshid Barlas paid a visit to Pakistan Sweet Home and announced to organize events for kids at world level. — DNA

Mohi, Afzal win BB Tennis inter-media doubles category

Islamabad Tennis Complex chief executive Fazal Subhan Ahmed was the chief guest on the concluding ceremony and distributed shields

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Seasoned sports journalists Mohi Shah and Afzal Javed won Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Tennis Inter-Media doubles title at the Islamabad Tennis Complex. Due to the journalists' commitments, Media category of the event was postponed during the BB Tennis held last month. The media category tennis was held in coordination with the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA-registered) with the support of Sindh Government. The final turned out to be a real thrilling one. Following 6-6 all in the final set, the match was decided on tie break with Mohi Shah/Afzal Javed pair winning it 7-4



against Mohsin Ijaz and Arif Khan (a regular tennis player). Earlier, Mohsin and Arif pair were leading 5-3 and then 6-5. On both occasions Mohi Shah and Afzal Javed staged comeback to take the final set into a tie break. In semi-final round, Mohsin Ijaz and Arif Khan defeated Sohail Raja and Hafiz Obaid 6-1 while Afzal Javed and Abdul Mohi Shah defeated Nasir Naqvi and Faheem Anwar Khan 6-2. Islamabad Tennis Complex chief executive Fazal Subhan Ahmed was the chief guest on the concluding ceremony and distributed shields to winners and runners up as well as appreciating the Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA) positive role for the promotion of tennis the region.

Manchester City sink Chelsea to close in on title

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Manchester City opened up a 13-point lead at the top of the Premier League as Kevin De Bruyne's sublime strike beat Chelsea 1-0, while Philippe Coutinho enjoyed a dream Aston Villa debut to rescue a 2-2 draw against Manchester United on Saturday. Everton boss Rafael Benitez is reportedly on the verge of being sacked after a 2-1 defeat at Norwich that lifted the Canaries to within a point of safety as Newcastle and Watford played out a 1-1 draw.



Meanwhile, Premier League bosses have been criticised by Tottenham for postponing their derby clash with Arsenal on Sunday despite the Gunners missing just one player due to coronavirus. De Bruyne broke Chelsea's resistance 20 minutes from time at the Etihad Stadium when the Belgium midfielder escaped N'Golo Kante and bent a perfectly-placed shot into the far corner of Kepa Arrizabalaga's goal from 20 yards. City's 12th successive league win effectively ended the Blues' title aspirations. Third-placed Liverpool can close the gap at the top to eight points with their two games in hand, but it would be a collapse by the champions to deny them a fourth title in five seasons. "In January no-one is champion," said City boss Guardiola. "All the players gave everything and it was an important victory because they are a big contender." Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel sent his side out to contain City. But after the game, the German was critical of Romelu Lukaku, who gave the latest in a long list of subdued displays since his club record transfer from Inter Milan last year. "Sometimes he has to do the service. He had many ball losses and a huge chance. Of course we want to serve him but he's part of the team." Tuchel said. "The performance up front in the first half, we can do much, much better." At Villa Park, the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo due to injury brought the best out of Bruno Fernandes. The Portuguese had been United's talisman in the 18 months prior to Ronaldo's return to Old Trafford, but had scored just once since September.

Salah strike gives Egypt win

YAOUNDE: Mohamed Salah got back among the goals for Egypt on Saturday as his second-half strike handed the record seven-time African champions a crucial 1-0 win over Guinea-Bissau in Garoua that was not without controversy. Salah's first-time finish at the back post in the 69th minute got his and his team's campaign in Cameroon up and running after they had lost 1-0 to Nigeria in their opening Group D game. However, Guinea-Bissau were left fuming after a stunning 82nd-minute strike by Mama Balde was ruled out following a VAR review. Egypt, who also hit the woodwork three times, will feel they deserved the victory on the balance of play and Carlos Queiroz's team now need only draw in their last group game against neighbours Sudan in Yaounde on Wednesday to guarantee safe passage to the last 16. "It was a really tough game and we were a little bit lucky with the foul," Salah admitted to broadcasters at the end of the match. — Agencies



HBL PSL-2022 in Lahore, Karachi from Jan 27: PCB

The HBL PSL has evolved and come a long way since its inception in 2016 and has now become a global brand that not only unites the nation but also attracts some of the biggest and most respected commercial entities

PESHAWAR: The HBL Pakistan Super League 2022 will be held in Karachi and Lahore from January 27 to February 27 with some of the world's best shortest format players in action in the 34-match competition. The HBL PSL has evolved and come a long way since its inception in 2016 and has now become a global brand that not only unites the nation but also attracts some of the biggest and most respected commercial entities. The recent landmark commercial agreements signed for the 2022 and 2023 events is a case in point and speaks volumes of this event's value and significance. The first edition that was competed by five sides was played from start to finish in the United Arab Emirates, while the final of the 2017 tournament was staged at the Gaddafi Stadium. In 2018, Multan Sultans joined as the sixth side and the two Eliminator were played in Lahore while the final was staged in Karachi. Eight matches of the 2019 edition took place in Karachi, whereas all 34 matches of the 2020 tournament were held across four Pakistan venues. In 2021, 14 matches were played in Karachi and the remaining 20 were staged in Abu Dhabi in June after the event had to be suspended in March following Covid-19 outbreak within the teams. The 2022 event is planned in Ka-

rachi and Lahore, and promises to be as exciting as the last six editions. Below is a quick history of the previous HBL PSL events that has not only produced high-quality cricket but has given world cricket some of the most entertaining and exciting players of this era. **HBL PSL 2016:** Islamabad United made history when they beat Quetta Gladiators in the final of the inaugural edition of the HBL PSL to become the first-ever side to lift the silverware. Islamabad cruised past the 175-run target for the loss of four wickets with eight balls spare at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. West Indian Dwayne Smith was named the player-of-the-match for his scintillating 73 (51 balls, 7 fours, 4 sixes). Karachi Kings' all-rounder Ravi Bopara was named the player-of-the-tournament for his all-round contributions (329 runs at 54.83, 11 wickets at 13.81). The tournament was played on a double-league basis. Peshawar Zalmi topped the standings at the end of the round-robin stage but lost out on a place in the final after losing both their play-offs to Quetta and Islamabad, respectively. **HBL PSL 2017:** Zalmi outclassed Gladiators in a one-sided final at the Gaddafi Stadium to lift the glittering HBL PSL 2017 trophy. Batting first in the final, Zalmi posted 148 for six in their 20 overs. Gladiators were dismissed

for 90 runs in reply to lose their second consecutive final. Sammy was named the player-of-the-match for his match turning unbeaten 28 off 11 balls (three sixes, one four) and astute leadership. Kamran Akmal with 353 runs in 11 games including a century in the play-off against Kings and 12 dismissals behind the stumps was declared the player-of-the-tournament. He also bagged best batsman and best wicketkeeper of the tournament awards. **HBL PSL 2018:** United reclaimed the title when they defeated Zalmi by three wickets in an exciting final at the National Stadium. Batting first, Zalmi posted 148 for nine with United chasing down the target with 19 balls to spare. Luke Ronchi capped off his player-of-the-match performances with a brilliant 52 off 26 balls (four fours, five sixes).

HBL PSL 2019: It was a case of third time lucky for the Gladiators as they finally lifted the trophy at the National Stadium after defeating Zalmi by eight wickets. Batting first, Zalmi posted 138 for eight as speedster Mohammad Haseeb and the richly experienced T20 globe-trotter Dwayne Bravo shared five wickets between them. Ahmed Shehzad and Rilee Rossouw saw off the chase with an unbroken 73-run third-wicket partnership to give Gladiators a much awaited HBL PSL title. Ahmed scored 58 off 51 balls while Rossouw made 39 off 32 balls. Gladiators' Australian import Shane Watson dazzled with the bat with a 430-run tally in 12 innings at 43.00 and a strike-rate of 143.81. Kamran was once again the mainstay for Zalmi producing 357 runs in 13 innings, while United's Cameron Delport stood third with 355 runs in 12 innings. Hasan Ali had a magnificent season for Zalmi; the right-arm-pace took 25 wickets in 13 games. Faheem took 21 in 12 games for the United while Wahab was once again among the top three, finishing the tournament with a 17-wicket tally in 13 matches. **HBL PSL 2020:** Babar Azam had an event to remember when he hit a 49-ball 63 to guide Karachi Kings to their maiden title when they defeated Lahore Qalandars by five wickets at the National Stadium. In pursuit

of a 135-run target, Kings reached victory with eight balls and five wickets to spare. Babar was later judged player of the final, best batsman of the tournament and player-of-the-tournament. Qalandars' Shaheen Shah Afridi won the Best bowler of the HBL PSL 2020 award with 17 scalps – the most in the edition – and Ben Dunk won the Best wicketkeeper of the HBL PSL 2020 award for accounting for nine batsmen behind the stumps. Peshawar Zalmi's Haider Ali was declared as the Emerging Player of the HBL PSL 2020 as he scored an impressive 239 runs at a strike rate of over 157. **HBL PSL 2021:** Multan Sultans became the fifth team to win the HBL PSL when they defeated Peshawar Zalmi at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi by 47 runs. Batting first, Sultans scored a record 206 for four that revolved around Sohaib Maqsood's 65 not out and Rilee Rossouw's 50. In turn, Zalmi finished at 159 for nine with Imran Tahir collecting three for 33 and Blessing Muzarabani and Imran Khan picking up two wickets apiece conceding 26 and 27 runs, respectively. Sohaib Maqsood not only earned a Pakistan call-up for the England and West Indies tours for his 428 runs, he also walked away with the player of the final, best batsman of HBL PSL 2021 and player of HBL PSL awards.

Probe holds authorities responsible

FROM PAGE 01
tourist vehicles ended up being stranded in Murree due to heavy snowfall. It should be recalled that following the tragic incident, the Punjab government had declared Murree as a calamity-hit area after heavy snowfall wreaked havoc on the city. According to the local administration of Murree, rain and blizzards were forecast around Murree, with thunderstorms at a speed of 50-90 kmph along with heavy snowfall. Furthermore, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had also reprimanded on Thursday the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and said it was responsible for the Murree tragedy.

Nawaz responsible...

FROM PAGE 01
Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has to repay \$ 55 billion loan in its five years tenure due to bad economic policies of the past regimes. So far, the PTI government had repaid \$32 billion loan during past three years, he added and said that owing to the bad governance and plunder of the past rulers, the country was facing inflation today, how can we ignore them. "Those who fled after looting and plundering the national exchequer are now giving lectures on economy today," Chaudhry Fawad stated. He said that the PPP had taken the right decision by stopping new gas schemes and at the end of its tenure in 2013, there was no revolving loan on gas. He said when Shahid Khaqan Abbasi left in 2018, he left a circular debt of Rs 197 billion on gas as the schemes he started require Rs 90 billion annually for completion. He said that some people had the perception that Imran Khan has lost popularity due to inflation but they were wrong as he has vote bank everywhere from Karachi to Khyber, Lahore to Peshawar, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. He said that elections would be held on 1100 national and provincial assemblies constituencies and there was no other party besides PTI that could field its candidates on so many seats.

Shahbaz...

FROM PAGE 01
and leeway you had to be provided, you have been." Further addressing the Sharifs, he said that it is "not as if you are out on a shopping trip, that you are seeking a deal". Gill said that the Sharif family will never be given a deal. "You have Imran Khan standing in your way," he said. "He did not let go of them when he was in the Opposition, how will he let go of them now?" he added. Speaking of the particulars of the so-called "deal", Gill claimed that it is sought for Nawaz, "his daughter", Shahbaz, and "his son". He went on to claim that the request is for the latter three individuals to be allowed to leave the country, whereas "Shahid Khaqan Abbasi will stay". "We won't even give you a boiled potato, and here you are asking for a chicken burger deal," he remarked, adding: "The Sharif family is asking for a burger deal which also includes a toy."

Three including two children...

FROM PAGE 01
of eastern Laghman province of Afghanistan. Reports pouring in Peshawar from Afghanistan reveal that hundreds of people assembled in front of passport office at Mehtarlam in connection with getting passports. Almost of people also included women along with children making their best to get passports. In the mean time gun totting Taliban soldiers resorted first beating away the people with sticks, iron bars and rubber wires. Later they reportedly opened firing with Ak 47 guns. The Taliban rulers after coming into power declared null and void all passports issued during previous regime, therefore, almost passport offices in Kabul and other provincial headquarters are jam-packed right from dawn and dust.

Briefs

Thousands protest in Vienna

FOREIGN DESK

VIENNA: Thousands of people took to the streets of Austria's capital on Saturday to protest against government plans to introduce mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for all next month. "The government must go!" crowds chanted at one rally in central Vienna in what has become a routine Saturday event. Parliament is scheduled to vote next week on the issue, which has polarised the country as coronavirus cases surge.

In November, the government announced a fourth national lockdown and said it would make vaccinations compulsory for all Austrians, the first European Union country to do so. A poll for Prof magazine found 51% of those surveyed oppose making jabs mandatory from February, of whom 34% were against compulsory vaccination in general and 17% wanted to wait. The survey found 45% of Austrians favoured compulsory vaccination starting in February.

The poll showed Chancellor Karl Nehammer's conservatives and the opposition Social Democrats in a dead heat for first place at 25%, followed by the right-wing Freedom Party, a strident critic of government policy, at 20%. The Greens, junior partner in the coalition, were even with the liberal Neos on 11%, while the vaccine-sceptical MFG party scored 6%. Health authorities have reported more than 1.4 million infections and nearly 14,000 deaths from COVID-19 since the pandemic broke out in early 2020.

Turkey's inflation to be single-digit by mid-2023

ISTANBUL: Turkey's annual inflation rate will be in single digit when the country will hold its presidential and parliamentary election in mid-2023, Turkish Treasury and Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati said on Saturday. "With the fiscal policies and the steps we will take, we will enter the election time next year... with single-digit inflation," the minister was quoted as saying by the state-run Anadolu agency.

Speaking to heads of non-governmental organizations in Istanbul, Nebati described the inflation, which hit 36.08 percent year-on-year in December 2021 as a "hump," noting that the figure would improve after the first quarter of this year. Turkey has also been struggling against the sharp depreciation of the national currency in foreign exchange markets. The lira's losses against the U.S. dollar reached 44 percent last year. According to Nebati, the government's new economic scheme adopted on Dec. 20, 2021 to rescue the currency has been working well, and the conversion of forex holdings to the Turkish lira will accelerate even further in the coming weeks.

He noted that more than 131 billion liras (9.69 billion dollars) had been deposited in accounts as of Friday under the new scheme. One dollar was traded at 13.53 liras on Saturday in the afternoon. - APP

Kazakh Dy energy minister detained

NURSULTAN: Former Deputy Energy Minister of Kazakhstan Jumabai Karagaev has been detained. "The investigative team of the territorial department of the Financial Monitoring Agency for the Mangystau region has detained [former] deputy energy minister Jumabai Karagaev, heads of online trading platforms and persons involved in the unjustified increase in prices for liquefied petroleum gas in the Mangystau region," reads the message.

Kazakh Deputy Energy Minister Jumabai Karagaev has been dismissed. Report informs referring to Kazakh media. 50-year-old Karagaev headed a number of private companies in the Atyrau and Mangystau regions, worked in the structure of the Atyrau region mayor's office. He was appointed deputy minister of energy in December 2019. - Agencies

Expert warns genocide could happen in India against Muslims

Dr Stanton said the two ways Modi went about this was by revoking the special autonomous status of Indian-occupied Kashmir in 2019 and passing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act the same year

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The founder of Genocide Watch, Dr Gregory Stanton, who had predicted a genocide in Rwanda years before it took place in 1994 has warned of an impending genocide of Muslims in India, comparing the situation of the country under the Narendra Modi government to events in Myanmar and Rwanda. Formed in 1999, Genocide Watch is a global organisation dedicated to the prevention of genocide. Dr Stanton is a former research professor in genocide studies and prevention at the George Mason University in Fairfax County, Virginia, United States.

Dr Stanton made these remarks during a congressional briefing titled 'Call For Genocide of Indian Muslims', organised by the Indian American Muslim Council. He was part of a five-member panel invited to speak at the session. In his video address, Dr Stanton began with highlighting that Gen-

ocide Watch had been warning of a genocide in India since 2002, "when riots and massacres in Gujarat occurred that killed over a thousand Muslims".

"At that time, the chief minister of Gujarat was Narendra Modi, and he did nothing. In fact, there is a lot of evidence that he actually encouraged those massacres," he said, adding that Modi, now the prime minister of India, had used "anti-Muslim, Islamophobic rhetoric" to build his political base. Dr Stanton said the two ways Modi went about this was by revoking the special autonomous status of Indian-occupied Kashmir in 2019 and passing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act the same year. He explained that the revocation of the occupied Kashmir's special autonomy was "largely aimed at restoring Hindu domination" in the valley, which had Muslim majority. Moreover, he added, the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act was especially "aimed at Muslims".

"It gave [a] specific favourable



status to refugees who had come from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, who were of certain religious groups. But the one group that was excluded was Muslims," he said. "This act was specifically ... aimed at the Muslims who had fled Bangladesh during the Bangladesh genocide and civil war in 1971 and had settled in Assam," he continued. Dr Stanton said there were around three million such people,

mostly Muslims, who had fled to India and "has settled down" as "regular citizens of India". But the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, he said, required people to prove through documentation that they had been the citizens of India before 1971 as part of a census that was to be overseen by the Indian supreme court. "Now a lot of people don't have that kind of documentation, of course," he pointed out, adding that "the idea

[behind the Act] is to essentially declare them (people who had fled to India from Bangladesh in 1971) foreigners, and therefore, to allow their deportation." He said this was "exactly what the Myanmar government did to the Rohingya Muslims" in 2017. The Myanmar government, he said, first declared Rohingya non-citizens through a legislation and then expelled them through violence and genocide.

In this regard, he also highlighted that the UN Genocide Convention - an international treaty that criminalises genocide - not just "covers genocides in whole. It also covers genocides in part". "It is specifically aimed at the destruction, in whole or in part, of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, and that is exactly what the Myanmar government did in Myanmar against Rohingya," he said. "What we are now facing is a very similar kind of a plot, if you will," he added, referring to India. Dr Stanton said the Indian government's aim was to extend

the census under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act across the country and the "victims will be 200 million Muslims in India". He further said that the "idea of India as a Hindu nation, which is the Hindutva movement, is contrary to the history of India and the Indian constitution".

The Indian constitution, he said, was devised "to make India a secular country", and that the secularity it promised was secured in the first years of India's existence under the Congress party.

"What we have now though, an actual member of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) - this extremist, Hindutva-oriented group - Mr Modi as [the] prime minister of India. So what we have here is an extremist who has taken over the government," he continued. Dr Stanton then went on to explain that genocide was not an event but a process, and that there were early "signs and processes" of genocide in the Indian state of Assam and occupied Kashmir.

Monks flee temples in eastern Myanmar amid intense fighting

YANGON: Hundreds of Buddhist monks fled two major towns in Myanmar, a witness said Sunday, among thousands recently displaced by intense fighting between the military and rebel groups opposed to last year's coup. A military power-grab 11 months ago expelled civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi's government with mass protests and subsequent crackdowns killing more than 1,400 - as dozens of rebel groups sprang up to oppose the regime.

Loikaw town - in eastern Myanmar's Kayah state - saw intense fighting last week and the United Nations estimates that almost 90,000 people have fled, with local NGO's placing that figure far higher at 170,000. "More than half the population of Loikaw township has been internally displaced," the UN said, with even the holy men of the town scattering as the fighting raged. "It was impossible for us to stay there," said one Buddhist monk, adding around 30 monasteries were fleeing - an unusual sight in a nation where they are revered and temples are considered safe havens. - APP



KABUL: Sewa Lamsal Joint Secretary of MoFA Nepal hands over humanitarian assistance from Nepal to Ramiz Alakbarov Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Humanitarian & Development Coordinator for Afghanistan at the Kabul International Airport. - DNA

Azerbaijan welcomes Turkish-Armenian contacts: Dy FM

DNA

BAKU: We welcome and support the beginning of Turkish-Armenian contacts, Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov said. He noted that there is no alternative to the implementation of the joint statements adopted as a result of the Second Karabakh War and the agreements reflected in these statements. "The region must develop towards peace and stability. The only way that serves these purposes is the normalization of relations between the countries of the region, the rejection of enmity, the strengthening of trust between countries, the development of economic ties, the opening

Normalization talks remain fragile: Experts

ANKARA: After an hour-and-a-half-long meeting Friday, Turkish and Armenian foreign ministries published the same statement hailing the talks and agreeing to "continue negotiations without preconditions." As the communique noted the meeting was conducted in a positive and constructive atmosphere, experts told Anadolu Agency that talks remain "fragile."

Former Ambassador to the US Serdar Kilic was named Turkish special envoy on Dec. 15, 2021 to discuss steps toward normalization with neighboring Armenia. Three days later, Armenia appointed its special representative, National Assembly Deputy Speaker Ruben Rubinyan. Before the meeting, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that at the gathering, the envoys would exchange views on a roadmap for moving forward, including confidence-building measures. In that context, the two officials conducted the first meeting in "a positive and constructive atmosphere" as they had "exchanged their preliminary views regarding the normalization process through dialogue between Turkey and Armenia." - DNA

of communications and the formation of an environment for cooperation. Therefore, we welcome and support the start of Turkish-Armenian contacts initiated by Turkey. We believe that the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations also determines the normalization of Azerbaijani-Armenian relations," he said. He stressed that first of all it meets the interests of the Armenian people, and then other countries and peoples of the region. "Therefore, these processes must be continued, and, of course, we support them. To build trust, communications between countries should be opened, ties restored and normalized. It is definitely necessary to reject hostile moods, hostile ideology.

Israel to supply gas to Lebanon

BEIRUT: Israel has reportedly reached an agreement with the United States to supply Lebanon with gas, as internet services across Beirut were disrupted because of diesel shortages. An agreement was reached between Washington and Tel Aviv to provide Lebanon with Israeli gas from the offshore Leviathan field through Jordan, according to Israeli media channel, Israeli Channel 12, on Sunday.

From Jordan, gas will be transferred to Syria and onto Lebanon. The deal was brokered by Amos Hochstein, the US special envoy and coordinator for international energy affairs, and approved by Russian President Vladimir Putin, the channel said. There was no comment yet from Israeli or Lebanese authorities on the claim. The Israeli channel said that gas line that flows from Syria

to Lebanon still needs. Internet services were disrupted in Lebanon on Sunday because of diesel shortages, according to the state provider, adding another essential service to the list of casualties of the country's snowballing economic crisis. Imad Kreidieh, the head of state internet provider Ogero, tweeted that starting early on Sunday a major station in west Beirut, al Mazraa, would run out of diesel and go offline. The outage affected over 26,000 subscribers, including the country's General Security operation rooms, he told AlJadeed TV. "The situation is unbearable," said Kreidieh. "I will not agree to continue in this post unless I have all the authorities and tools to do my job." By midday Sunday, a resident donated diesel, allowing the station to get back online, he said. Meanwhile, another neighbourhood in east Beirut, Achrafieh, was out of diesel and operated on batteries. Lebanon suffers from a severe shortage of electricity supply due to insufficient fuel needed for power generation, in addition to a sharp rise in the prices of derivatives due to the collapse of the lira, and the lack of foreign exchange needed for imports. - DNA

17pc flat GST rate to spur inflation further

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Friends of Economic and Business Reforms (FEBR) has said that the mini budget will increase the cost of businesses by 17 percent, as the FEBR has shifted many exempted and zero-rated goods to flat general sales tax rate of 17 percent which will spur the inflation further. FEBR President Kashif Anwar said that the FEBR could not succeed in broadening the tax net resulting in squeezing existing tax payers. Pakistan lacks culture of tax compliance due to unfair taxation system. Harmful taxation that hin-

ders business and trade in the country should be eliminated. We firmly believe that broad based reforms in taxation system with the consultation of private sector are need of the hour. Instead of enhancing the tax base, government's total focus is on those who are already in the tax net. First of all, the FEBR should go against those whose information is with them and who are not filing their tax returns. He said that the FEBR has been pointing out to bring those retailers into the tax net whose area of shop is more than 1000 sqft as there is no correlation of area with sales.

Azerbaijan to hold Technofest festival

BAKU: Azerbaijan will hold the next world's largest aviation, space and technology festival, Technofest, on May 26-29, 2022. Trend reported with the reference to Turkish media. The acceptance of applications for "Technological competitions" within the framework of the festival has begun. It should be noted that the deadlines for the application for each competition are different and detailed information can be found on the website www.teknofest.az. The competitions will also be open to international participation. The Technofest event has been held annually since 2018, with the joint organization of the Turkish Technology Team Foundation, which is managed by the Turkish Ministry of Industry and Technology and the technical director of BaykarMakina, in partnership with more than 60 Turkish state institutions, universities and private companies. - APP

Air Malta to halve workforce

VALLETTA: Air Malta, the country's flag carrier, will reduce the number of employees by half as the government plans to make the airline financially viable, Finance Minister Clyde Caruana said here on Friday.

The airline currently has 890 employees, and the plan is to offer around 470 of them jobs in other government sectors with the same conditions and salary. The move, to be completed by this summer, is expected to save the airline around 15 million euros (17.1 million U.S. dollars) per year, Caruana told a press conference. The restructuring plan was unveiled as the government awaits the European Commission's final decision on how much in state aid it can inject into the airline.

The plan also foresees the negotiation of new collective agreements to allow the airline more flexibility and to introduce new and sustainable operational practices. Caruana said the cost-cutting plan will see the airline close its ground and baggage handling operations, which alone employ 300 people. Another 110 administrative staff will also be transferred to other government sectors. Air Malta will cut unprofitable routes and will attempt to operate flights that would not land in Malta. Caruana said these changes were needed to save the airline, which has racked up over 258 million euros in operational losses since 2005. - APP

Business climate of China's SMEs improves in December

BEIJING: Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in China reported better operation conditions last month, according to an industrial group. The China Association of Small and Medium Enterprises said that its monthly index tracking the performance of 3,000 SMEs from eight major sectors gained for the second straight month to 86.4 in December, up from 86.3 in November and 86.1 in October.

The association added that the development of SMEs in December featured recovering market expectations, curbed cost increases, stable employment, and improved investment sentiments. Recent favorable government policies for SMEs, including tax breaks and financial support, helped bolster industrial and supply chains, the association said.

The sub-indexes of industry, construction, transportation and postal services, real estate, and social services rose from a month ago, while those for wholesale and retail and computer software declined. The sub-index of accommodation and catering remained flat. Despite the improvement last month, the association warned that SMEs still face multiple challenges ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to financing difficulties and high logistic costs. - APP

Uzbekistan introduces new 'Mahallabay work system'

80,000 hectares of sown land planned for allocation this year will be provided primarily to families of above category. Due to this, it will be possible to provide a permanent source of income for 500 thousand people

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a videoconference on the priority tasks of organizing a new mahallabay work system and ensuring employment in 2022. As a result of active reforms, development of entrepreneurship and work in the context of mahallas, last year the gross domestic product of our country increased by 7.4 percent. About 100,000 new entrepreneurs have started their activities in the regions. The number of self-employed increased by 700 thousand and reached 1.2 million people.

- We declared 2022 the Year of Ensuring Human Interests and Development of the Mahalla. Therefore, fundamental changes should take place in all mahallas this year, the head of state said. Since the beginning of the year, 9,309 assistant khokims have started work. The activities of the Agency for the Work of Mahallabay and Entrepreneurship Development, which is responsi-

ble for this system, have been established, all organizational issues have been resolved. The meeting discussed further measures that need to be taken to create a mahallabay system of work. In particular, the personal responsibility of the relevant responsible persons for organizing the activities of assistant khokims, reducing poverty and developing entrepreneurship in mahallas is indicated. It was noted that assistants to khokims should conduct studies in their mahallas within the framework of the "iron", "women's" and "youth" notebooks and update the data of the social register. Then work will be organized to train families who want to do their own business, but do not have sufficient conditions for this, to provide them with soft loans, subsidies or land plots for dekhkan farming. - Significant loans and subsidies are

allocated for education and entrepreneurial activity of the population. However, it should be recognized that many local residents do not know about them, the President said. "Therefore, assistants to khokims must work with the population every day, bring the existing conditions to the attention of citizens, remove them from poverty, teaching entrepreneurship and agriculture. For these purposes, 10 trillion soums of soft loans and 2.5 trillion soums of subsidies will be allocated this year (an average of 1.3 billion soums for each mahalla).

It was emphasized that special attention should be paid to providing families with the necessary equipment and working tools for the development of entrepreneurship and agriculture in mahallas. The 80,000 hectares of sown land planned for allocation this year will be provided

primarily to families of the above category. Due to this, it will be possible to provide a permanent source of income for 500 thousand people. Responsible persons were instructed to conduct a critical discussion of the work on the allocation of sown lands, to attract leading entrepreneurs to engage in poultry, sheep, goat, rabbit, fish and bee breeding, to provide mahallas with incubators with the participation of entrepreneurs, to create a system of guaranteed purchase of harvested agricultural products. - Everyone should understand for themselves: the khokim's assistants are representatives of the President in the mahalla. Their main task is to develop entrepreneurship, create jobs, reduce poverty and increase family incomes in their mahallas. For this, it is necessary that the khokim's assistants be free from any bureaucracy, no khokim or leader should call them to meetings, "load" them with various reports. It is only necessary to create conditions for them, said Shavkat Mirziyoyev.



Briefs

Omicron not lethal like Delta: Experts

ISLAMABAD: Eligible citizens should take the Covid-19 booster dose to increase their immunity level as Omicron coronavirus variant is not lethal than previous Delta strain but it remains a "dangerous virus", particularly for those who are unvaccinated yet, health experts warned on Sunday. Talking to a private news channel, Health expert Dr Faisal Mehmood urged the people, both fully vaccinated and yet to be vaccinated, to adhere to the standard operating procedure strictly to curb the spread of Covid-19. He said that spike in infections is being driven by the Omicron variant, which is rapidly replacing Delta in almost all other countries, adding, there is no need for people to panic but there is a definite need for everybody to follow Covid appropriate behaviour. "The vaccine is our best defence against this virus and our phenomenal vaccine campaign would save thousands of lives", he added. Replying a question, he said health authorities were taking strict measure to implement the mandatory vaccination in order to prevent the threat posed by the Omicron variant of coronavirus. He also asked citizens to adopt safety measures to avoid Covid-19 and follow the standard operating procedures issued by the government to maintain social distancing. Another health expert Dr Faisal Masood added that vaccines are protecting everyone and it is important for elderly to get inoculated. Dr said Pakistan's data on vaccination shows that the infection rate of the disease in immunized people is way less than those not vaccinated. Omicron is already dominant in Australia, India, Russia, South Africa and the United Kingdom, he said, adding, In Pakistan the overall cases of coronavirus are increasing and vaccine is only best tool to protect ourselves against Omicron. - APP

Pak reports 4027 Covid cases, 9 deaths

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported 4,027 fresh cases of Covid-19 in the last 24 hours, the NCOC said on Sunday, pushing the countrywide tally of cases to 1,324,147. A total of 51,236 samples were tested, out of which 4,027 turned out to be positive, showing the positivity rate of 7.8 per cent. Nine more patients of Covid-19 succumbed to the viral disease in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 29,012. The number of critical patients rose to 752 from 709 yesterday. The NCOC on Saturday discussed the need for restrictions on movement, non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), amid a surge in COVID cases especially the Omicron variant. A NCOC meeting chaired by Asad Umar, yesterday reviewed the pandemic's trends in the country and discussed the epidemic curve chart data, disease prevalence and proposed NPIs in the wake of rising disease in the country, especially in the urban centers.

Five gamblers booked over cockfighting

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested five gamblers over cockfighting during crackdown and recovered money at stake, while 02 chickens and 05 motorcycles were also seized, police spokesman informed on Sunday. The arrested accused were identified as Mansoor, Omar, Shehzad, Ramzan and Osama. Police have registered separate cases against all the accused and further investigation was in progress. SP Saddar said that gambling was the root cause of other social evils and action against gamblers would continue. - APP

Djokovic loses fight against Australia deportation

The Player's high-powered legal team had painted Australia's effort to deport him as "irrational" and "unreasonable", but at times they faced pointed questions from panel of three justices who will now decide case

WEB DESK

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic lost his final bid to avoid deportation from Australia on Sunday, ending a sensational 11-day battle over his Covid-19 vaccination status and dashing his dream of a record 21st Grand Slam. In a few dry words, the chief justice of Australia's Federal Court, James Allsop, Sunday dispensed with the unvaccinated tennis superstar's attempt to reinstate his cancelled visa. "The orders of the court are that the amended application be dismissed with costs", Allsop said announcing the unanimous decision, on the eve of the first matches at the Australian Open. The 34-year-old defending champion and first seed had been scheduled to play in the evening of the first day. If he had retained the title he would become the first men's tennis player in history to win 21 Grand Slams. Instead, the openly anti-Covid vaccine tennis superstar is now set to be kept in detention pending a quick flight out of Australia. Three Federal Court justices had listened to a half-day of feisty legal back-and-forth



about Djokovic's alleged risk to public order in Australia. Immigration Minister Alex Hawke said Djokovic's stance may inspire anti-vaccine sentiment, leading some people to face the pandemic without vaccination and inspiring anti-vaxer activists to gather in protests and rallies. The player's high-powered legal team had

pointed Australia's effort to deport him as "irrational" and "unreasonable", but at times they faced pointed questions from the panel of three justices who will now decide the case. His lawyer Nick Wood sought to systematically dismantle the government's central argument. Despite the Serbian star being unvaccinated, Wood insisted his client had not courted anti-vaxer support and was not associated with the movement. The government "doesn't know what Mr Djokovic's current views are", Wood insisted. Djokovic has spent much of the last week in immigration detention, with his visa twice being revoked by the government over his refusal to get a Covid-19 vaccine before arrival - a requirement for most visitors. Government lawyer Stephen Lloyd said the fact Djokovic was not vaccinated two years into the pandemic and had repeatedly ignored safety measures - including failing to isolate while Covid-19 positive - was evidence enough of his anti-vaccine views. "He has now become an icon for the anti-vaccination groups," Lloyd said. "Rightly or wrongly he is perceived to endorse an anti-vaccination view and his presence here is seen to contribute to that."

Karachi positivity rate nears 40%

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The coronavirus positivity ratio in Pakistan's biggest city is about to touch 40%, as Karachi reported 2,412 fresh cases overnight. The new infections were detected after 6,124 diagnostic tests were conducted in the last 24 hours. According to health department officials, Karachi's positivity ratio jumped to 39.39% from 35% within the same duration. Meanwhile, federal health officials told media that they expected the situation in Karachi to change in the coming week as the positivity ratio might hit 50%, leading to an increase in hospitalisations. The officials also said that daily cases were expected to shoot up to 6,000. Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah had called a meeting of the provincial government on Saturday to discuss the COVID-19 situation in Karachi, media reported. According to sources, members of the COVID-19 task force, the Sindh Health Department, and coronavirus specialists were to attend the meeting to talk about the ongoing situation in the city.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain distributing Qaumi Sehat Card (National Health Card) among the members of Press club. - DNA

Pak condemns harassment of Kashmiri journalists

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan condemns the increasing harassment, illegal arrests and registration of fake criminal cases against journalists and civil society activists in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The reported attack on Kashmir Press Club yesterday manifestly reflects India's entrenched use of brute force and coercion to forcibly silence those raising voices against its horrendous crimes and egregious human rights violations IIOJK. Equally condemnable is the increasing use of draconian and inhumane laws including Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), Public Safety Act (PSA) and Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) with impunity in IIOJK, which reflects India's colonial mindset. India's state-sponsored terrorism can never weaken the resolve of the Kashmiris for their right to self-determination. Pakistan calls upon the international community, particularly the United Nations and international human rights and humanitarian bodies to hold India accountable for its unabated harassment and illegal arrests of journalists, human rights defenders and other civil society activists in IIOJK.

Anti-Iran policies led to Iran's assertive policy'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In a webinar conducted by Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad on the theme "Militarization of Iranian Politics: A Reality or a Western Construct", experts outlined their analysis by highlighting the anti-Iran policies adopted by the US and regional countries. Dr. Qandil Abbas of School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid e Azam University, said that Iranian policy was the reflection of action-reaction concept. The reason why we saw the increasing role of IRGC inside Iranian political sphere was because of the legacy left behind by Iran-Iraq war. The imposition of war immediately after the Islamic Revolution had led to the rise of IRGC which had eventually translated into its role domestically as well. Dr. Sibtain of Department of International Relations, National University of Modern Languages (NUML) pointed out the role of religion in Iran. He argued that since Iran was a religiously motivated state in which religion played a pivotal role, the role of IRGC was inevitable.

PMD forecast another rain spell across country

ISLAMABAD: A weather system of light to moderate intensity is expected to approach western and upper parts of the country from Tuesday, the Met Office forecast on Sunday. The weather system may persist in upper parts till Thursday, according to the weather report. Rain or snowfall is expected in Quetta, Ziarat, Pishin, Zhob, Qila Abdullah, Kohlu and Barkhan in Balochistan on Tuesday and Wednesday under the influence of this weather system. Rain with snowfalls over the hills

is also expected in Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Chitral, Dir, Kalam, Swat, Malakand, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Charsadda, Bajaur, Kurram, Waziristan, Kohat, Bannu, D.I.Khan, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahaudin, Sargodha, Khushab, Mianwali, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore and Kasur from Tuesday to Thursday, according to the weather report.

Light to moderate snowfall is expected in Murree, Galiyat, Nathiagali, Kaghan, Naran, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Astore, Hunza, Gilgit, Neelum Valley, Bagh and Haveli districts from Tuesday night to Thursday. Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has warned against likely landslides in the vulnerable areas of Dir, Malakand, Hazara, Swat, Kohistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. Prevailing dense foggy conditions are likely to subside after the rainfall. - DNA

Govt finalizes Murree emergency response plan

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration, under a contingency plan, formulated to deal with any emergency during heavy rain and snowfall in Murree and finalized arrangements to control entry of vehicles in Murree. According to Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ali, a special plan was also finalized to ensure quick and timely relief and rescue operations. He said a contingency plan was finalized to deal with any emergency, adding, although, natural calamities are beyond control but the damages could be reduced through disaster management.

The main focus would be on snow removal operations and traffic management. There would be regulated entry during such spells and maximum 8,000 vehicles would be allowed to enter Murree. He informed that all the departments concerned especially the health department, have been directed to extend full cooperation to the rescue personnel in any emergency so that fast and effective response could be provided. The DC who is also Chairman, District Disaster Management Authority, Rawalpindi informed that the entry of vehicles into Murree had been allowed but, maximum 8,000 vehicles per day would be allowed entry from all entry points in normal weather conditions. This limit would not be applicable to the residents of Murree, AJK and official vehicles. The Chief Traffic Officer, (CTO) Rawalpindi would devise a system to ensure that the traffic does not exceed the prescribed limit and would intimate well in time. No entry would be allowed between 5 pm to 5 am except for emergency services, vehicles carrying POL/LPG and food items. XEN Mechanical machinery and the CTO would have effective coordination with Pakistan Meteorological Department to set up, maintain, review and upgrade mechanism for early warnings to regulate traffic. - APP

Cost of Rs. 60 to 62 billion can be incurred on EVMs: Shibli Faraz

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Senator Syed Shibli Faraz said the total cost of Rs. 60 to 62 billion could be incurred on manufacturing of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) for the 'General Elections 2023' in the country, as per rough estimates. "Since the EVMs are not disposable and can be used in all kinds of elections like local government, bar council and other departments; the cost is justified", the minister said in an interview with APP.

Shibli Faraz said those who were spreading false information about the total cost of EVMs were misleading the people. "The media reports about the total cost of EVMs from Rs. 300 billion to Rs.400 billion are totally baseless". The minister said around Rs. 27 billion were spent during the last general elections of 2018 which were conducted manually. The minister said it was very unfortunate that the Ministry of Science and Technology was neglected in the past

due to lacking leadership. "The Ministry of Science and Technology is considered as the second most important department after the Prime Minister's office in the world while the Deputy Prime Minister in some countries holds the portfolio of the Minister for Science and Technology too", he observed. The minister said, "It was the vision of the Prime Minister, Imran Khan that we have to give importance to technology for achieving progress on social and economic fronts". - APP

Chairman NAB for collective efforts to eliminate corruption

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal Chairman NAB urged for collective efforts for eradicating corruption so that we leave for our future generations a better and prosperous Pakistan. "The NAB is determined to the success of NAB's mission of eradication of corruption from Pakistan by utilising all its resources by adopting "Accountability for All" policy. NAB is committed to its firm resolve to fulfill its commitment to the task of making Pakistan a corruption free nation," he said while chairing a meeting to review performance of Awareness and Prevention Division especially the "Role of youth in eradication of corruption" at NAB Headquarters. NAB chairman said corruption is an evil that is defined as the dishonest or unethical method used by a person entrusted with a position or authority, for personal benefits, in other words, corruption is when a person who is re-



sponsible for a task, and misuses that position for their own profit. He said corruption includes bribery and embezzlement and has a greater impact on Pakistani economy as corruption is not only a root cause but badly affects the state of economy, standard of living and social justice. He said the corruption eats up the innocence of people belonging to all walks of life. "If any country wants to achieve sustained socio economic development with healthy foreign invest-

ment, corruption must be eliminated at all cost," he said. The NAB chairman said that the ill effects of the menace of corruption have become one of the greatest challenges that country is confronted with. He said the more developed countries have managed in reducing its size and scope to a minimum level through sustainable measures like building infrastructure but it is quite rampant in developing countries and it is one of the major reasons for corruption in the society. In our own case, he said money laundering, corruption, misuse of authority, assets beyond known sources of income and cheating public at large are the main challenge. In fact, he said the nation was warned against this matter by father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohamad Ali Jinnah in the first ever address in the constituent assembly said that one of the biggest curses is bribery and corruption. "That really is a poison. We must put it down with an iron hands," he said.

JANUARY 2022
Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

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