



# Islamabad POST

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

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### EU parliament elects Roberta Metsola as its new president

Detailed News On Page-08

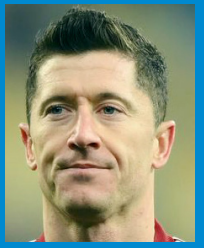
### Germany ready to defend its values: FM

Detailed News On Page-07



### Lewandowski wins best Men's Player award

Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

### Rashid warns of more terror incidents

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid on Tuesday warned of more terrorism-related incidents in the federal capital after a policeman was shot dead and two others were injured at a check-point. The Monday night gun battle, in which two militants were also shot dead, started when two gunmen riding a motorcycle opened fire on a police check-point in the vicinity of the Karachi Company police station.

### Khaqan accuses PTI of fudging

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Tuesday has alleged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of embezzling in 22 bank accounts. Talking to media, the PML-N leader said that PM Imran Khan has committed corruption by establishing two companies abroad. Earlier, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi stated that the government cannot take loan from the SBP and will have to approach other banks. While holding a press conference, he stated the board that the government used to consult with has been demolished. "Governor SBP will be the second most powerful person."

### No room for presidential system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Zardari has said that his party would challenge the recently passed State Bank of Pakistan Bill and other ordinances. He also declared that there is no room for presidential system in Pakistan's law and Constitution. The PPP chairman was talking to media outside the Parliament House on Tuesday. He showed his apprehension that the State Bank would now see the country's defence budget.

## Top Houthi Gen killed in Saudi strike

An Arab Coalition spokesperson said in a statement that strikes were launched "in response to threat and military necessity"

AGENCIES

SANAA: Arab Coalition airstrikes on targets north of Yemen's capital Sanaa killed Houthi leader Major General Abdullah Qassem al-Junaid, according to a report from Al Arabiya sister channel Al Hadath. Strikes were launched after the Iran-backed Houthis claimed an attack on two targets in the United Arab Emirates capital Abu Dhabi on Monday morning, which killed three people and injured six. An Arab Coalition spokesperson said in a statement that strikes were launched "in response to threat and military necessity." A construction site at Abu Dhabi's new airport extension, and an oil facility caught fire on Monday morning. Police said the incidents were possibly caused by drones. UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed later described the incidents as "terrorist attacks and [a] sinister criminal escalation," adding that they "will not go unpunished. The fires were a rare instance of attacks on UAE soil. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry condemned the attacks in a statement released on Monday. "The

Continued on Page 06

### MBS condemns attack on UAE



DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman made a phone call to his Abu Dhabi counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, during which he condemned an attack on the UAE by the Iran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen. The militia attacked the capital Abu Dhabi using missiles and

Continued on Page 06

## Convicted criminals Pak, UK agree for repatriation

Pakistan and the United Kingdom have friendly multi-faceted relationship: Turner



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United Kingdom have agreed to finalize and sign at the earliest agreements for repatriation of convicted citizens and criminals.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. - DNA

## Blinken to visit Ukraine

Vladimir Putin to host Iran's Ebrahim Raisi

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will fly Tuesday to Ukraine in a show of support amid fears of a Russian invasion, the State Department said. Blinken, who will meet Wednesday in Kyiv with President Volodymyr Zelensky, will "reinforce the United States' commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity," State Department spokesman Ned Price said. Blinken will also head Thursday to Berlin for four-way talks with Britain, France and Germany on the Ukraine crisis. The four

Continued on Page 06

## Security forces kill two terrorists

RAWALPINDI: Security forces on Tuesday killed two terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Thal, North Waziristan District, the military's media wing said in a statement. A large number of weapons and ammunition were also recovered, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. "The killed terrorists were involved in terrorist activities against security forces, target killing and kidnapping for ransom," the statement added. On January 14, security forces killed one terrorist and apprehended two others during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Miranshah, North Waziristan. In a separate development, a soldier of the Pakistan Army embraced martyrdom while fighting a terrorist attack on a military post on the night of January 13 and 14, 2022 in Jani Khel, Bannu, the ISPR said. - News Desk

## Green areas restoration

# PM directs to finalize master plans

### Cabinet takes stock of Omicron spread in country

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed to finalize the master plans of all big cities on priority basis to ensure restoration of green areas in the cities and discourage land encroachments. This was announced by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhary Fawad Hussain along with Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar while briefing media about the decisions taken by the Federal Cabinet, which met in the Federal Capital today with Prime Minister Imran Khan in the chair. Chaudhary Fawad Hussain said the cabinet was briefed on the production and availability of Urea in the country. It was informed that the demand of Urea was increased due to increase in the cultivation of Wheat and overall increase in prices of Urea around the globe. It was apprised that Urea prices

Continued on Page 06

## Fawad slams Maryam for rumor mongering

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry said on Tuesday that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz has given many dates for toppling government and even children laugh at her rumor-mongering. Addressing a press conference along with Federal Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar after federal cabinet

Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan-Russia relations on positive trajectory: Qureshi

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi says Pakistan-Russia relations have been on the positive trajectory. In a statement, he said the two countries have held mutual consultations on the Afghan issue. The Minister said Pakistan has been part of Moscow Format and Russian representative attended the Troika Plus meeting in Islamabad. He said Russian Representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov also participated in the recently held extraordinary session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Pakistan's efforts have resulted in drawing the world attention to the situation in Afghanistan; however, further attention is required. He said the humanitarian situation is further deteriorating in Afghanistan with the severity of cold weather. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the two countries are developing understanding on North-South Gas Pipeline project, which is a significant step for bilateral cooperation in economy and energy.

## Qureshi talks to his UAE counterpart

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi received a telephone call from His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, today. Foreign Minister Qureshi reiterated Pakistan's strong condemnation of the heinous terrorist attack on civilian areas by Houthi militia. He offered condolences to the families of the victims and prayed for speedy recovery of the injured. Foreign Minister His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan conveyed heartfelt condolences on the demise of a Pakistani national, due to the terrorist attack in Abu Dhabi on 17 January 2022. He also shared details of the tragic incident with Foreign Minister Qureshi. The Foreign Minister thanked the UAE Government for extending all-out support in early repatriation of the mortal remains of the deceased Pakistani national and treatment for the injured. Expressing solidarity with the brotherly people and Government of the UAE over the tragic incident, Foreign Minister Qureshi underlined that such acts violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United Arab Emirates.



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Murray wins in Australia for 1st time since 2017 - Page 06

Germany ready to pay high price to defend values - Page 07

Indonesian coal exports support CPEC energy projects in Pakistan - Page 08



## Briefs

## FESCO issues shutdown notice for Wednesday

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued power shutdown schedule for Wednesday due to necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines.

According to the schedule, power supply from Saeed Colony and Hajwari Park feeders linked with 132-KV Old Thermal grid station, Zia Town feeder originating from 132-KV Steam Power grid station, Minara and Ahmad Nagar feeders linked with 132-KV Bhowana grid station, Bhaiwala feeder originating from 132-KV Nishatabad grid station, new Awagat feeder linked with 132-KV Jaranwala grid station, Phalahi feeder originating from 132-KV Chak No.103-RB grid station, new Ahmad Nagar feeder linked with 132-KV Chenab Nagar grid station, Ziyarat (SEL) feeder originating from 132-KV Bandala grid station, Jewan Shah feeder linked with 132-KV Kamal Pur grid station, Sakhi Abdul Wahab feeder originating from 132-KV Chiniot grid station, Riaz Abad feeder linked with 132-KV Lalian grid station, Barana feeder originating from 132-KV Barana grid station, Millat Road, Muslim Town, Millat Town, Sandal and Ghausia Abad feeders linked with 132-KV Chiniot Road grid station, Gulberg and Bashir Abad feeders originating from 132-KV Gojra grid station, Pakka Anna feeder linked with 132-KV Nia Lahore grid station, Aminabad feeder originating from 132-KV Factory Area grid station, Shadab feeder linked with 132-KV Jhang Road grid station, Soondh feeder originating from 132-KV Mureedwala grid station, City Tandlianwala feeder linked with 132-KV Tandlianwala grid station and Kanjwani feeder originating from 132-KV Manjhalah Bagh grid station will remain suspended from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. while Ismaeel Road, new Civil Line, Taj Colony, Karais Tex, Khyaban Garden, CTM-II and Punj Pulli feeders linked with 132-KV University grid station, Lasani Town feeder originating from 132-KV Industrial Estate grid station, Manzoor Park feeder linked with 132-KV Old Thermal grid station will observe shutdown from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday (January 19). — APP

## Mostly cold, partly cloudy weather to prevail in KP

PESHAWAR: The Regional Meteorological Center Peshawar on Tuesday predicted cold and cloudy weather for most parts of the province.

However, light rain with snowfall over the hills was likely at isolated places of Abbottabad, Mansehra, Kohistan, Torghar, Battagram, Shangla, Chitral, Lower & Upper Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Mohmand, Bajaur, Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda, Nowshera, Peshawar, Orakzai, Khyber, Kurram, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Hangu, Karak, Kohat, North and South Waziristan and Kohat districts.

On Tuesday the weather remained cold and partly cloudy in most of the province. However, light rain with snowfall over the hills occurred at isolated places in Abbottabad, Mansehra, Kohistan, Torghar, Battagram, Shangla, Chitral, Lower & Upper Dir, Swat, Buner, Kurram and Bajaur districts. — APP

## 62kg hashish recovered, two held

PESHAWAR: The police of Pahari Pura area here on Tuesday foiled an attempt of big quantity of narcotics smuggling and arrested two involved smugglers. SSP Operations, Haroon Rashid told media that a suspicious car was signalled to stop and upon thorough search 62 kilogram high quality hashish was recovered from its secret cavities. He said two drug smugglers belonging to Peshawar and Charsadda were taken into custody and shifted to police station for further interrogation. The narcotics were being smuggled to Punjab, he added.

## Women bodies for better working conditions for females

Call upon government to introduce reforms in labour laws and incentivize progressive employers

SHAHMIM SHAHID

ISLAMABAD: A national collective of women workers employed in formal sectors titled Women Workers Alliance (WWA) and 13 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCIs) including those representing federal and provincial capitals resolved to work together to ameliorate the working conditions for women as a means to improve economic growth of the country. The unique gathering of the representatives of employers and workers was facilitated by Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA) under its project Enhancing Women Workers Access to Market (EWAM), which is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The members of the National Steering Committee of WWA and the presidents or their

nominees of CCIs representing Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Haripur, Gujranwala, Mardan, Rahimyar Khan, Sukkur, Faisalabad, Jhelum and Mirpurkhas were in the attendance.

In a Joint Declaration agreed by the CCIs leadership and WWA's National Steering Committee, both parties resolved to establish Joint Employer-Women Workers Working Groups in aforementioned districts. These groups will act as a bridge between employees and employers to resolve issues related to provision of minimum wage, employees' contracts, separate washrooms for women, and formation of protection against harassment at workplace committees.

The Joint Declaration also called upon the government to complement this unique understanding by updating labour laws, ensuring their enforcement and introducing administrative measures to improve

the working conditions of women workers. The Declaration also called upon the government to incentivize the employers for compliance with labour standards as set in the international conventions and national laws on the subject in order to provide improved working conditions at the workplace, especially for women.

His Excellency Ambassador of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Wouter Plomp, Parliamentary Secretary for Commerce, Trade, and Industry Ms. Aliya Hamza Malik, Chairperson Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Ms. Shandana Gulzar Khan, TDEA Director Programs Muddassar Rizvi, and EWAM Team Lead Uzma Farogh also addressed the gathering.

Ambassador Plomp stated that recognition of an issue is the first step towards its resolution. He recognized the Joint Declaration of CCIs and WWA a major

leap towards enhanced economic participation of women workers.

Ms. Shandana Gulzar emphasized the need for the government to take ownership of the issues facing women workers. She drew attention to the economic losses incurred due to under-representation of women in national labour force. Ms. Aliya Hamza Malik underscored the importance of the workers' perspective especially of women in resolving issues related to commerce and trade in the country. Mr. Muddassar Rizvi, TDEA's Director Programs, highlighting the importance of WWA, said that the WWA has not only challenged the dominant patriarchal ideas that had undervalued the work of women and hindered their attempts at organizing, but the unique approach of coordination and collaboration has also been helpful in setting new practices for trade unionism.

## Monal appeal IHC reserves decision on maintainability

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday reserved its judgment on the maintainability of an intra court appeal (ICA) against the sealing of Monal Restaurant at Margalla Hills National Park.

The IHC division comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb reserved the decision after listening arguments from the petitioner. The petitioner's lawyer Sardar Taimoor Aslam Advocate pleaded before the court that his client was granted a 15-year lease of the said land, which was supposed to be extended for another 15 years under the agreement. The petitioner had been paying the rent despite end of the first lease in 2019, he said. Justice Miangul Hassan questioned whether the Federal Capital should be handed over to Punjab again or the area's status of 1910 should be restored. The court noted that the detailed decision of single-member bench was awaited, and it had been challenged in advance. Let the detailed judgment be issued first as the division bench could intervene only after going through it, Justice Farooq remarked. — APP

## Metro joins German consulate for parks cleaning drive

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: METRO, the leading international wholesale company, joins the consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany in Karachi for the launch of an environmental project at Clifton's Aunty Park. As part of Corporate Social Responsibility, METRO Pa-

kistan provided the cleaning equipment, gloves, garbage bags and bins, and extended its support for the initiative. The DG Parks Karachi, Mr. Junaidullah Khan, was the chief guest for the occasion. Speaking at the occasion, Mrs Birgit Nicole Kuhlmann, the Deputy Head of Mission at the German Consulate General in Karachi, said "We are here to

inaugurate the Aunty Park environmental project 2022, together with our Pakistani partners METRO and TrashIt. We will be refurbishing and cleaning up the park, and will be placing garbage bins, and at the same time we will be running awareness drive for cleanliness of the premises and protection of the nature"

Representing METRO, Mr. Imran Shamim, Senior Manager Corporate Affairs, said "METRO being the biggest wholesale company always supports the constructive initiatives to protect environment and nature, and today we have sponsored this activity by the German Consulate Karachi.

Such projects are necessary for less polluted and healthy public spaces," METRO Pakistan is working on many sustainable and green projects throughout Pakistan, and has been the first wholesale company to shift to solar power solutions to generate clean and green energy and to reduce 260,000 kg of carbon emissions per year.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi calls on UAE Ambassador Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi. — DNA

## Sindh Governor assures to extend co-op to traders

KARACHI: A 16-member delegation called on Governor Sindh, Imran Ismail here at Governor's House. The delegation was led by Patron of the SITE association, Muhammad Zubair Motiwalla. The Governor Sindh extended assurance that every possible cooperation and assistance would be provided to the traders and industrialists. "Karachi is the economic hub of the country and it would be ensured that the industries continue to perform at a faster pace as Industrial development is inevitable for national prosperity," he added. The Governor also asked the members of the delegation to submit detailed working paper regarding the problems being faced. "The government will consider the suggestions forwarded by the business community as the federal government has prioritised to creating ease in doing businesses", he added. — Nazir Siyal

## Govt to spend Rs 20bn to develop power distribution

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif Tuesday said that federal government would spend Rs 20 billion to upgrade electricity distribution system. Briefing media persons about mega projects announced by Prime Minister, Imran Khan for KP, he said that improvement of power distribution system would address issues of load shedding and low voltage.

He said that wheeling system would be made functional within next 30 days. He informed that micro hydel system was being introduced under which 500 small dams would be constructed in the province adding that power generated through the system would also be provided to far flung areas that were without proper distribution system. Barrister Saif said that six more economic zones like Rashki under CPEC would be established in KP. He said that Pakistan Digital City Haripur was a

flagship project that would cost Rs 1.31 billion and would open new vistas of growth and prosperity for people. He said that two to three Special Technology Zones would be established to impart contemporary techniques of information technology to youth and create new employment opportunities for them. He said that food processing projects would be started to invite foreign investment. He said that infrastructure network would be developed while Chitral and Shindur would be connected with expressway. The CM's aide said that annual development budget for new merged districts had been increased from Rs 24 billion to Rs 54 billion. He said that government had also launched Ehsas Ration Program under which poor people would get concession of Rs 1000 in purchase of edibles. — APP

## No power can damage Pak-UAE ties: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Interfaith Harmony and Muttahida Ulema Council (MUC) Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi has condemned the drone attack on a United Arab Emirates (UAE) oil facility in Abu Dhabi.

To express solidarity, he paid a visit to UAE embassy and held a meeting with Ambassador Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi on Tuesday.

Ashrafi said Pakistan had close and brotherly association with the UAE and it considered the UAE's security and stability as its own ones. He said in the sad incident, a Pakistani had killed while two others had injured adding the Pakistan's embassy was in constant contact with the UAE's leadership into the matter. He said no power on earth could damage the bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries. On this occasion, the UAE ambassador offered condolences on the martyrdom of Pakistani citizen.

However, he said, the two injured of Pakistan origin were being provided the best medical facilities.

He said the UAE's foreign minister was in complete contact with the Pakistani embassy there. Concluding the meeting, the ambassador thanked Pakistan for the cooperation and standing by the UAE through thick and thin. — APP

## 860,000 rupee fine imposed on overcharging vendors

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHAN: Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Azoba Azeem said that during this month throughout the district collectively 860,000 rupee fines were imposed on 361 overcharging vendors, she added that 54 overchargers were arrested while cases were registered against 16. She expressed these remarks while presiding over the performance review meeting of District Price Control Magistrates. In the meeting individual performances of District Price Control magistrates were reviewed, she said that Price Control magistrates should go out in field and ensure the provision of relief to the people, she added that heavy fines should be imposed against overcharging and cases should be registered against the violations of Price control act.

It was told during the meeting that during this month District Price Control Magistrates imposed 860,800 rupee worth fine to 361 offenders while Price control magistrates arrested 54 offenders and registered cases against 16.

It was told during the meeting that during this month Tehsil Lodhran's price control magistrates imposed fines of 322,500 rupee fine against 173 offenders, in Tehsil Kehror Pakka 236,300 rupee fines were imposed against 79 offenders.

## NADRA expressed dismay on the word of "alien" to Bengalis

The committee appreciated the performance of Chairman NADRA regarding recruitment of local people to facilitate the local and it also appreciated the inclusive policy of NADRA on latest technology analyst

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Coordination Committee (NADRA), under the Convenership of Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri, took notice of non-functionality of District Level Committees (DLCs) regarding the issue of Blocked Identity cards. The committee proposed for altering the formation of DLCs as of NADRA briefed the participants about non-functionality of these committees. The committee observed that being Public Representatives it is their prime obligation to ensure easy access to fundamental right of "Identity" for its citizens. The committee also observed that smaller provinces need special attention of NADRA as Balochistan is the only province which did not have NADRA mega centre to facilitate the common people. The committee also proposed that

the number of female centre be increased especially in KPK and Balochistan to facilitate women of these areas. The committee appreciated the performance of Chairman NADRA regarding recruitment of local people to facilitate the local and it also appreciated the inclusive policy of NADRA on latest technology analyst. The committee agreed to the proposition of Chairman NADRA about the word "Alien" and proposed to change its name immediately as the word "Alien" is disrespectful to its holders as observed by Chairman NADRA. The meeting of Coordination Committee (NADRA) was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri in the Parliament House today.

While observing the sensitivity attached with the issuance of Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC), Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri said

that identity is a fundamental right to each Pakistani. He said that there must not be any discrimination on the basis of nationality and language in the provision of CNIC. He expressed his dissatisfaction over non-establishment of Mega centre of NADRA in Balochistan. He instructed NADRA to immediately complete the establishment of NADRA mega centre in Quetta. He also took notice of the fact that the 95 percent of NADRA centers are being functioned in rented buildings. He stressed on the need to review this trend as NADRA deals with sensitive data. He also stressed to develop a proper payment mechanism for overseas Pakistanis so that they can easily pay NADRA for its services.

Chairman NADRA Muhammad Tariq Malik briefed the participants initiatives of NADRA for inclusive identity. He also briefed the participants of the meeting regarding its

initiatives of issuance of Succession certificates and Armed license procedure. He also said that total 157 districts of the country and 510 Tehsils out of 543 Tehsils in the country has NADRA centre and he said that till June 2022 the target of establishment of NADRA centre in each Tehsil of the country would be fulfilled, that there are 13 Ambessies where NADRA has its office and soon the number of office would be increased. Chairman NADRA also presented NADRA's performance during his first 150 days. He apprised the committee about new initiatives so far taken for general public and overseas Pakistanis. The committee members appreciated Chairman NADRA's performance. The meeting was attended by MNAs Mr. Gul Dad Khan, Muahammad Alamgir Khan, Sardar Muhammad Israr Tareen and Senior officers of NADRA and National Assembly Secretariat.



## SERVICES



## Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:44 am
Zohr.....	12:18 pm
Asr.....	03:47 pm
Maghrib.....	05:25 pm
Isha.....	06:52 pm



## Hotels &amp; Restaurants

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



## Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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## Emergency

Rescue (Police).....	15
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Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
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MH.....	5611116
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DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.....	4603666



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CDA.....	9208301-04
Met Office.....	9250360-6
RDA.....	5555864
TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3



## Complaints

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G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8.....	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8.....	9266316
Wapda Islamabad.....	9217579
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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## NCOC may consider smart lockdown in high ratio cities

### Experts call for joint efforts to combat omicron spread

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: While expressing concern over the increasing number of Covid-19 cases following the emergence of Omicron variant in Pakistan, stakeholders have emphasized the need for more coordinated efforts by the government as well as private organizations to effectively cope with this new pandemic-related situation. These remarks were expressed at an event organized by the Italian INGO Cesvi Pakistan to celebrate the achievements and reflect upon the lessons learned of the project 'Improving National Capacity to Respond to COVID-19 Pandemic in Pakistan' implemented across 24 districts of all four provinces of Pakistan. The project was funded by the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) for a duration of 18 months. The event was attended by Country Director CESVI Pakistan Farhan Ahmed Khan, representatives of



the consortium INGOs, PDMAs, Health Departments from all four provinces, members of civil society and media persons. Addressing at the occasion, Dr. Nausheen Hamid (Parliamentary Secretary Health) mentioned that the Government of Pakistan made significant efforts for COVID-19 containment and prevention. Soon after the emergence of the pandemic, the government responded

efficiently through upgradation of testing labs and installation of mobile testing labs at border crossing areas. In addition, for real-time COVID-19 situation monitoring and response efforts, the efforts of the NCOC and Central Health Administration Department are commendable in this regard. Dr. Stephen Langrell, Team Leader Rural Development and Economic Cooperation section of the Europe-

an Union Pakistan, acknowledged the efforts of consortium partners for providing assistance to 2.5 million people across Pakistan in these testing times. He said that ECHO found it essential to support the Government of Pakistan in combating COVID-19 in the country. Earlier, Farhan Ahmed Khan while giving an overview of the project said that the project successfully endeavored to strengthen the ca-

capacity of health care providers and equipped the High Dependency Units and Intensive Care Units (ICUs) of 324 health facilities across all four provinces of Pakistan. He also mentioned that along with the components of capacity building training, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), WASH support, the project has provided essential COVID-19 treatment and diagnostic equipment, testing kits, non-COVID and non-medical equipment, and fixtures, PPEs and disinfection supplies. Besides, a panel discussion was also held in which the Country Directors of all seven consortium partners shared their field experiences, best practices and key challenges experienced during the implementation of the project. The panelists included Farhan Ahmed Khan from Cesvi, Waqas Ahmed from MDM, Mubashir Ahmed from Concern Worldwide, Aisha Jamshaid from WHH, Dr. Arjumand Nizami from Helvetas, Sarfraz Laldin ACTED, Rafiullah Khalil from IMC.

## Admin issues advisory for Murree

RAWALPINDI: The administration of Murree tehsil has issued travel advisory advising the tourists to get weather updates and traffic-related information prior to travelling to Murree from control room on 051-9269016. According to Assistant Commissioner Murree, the new travel advisory had been issued for the tourists advising them not to make unnecessary trips to Murree and its adjoining areas during the current spell of rain and snowfall. The instructions being given at Murree Toll Plaza to the tourists must be followed, he said adding, strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against parking rules violators. No entry would be allowed between 5 pm to 5 am except for emergency services, vehicles carrying POL/ LPG and food items. The tourists could contact control room on 051-9269016, Assistant Commissioner office on 0321-3219221 and Deputy Superintendent of Police, Murree on 0321-5615668 to get information. He said that comprehensive traffic plan was in place ahead of predicted snowfall in Murree. Traffic Police helpline 051-9269200 could also be used in emergency, he added. - APP

## Gwadar's mega projects to be completed

ISLAMABAD: The multiple mega projects of Gwadar under the game changer China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are expected to be completed during the current year that would benefit the local masses of the port city. The mega projects to be completed in 2022 included Pakistan-China friendship hospital, Gwadar Eastbay Expressway, provision of water to Gwadar city, linking Gwadar to the national electricity grid, establishment of University of Gwadar, Gwadar Safe City project and certain other projects in the socio-economic domain. The construction work on 300 beds modern hospital in Gwadar was expected to be accomplished by December this year that would ensure best healthcare facilities for the local people, said official source. - APP

## NAB chairman all praise for Karachi office

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting to review the performance of NAB Karachi especially the convictions made under Section 10 and Section 25 (b) of National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) 1999 from Oct 10, 2017 to Dec 31, 2021 at NAB Headquarters. Zahir Shah, Deputy Chairman NAB, Syed Asghar Haider, Prosecutor General Accountability (PGA), DG Operations and other senior officers of NAB attended the meeting whereas Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza, DG NAB Karachi participated in the meeting via video link. During the meeting Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza, Director General (DG), NAB Karachi informed the meeting that under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB during the period from October 10, 2017 to Dec 31, 2021, 218x accused persons have been convicted under section 10 of NAO-1999 whereas 246x convictions made under section 25(b) of the NAO-1999. During the meeting, Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza, DG NAB-Karachi informed that during the period from 1st January to 31st December, 2021 53 persons were convicted by different learned Accountability Courts of Karachi under section 10 of NAO-1999. The details of the 53 convicted persons under section 10 of NAO-1999 are as under: State Vs Syed Muhammad Furqan & Others (Supplementary Reference filed on 03.04.13) (SECP). Accused Syed Muhammad Furqan S/o Syed Nisar Hussain, Rasheed Ahmed S/o Faraed Ahmed, Muhammad Saleem Yousuf S/o Muhammad Yousuf and Aftab Hassan S/o Shamsul Hassan were convicted by the Accountability Court on 30.03.2021 with a fine of Rs. 600 million.



ISLAMABAD: First lady Samina Arif Alvi distributing wheel-chairs among persons with disabilities, at NIRM. - DNA

## LG polls schedule to be announced after delimitation: ECP

ISLAMABAD: Election of Pakistan (ECP) will issue the schedule of local government elections for the federal capital after completing the process of delimitation. Clarifying the news item appeared in sections of press regarding holding of local government elections in the federal capital, the spokesperson of ECP said that once final delimitation was done and published as per delimitation schedule, the election schedule would be issued. He said that the commission was in the process of delimitation and the draft of delimitation had been made public while inviting objections on it. He added Regional Election Commissioner Rawalpindi had the authority to make decisions on objections. He said that decisions on all objections will be made by February 7 while the final list of delimitation for Islamabad would be issued on February 16. The spokesperson added, "After issuing this final list we will be able to announce election schedule." He said that only ECP could issue schedule of local government elections. - APP

## Court restores Banuri as HEC chairman

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Tuesday restored Dr Tariq Banuri as chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC). A two-judge bench of the IHC headed by Chief Justice Athar Minallah announced a short order, invalidating the government's notification regarding removal of Banuri as the HEC chairman. "For reasons to be recorded later the petition in hand is allowed. Consequently, the impugned notifications, dated 26.03.2021 and 05.04.2021, are declared to have been issued without legal authority and contrary to amended provisions of the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002," the court order said. "Dr Tariq Javed Banuri, therefore, stands restored as the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission," the IHC ruled. The petition was filed against the promulgation of HEC Ordinance that reduced the term of chairman from four to two years and 'curbed' its autonomy by a number of eminent academicians, right activists and scholars including Javed Jabbar, Dr Pervez Hoodbhoy, Mosharraf Ali Zaidi, Prof Dr M. Asif Khan, Syed Ahmed

Masood, Prof Dr A. H. Nayyar, Prof Dr Naazish Attallah, Prof Salima Hashmi, Khawar Mumtaz, Dr Rubina Saigol, former Pakistan Bar Council vice chairman Abid Hussain Saqi, Karamat Ali, Nazim Fida Hussain Haji, Prof Dr Syed Tipu Sultan and Mohammad Tahseen. According to the petition, it was a settled principle that laws should be saved through the process of interpretation including the principle of reading down especially if reading of the statutory text leads to violation of fundamental rights including the right of non-discrimination. Even if the interpretation is accepted, it is in contradiction of Article 25 of the Constitution. The petition stated that the Ordinance did not lead to the conclusion that it took away the vested rights of the former HEC chief, adding that the government authorities misinterpreted the law and curtailed the tenure of Banuri from four to two years. On March 27 last, the government had reduced the service tenure of Tariq Javed Banuri to two years through an HEC amended Ordinance 2021, from four years through an ordinance. - DNA



## CDA urged to consult slum dwellers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The rights activists on Tuesday urged the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to consult the slum dwellers as stakeholders during development of Sector E-12 project and provide alternate accommodation for them. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) held public hearing of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report of the development of Sector E-12 project which was compulsory for any development project executing body under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997 to obtain an environmental approval prior to commence construction work. The project area spreads over 5,967 kanals (745.87 acres) land and is part of Islamabad's Master Plan of 1960 and aimed to provide residential plots for all-income groups in the metropolis. The EIA Report was prepared by Project Procure-

ment International and the CDA was the project proponent. Environmental Engineer Ali Abdullah from Project Procurement International presented the EIA Report before the participants. Deputy Director EPA Khalid Mehmood and Deputy Director EPA Dr Mohsina Zubair chaired the public hearing on behalf of the Director General EPA. Speaking on the occasion, Khalid Mehmood said the public should be aware that public hearing was a legal formality and not the approval of the Agency for a particular project. The citizens and civil society activists and experts were encouraged to send their queries, concerns and recommendations on the project in writing to Pak-EPA. Engineer Ali Abdullah while briefing on the EIA Report informed that the housing project was designed keeping in view the rising urbanization and population of the federal capital.

## JANUARY 2022

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## Briefs

## Mohmand Dam to generate 800 MW

ISLAMABAD: Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project has the capacity to generate 800 megawatts (MW) of low-cost hydel electricity, irrigate 15,100 acres of land and control floods downstream in the area.

Mohmand Dam is historic and unique in nature being constructed on River Swat in Tribal District Mohmand of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, is scheduled to be completed in 2024.

The dam would also store about 1.2 million acre-feet (MAF) of water, besides supplementing 160,000 acres of existing land and about 16,700 acres of new land will also be irrigated, said official source while talking to APP. In addition, 300 million gallons of water per day will also be supplied to Peshawar for drinking purposes and the annual benefits of the project have been estimated at Rs. 51.6 billion.

Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project will phenomenally contribute towards the water, food, and energy security of the country. Water and Power Regulatory Authority (WAPDA) is committed to completing the project as early as possible to cope with the ever-increasing needs for water and electricity in the country. The Mohmand Dam would go a long way in stabilizing the national economy besides alleviating poverty and ushering in an era of development in the project area. — APP

## No forces personnel working in NADRA on deputation

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan on Tuesday informed the Senate that no retired or in-service employee of Pakistan Armed Forces was working in NADRA on deputation basis. Replying to a question during Question Hour, as many as 13,997 employees were working in National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).

He said that only six employees were working in NADRA on deputation. These employees were being paid salaries in Basic Pay Scale as per their LPC issued by their parent departments with addition of 10% Headquarters & Utility allowances and 20% Deputation Allowance, he said.

To another question, the minister said Islamabad Traffic Police issued violation tickets against fancy number plates apart from the number plates issued by respective Excise and Taxation offices.

However, use of bogus number plates was a crime and case should be registered against such vehicle's owners, he added. He said Islamabad Traffic Police issued traffic violation tickets to the violators for displaying un-prescribed number plates. As many as 42,831 tickets were issued during 2021 by the traffic police and Rs12,849,300 fine was collected from the violators, he said. — APP

## IRSA releases 28455 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Tuesday released 28455 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 47229 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1443.96 feet, which was 51.96 feet higher than its dead level 1392 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 12900 and 5000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1133.70 feet, which was 83.07 feet higher than its dead level of 1050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 10989 and 115 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 15275, 24337 and 21180 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 7400 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 15940 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. — APP



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. — DNA

## New frontiers in delivering justice for the Balochistan

Ms. Jouhaida Hanan mentioned the UNODC contribution towards the baseline data and provision of an evidence-driven interface through the Database Management Information System (DBMIS)

DNA

QUETTA: The Steering Committee on the Rule of Law (RoL) Roadmap Balochistan convened its fifth stock take meeting on 18 January 2022 in Quetta underscoring a high-level commitment from the key stakeholders towards advancing the rule of law reforms in Balochistan. The event marked a milestone achievement in providing a convergence platform to the development partners and rule of law institutions to deliberate on the progress and achievements of the Rule of Law Roadmap that has been a flagship project of the Government of Balochistan. Mr. Ziaullah Langau, Adviser to the Chief Minister on Home & Tribal Affairs, GoB appreciated the progress since its

inception to date. The project is being implemented by UNODC and graciously supported by the British High Commission till March 2021. The commitment of the Government of Balochistan has led to the development of the PC-1 and allocation of PKR 500 million for the implementation of sustainable rule of law reforms.

Mr. Sven Ruesch, Acting Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to Pakistan commended the achievements of the Rule of Law Roadmap project so far that offer a strong base to implement the next generation of rule of law reforms supported by the EU-funded programme. Mr. Ruesch further conveyed the message from the EU Ambassador Mrs. Androulla Kaminara that the EU regards rule of law as a cornerstone for development,



peace and security for the people of Balochistan, particularly women and girls and is looking forward to continuing its support in the coming years. Representatives from the partner agencies of UNDP, UN Women and UNODC shared their implementation plans, identifying collaborative synergies as part

of the EU-funded Rule of Law Programme. Ms. Jacqui Ketunuti, Deputy Country Representative & RoL Advisor of UN Women underscored the significance of collective efforts towards provision of enabling rule of law to realize the rights of women, girls and marginalized groups, while minimizing the forms of gender-based violence through continued reforms in the justice sector. The Resident Representative of UNDP in Pakistan Mr. Knut Ostby highlighted their strategic commitment towards supporting the ongoing reforms through transformative activities envisioned under the EU-funded Rule of Law reforms. Ms. Jouhaida Hanan mentioned the UNODC contribution towards the baseline data and provision of an evidence-driven interface through the Database Manage-

ment Information System (DBMIS). The Delivery Unit updated the forum on the progress through a demonstration of the DBMIS and website as well as sharing the process of data stock takes. The forum was also briefed on the ongoing work led by UNODC on the juvenile justice assessment, which is a step forward towards effective implementation of juvenile justice in Balochistan. Despite unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, the pioneering work led by the roadmap was acknowledged as a groundbreaking effort towards delivering a robust regime of rule-based governance in Balochistan. This Project is supported by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Country Office in Pakistan (UNODC COPAK).

## Pakistan earns \$1051 million from IT services

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$1051.050 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the first five months of financial year 2021-22. This shows growth of 37.55 percent as compared to US \$764.100 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year 2020-21, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During July-November (2021-22), the export of computer services grew by 39.39 percent as it surged from US \$593.170 million last fiscal year to US \$826.800 million this year. Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed increase of 47.92 percent, from US \$200.272 million to US \$296.246 million while the exports of hardware consultancy services also rose by 256.52 percent from, US \$0.276 million to US \$0.984 million. — APP

## Exports increase 29.48% in first half FY22

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country in rupee term witnessed an increase of 29.48 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. According to PBS provisional figures, the exports during July-December (2021-22) were recorded at Rs2,562,063 million as against the exports of Rs1,978,753 million during July-December 2020-21. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 29.34 in December 2021 as compared to the exports of December, 2020. The exports during December, 2021 amounted to Rs489,918 million against the exports of Rs378,776 million during December 2020. — APP

## Food commodities worth \$2.482 bln exported

ISLAMABAD: Food group exports from the country during the first-half of current fiscal year increased by 22.28% as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-December, 2021, different food commodities including rice, vegetables, fruits, oil seeds, meat, fish, spices and others valuing \$2.482 billion were exported against the exports of \$2.030 billion of the same period last year. According to the trade data released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, during the period under review exports of rice grew by 10.73%, fish and fish preparation 3.19%, fruits and vegetable 11.135 and 14.30% respectively. — APP

## PNCA starts registration in 'Arts Lovers Club'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has started registration in "Arts Lovers Club". According to PNCA, the registered persons will get numerous opportunities to participate in musical, theatrical and artistic activities. PNCA invited art enthusiasts to attend music listening sessions, drama reading sessions, literature recitations, instrumental performances, talks by experts, film screenings and many other interesting activities. — APP

## Railways procures 230 new bogies

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways Muhammad Azam Khan Swati on Tuesday told the Senate that Pakistan Railways has procured 230 new bogies to provide better services to the passengers which would be received in three to four months. Replying to various questions during Question Hour, the minister said the capacity of repair workshop was also being enhanced in order to repair 30-40 bogies per month. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and Senators offering Fataha on the sad demise of the brother of Senator Kamil Ali Agha, at his residence. — DNA

## Chinese traditional medicines have big scope in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese traditional medicines have big scope to become popular in Pakistan, says Dr Zabta Khan Shinwari, professor emeritus at Quaid-e-Azam University. According to Gwadar Pro, she sees bright chances for traditional Chinese medicines (TCMs) to become popular in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

TCMs, backed by profound research and thousands of years of usage in China, are effective alternatives of allo-

pathic medicines for variety of diseases. Pakistani people are already familiar with the Chinese therapies like cupping and acupuncture and TCMs are also likely to make their mark in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Dr Shinwari told Gwadar Pro. Dr Shinwari is advisor to China-led Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO) and also involved in clinical trials of Chinese traditional medicines in Pakistan. He urged the Chinese TCM companies to collaborate with Pakistani traditional medi-

cines firms like Qarshi, Ahmad and Marhaba etc. for market-oriented research to launch their products in the region. So far, clinical trials are underway on TCMs in institutions like International Centre for Chemical and Biological Science at University of Karachi. However, clinical research is meant only for academic purposes, he said, adding that the Chinese TCM companies need to launch joint research projects with Pakistani firms dealing in traditional medicines (Unani medicines or tibb) to familiarise the TCMs in the country.

'Every time a Chinese TCM firm approaches me for advice to launch their products in Pakistan, I tell them to do so through existing Pakistani Unani medicines companies', he said. Dr Shinwari remained President of Pakistan Council for Tibb for five years and has vast experience in traditional medicines. He said that TCMs are similar to Pakistani Unani medicines except that TCMs also include animal parts. Moreover, TCMs have been developed after modern scientific research while Pakistani tibb is still in primitive stages.

## Ehsaas Rehriabaan' initiative dismantles shopkeepers' monopoly

ISLAMABAD: "Ehsaas Rehriabaan" initiative has dismantled the monopoly of shopkeepers who used to charge

a handsome rent to street vendors on monthly basis in Sector G-11 Markaz. Despite paying a good portion of their monthly income to the shopkeepers, the street vendors business was not secure. The Capital Development Authority used to conduct anti-encroachment operations time and again to clear the footpaths for smooth movements of pedestrians and shoppers and confiscate goods of the poor sellers. The "Ehsaas Rehriabaan" initiative has provided a sigh of relief to the untended segment of the society, which could not afford to have a shop on rent. The beneficiaries of vendor-friendly project, during a talk to this scribe on Tuesday, appreciated the incumbent government of Pakistan

Tehreeke-e-Insaf (PTI) to give a legal cover to their small businesses, which is bread and butter for their children. Syed Tahir Sardar, a vendor providing watchmaking service, said, he used to pay Rs12,000 monthly to the shopkeeper for his small counter. But thanks to Allah Almighty, after this incredible initiative of the PTI government, he was paying only Rs24,000 annually and running his business independently and tension free. He said although everything was fine but the solar panels provided to the vendors for electricity purposes were incompatible to the weather condition of Islamabad and not meeting their demands. — DNA

## Eminent literary giant 'Saadat Hasan Manto' remembered

ISLAMABAD: Eminent Urdu-language short story writer, radio script writer and journalist Saadat Hasan Manto was remembered on his 67th death anniversary today (January 18) for his lifetime services to Urdu literature. Manto was known to write about the realities of the society that no one dared to talk about. Manto was born on 11 May 1912 in Ludhiana in British India and breathed his last on 18 January 1955.

He is best known for documenting stories about the partition of sub-continent and highlighted the pain and misery of those times and stood with the victims of partition. Manto attained a unique position in Urdu literature. Manto, writing mainly in the Urdu language, produced 22 collections of short stories, a novel, five series of radio plays, three collections of essays and two collections of personal sketches, private news channels reported. During his early days he met a journalist, Abdul Bari Alig, who soon changed the young man's imaginary dabbling with genuine interest in politics and enthusiasm. Manto completed the translation within two weeks and sold it to the Urdu Book Stall, Lahore, which published it under the title Sarguzasht-e-Aaseer. Having now become a published author, Manto aided by Hasan Abbas soon attempted a translation of Oscar Wilde's Vera, which was published in 1934. Manto also continued to try his hand at original short stories in Urdu, at least one of which "InqilabPasand", dated March 1935 which was published in the Aligarh Magazine. Later this, story "Tamasha" and several others were put together into Manto's first collection of original short stories in Urdu, 'Atish Pare', published in 1936. Later he came to Lahore and joined newspaper Paras.

In late 1936, he accepted an invitation to edit the weekly Musawwir and justify Lahore for Bombay. In 1941, he came to Delhi and accepted the job of writing for Urdu Service of All India Radio. Soon four of his collection of radio plays, Ao, Mantoke Drame, Janaze and Tin Auratzen were published. — DNA

## President for collective efforts to eliminate TB

The president said the main thing in the eradication of this communicable disease was recognition of TB as a curable disease. The sufferers of these diseases should be traced and treated, he stressed

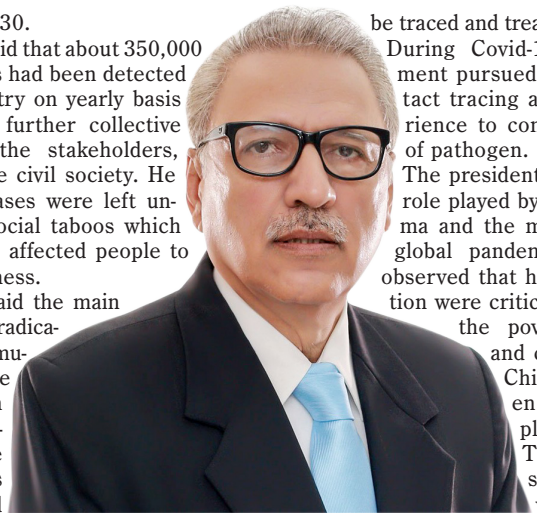
STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Tuesday stressed upon continuation of strenuous efforts to efface the debilitating disease of tuberculosis (TB), as the country was at an advantageous edge, gleaned from the valuable experiences in containing the Covid-19 pandemic. The president said Pakistan was successful in its drive against polio and due to relentless efforts coupled with public awareness, only a single polio case was detected last year. The president was speaking at an "End TB Summit" organized by Stop TB Partnership, DOPASI and Parliamentary Committee on the National Health Services. The summit focused on bringing together global expertise through a shared vision

to end TB by 2030. The president said that about 350,000 TB related cases had been detected across the country on yearly basis which required further collective efforts by all the stakeholders, partners and the civil society. He said different cases were left untraced due to social taboos which often forced the affected people to conceal their illness. The president said the main thing in the eradication of this communicable disease was recognition of TB as a curable disease. The sufferers of these diseases should

be traced and treated, he stressed. During Covid-19, the government pursued a policy of contact tracing and gained experience to contain the spread of pathogen. The president also lauded the role played by the people, ulama and the media during the global pandemic. He further observed that health and education were critical steps towards the poverty alleviation and cited example of China that had taken 800 million people out of poverty. The president said Sehat card was a part of the

government's endeavour in this regard. About the impacts caused by Covid-19, he opined that logistic system throughout the world collapsed, disrupting supply and demand chain which resulted into global price hike of commodities. The president also appealed to the people to observe the standard operating procedures (SOPs) in the face of growing Omicron variant infections in the country. On the occasion, Parliamentary Secretary on National Health Services, DrNosheen Hamid called for continuous efforts to eliminate TB by the year 2030 through creation of public awareness and eliciting public support. Faisal Qureshi, a famous TV actor and programme ambassador, also expressed his views to highlight the issue. Representatives of STOP TB programme and other stakeholders also shared their views.





## Russia-Ukraine Tensions

**T**ENSIONS between Ukraine and Russia are threatening to boil over as Russia has amassed about 100,000 troops on the Ukraine border and diplomatic talks to resolve the standoff have failed thus far. Members of the EU and the US are claiming that Moscow is planning an invasion, however this has been denied by Russian officials. The crux of the matter is that Russia wants NATO and its allies to ban Ukraine and former Soviet nations from joining the alliance, and has also called on the security alliance to scale back its activities in Eastern Europe. The latter would mean pulling out NATO combat units from Poland and the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and not deploying missiles in countries such as Poland and Romania. Essentially, Moscow wants NATO to return to its pre-1997 borders. While the US has said that it would be willing to negotiate over the deployment of missiles and the nature of military exercises in Eastern Europe, there can be no conversation over restricting the eastward expansion of the alliance. The expansion of NATO in Russia's backyard has been a longstanding concern and Moscow is unlikely to budge from its position. From a historical perspective, Russia has maintained that NATO's expansion in its neighbourhood was a betrayal of promises that were made by the US. Some are also likening the current situation to the leadup to Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. At that point too, Ukraine was increasingly looking to strengthen its ties with Europe and the West. Some US officials have claimed that as per their intelligence, Russia is planning a false-flag operation to justify its invasion of Ukraine. This should however, be taken with a pinch of salt given how Washington has time and again furthered exaggerated or fabricated claims regarding Russia in the past. Some headway will have to be made soon as the rhetoric continues to escalate. Moscow has warned the US that it would not exclude the possibility of sending its military assets to Latin America if the US does not halt military activities on Russia's doorstep. This conflict could very easily spillover into other regions and be very detrimental to an already shaky global order. Crisis de-escalation is of the utmost importance at this point in time.

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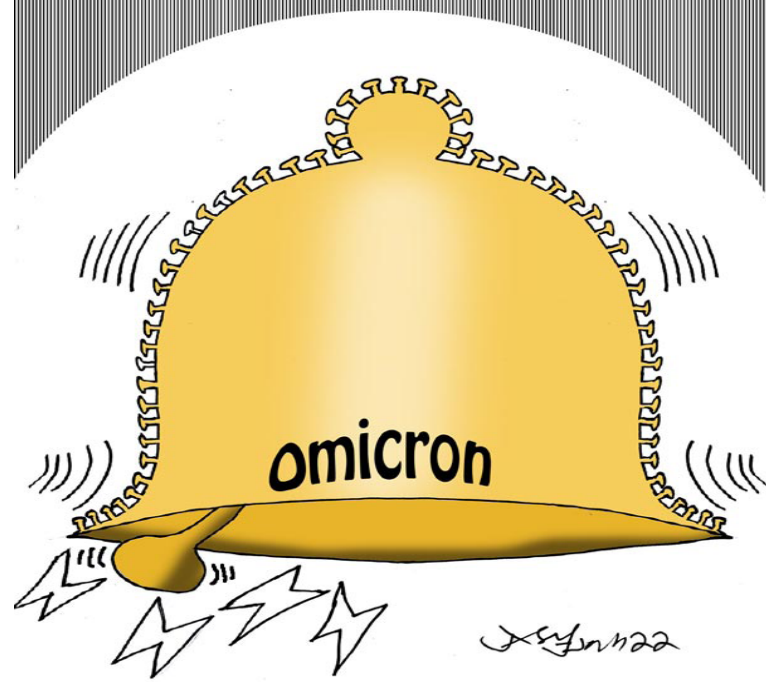
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Daily Times



## Why America shares blame for the attack on Abu Dhabi

Faisal J. Abbas

Enabled by their backers in Iran, the Houthis have launched waves of drone and missile attacks targeting civilians and key infrastructure in the Kingdom, from Jazan in the southwest to Riyadh itself

**T**HE deadly terrorist attack on Abu Dhabi on Monday by the Houthi militia in Yemen, despicable as it was, came as no surprise to those of us in the region – especially here in Saudi Arabia – who are already familiar with how low these terrorists can sink. Enabled by their backers in Iran, the Houthis have launched waves of drone and missile attacks targeting civilians and key infrastructure in the Kingdom, from Jazan in the southwest to Riyadh itself. Yes, there is a war going on in Yemen, and wars have inevitable consequences. Some people will say the UAE and Saudi Arabia must have expected that civilian casualties would be one of them.

Non-combatants, including innocent people in Yemen, have died – although it is important to point out that there is no moral equivalence here. When the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen causes civilian casualties it does so by accident, it investigates, and it apologizes; the Houthis kill innocent people deliberately, then brag about it. What the UAE and Saudi Arabia could not have expected, however, was that the US under the Biden administration would turn its back on them – long-time allies and partners – in the way that it has, by revoking the Trump-era designation of the Houthis as a terrorist group, and withdrawing Patriot air-defense batteries even as the Kingdom was coming under attack from Houthi missiles. When the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen causes civilian casualties it does so by accident, it investigates, and it apologizes; the Houthis kill innocent people deliberately, then brag about it. These actions were unexpected not just because of the history and the strategic logic behind the alliance, but because America has seen at first hand what the Houthis are capable of. Not only is the group's official motto "Death to America," but it also attacked the US Navy on three occasions in late 2016 at a time when Barack Obama was trying to appease Iran. The US says it revoked the Houthi terrorist designation because it was hampering the flow of aid to Yemen, an argument that convinces no one. As Adel Al-Jubeir, the Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, told Arab News in an interview

last year, the Taliban, Daesh, Hezbollah, Al-Shabab and Boko Haram are all on the US terrorism list, but that does not impede the flow of aid into Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Somalia or the Sahel. As for the withdrawal of the Patriot batteries, the US says it had been planned for some time as part of a strategic regional reorientation, and was not intended against Saudi Arabia specifically – although if that were true, why could the decision not simply be reversed when Washington can see that the Kingdom continues to come under missile attack? Not only that, but in behavior that defies logic, while some misguided US legislators continually try to block US arms sales to Saudi Arabia, some media commentators have the audacity to criticize the Kingdom for turning to other countries to secure weapons with which to defend itself. The war in Yemen is not going the Houthis' way. Coalition forces have driven them out of Shabwa and made military gains in the battleground province of Marib. Wounded animals lash out, so the attack on Abu Dhabi was in many ways predictable. However, sad to say, Iran is currently not the only enabler of these terrorists; they would never have dared to strike in such a way had they not felt empowered by the Biden administration's failure to support its allies and partners. It was reported by Bloomberg on Monday that the UAE would ask the US to reinstate the Houthis on its terrorist list. Acceding to that request is the very least America can do.

—Arab News

## Britain's surprising new focus in its bid to undermine China

Tom Fowdy

Deborah Brautigam, a scholar who has long disproven claims of the idea of the Chinese debt trap, engaged in an interview with the BBC on China and Sri Lanka – only to subsequently complain that the broadcaster had edited it to misrepresent her words and make it look like she was pushing this narrative

**O**N Monday, the BBC published a feature focusing on a Chinese-funded development in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo, under the heading "Colombo Port City: A new Dubai or a Chinese enclave?" The aim is to turn the area into a new financial centre, but the article's tone was predictably slanted in a negative way and emphasised the narrative of a "debt trap" – that Sri Lanka has handed over a port to Beijing because it could not pay its debts. The suggestion was that Beijing is engaged in geopolitical manoeuvring. The article, which described Sri Lanka as "India's backyard," also took aim at the country's prime minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa, and suggested that it has "much to fear" from the project as China seeks to "tighten its grip". What is even more eye-opening, however, is that this isn't the first article of this nature the BBC has published. In 2022 alone, it has run other front page pieces with headlines including "Crisis-hit Sri Lanka asks China to restructure its debt" and "China: Is it burdening poor countries with unsustainable debt?". In addition, late last year, Deborah Brautigam, a scholar who has long disproven claims of the idea of the Chinese debt trap, engaged in an interview with the BBC on China and Sri Lanka – only to subsequently complain that the broadcaster had edited it to misrepresent her words and make it look like she was pushing this narrative. It is abundantly clear that the BBC is promoting a very specific line regarding China's relationship with Sri Lanka. The BBC has a very obvious political agenda against China. It won't admit it, insisting that it is impartial, but the reality, as is frequently demonstrated, is that it ultimately advocates the British government's foreign policy. It is very much doing so when it comes to China, similar to how it acted on behalf of UK government messaging during the initial Cold War. The international version of its website carries negative stories about China on a near-daily basis, often using emotive language, such as when it accused Beijing of imposing starvation and death in lockdown-stricken Xi'an. It's hard for any serious person to say that the BBC is impartial. It has also been a leader in promoting the narrative of human rights abuses in Xinjiang against China. But when it comes to Sri Lanka in particular, there is an interesting assessment to be made. While the island has become the staple example

of China's so-called "debt trap diplomacy," it is noticeable that the BBC in particular focuses much more on it than the American media does. This shows that there is a strictly British dimension to this issue, and that stands to reason, given that Sri Lanka is a former dominion of the British Empire. When you take into account how Sri Lanka was previously a strategic base for the Royal Navy, and also consider Foreign Secretary Liz Truss's "network of liberty" – which professes to "bring countries into the orbit of free market democracies" – it is obvious that the British government sees itself in competition with China for influence over Colombo. The country sits at a critical geostrategic junction. It's in the middle of the Indian Ocean and just off the coast of India itself, so integral to the Indo-Pacific vision. It is also a key juncture of China's Belt and Road Initiative. The two countries have a strong relationship because they subscribe to the ideas of the non-aligned movement and have similar values as post-colonial states who seek norms of national sovereignty and non-interference. Sri Lanka, in particular, has a history of ethno-sectarian conflicts which has put it at odds with the west and created sympathy towards China. Whilst Colombo inevitably has an important relationship with its closest neighbour, India, it does not seek to be dominated by the country and therefore uses China as a strategic hedge in order to uphold its own political space. The mainstream media and BBC portray the island as a desperate cash-strapped country reliant on Chinese financial support, but it's simply not true. In reality, Sri Lanka owes more to Japan individually than China. Beijing has become a preferred partner of late because it is politically expedient for the government and comes with no strings attached. The truth is there is no debt trap, only a politically shrewd government. However, in the wake of Brexit, Britain is developing a foreign policy where it sees its former colonies as its own rightful dominions and – using the ideology of British exceptionalism – believes it should now compete against China in these nations. When Barbados scrapped the British monarchy last year and became a republic, the right-wing press in London blamed China and accused it of 'buying' the island, highlighting their deepening economic ties. It was no coincidence that at the same time, Truss launched her fund and began openly framing international finance as a battle for influence for "free market democracies." It can be argued, in turn, that Britain sees Sri Lanka in the same way – that it was a righteous overseer of the island which acted in its best interests, and now faces a battle over increasing Chinese influence. In line with these geopolitical objectives, the BBC is repeatedly producing negative, critical coverage of Beijing's dealings with the island in order to interfere in its politics and intentionally undermine support for China there. It continues to hammer the idea that the island is not dealing with Beijing on its own terms, but is being financially and politically subjugated. One can only hope that Sri Lankans will not be fooled by this effort. After all, the country that ruled them for 130 years, waging some very violent conflicts, should not get to decide who their enemies are.

— RT

## Iran's relentless crackdown on Sunni scholars

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

The regime has taken measures to restrict the movements of Sunni scholars inside Iran without permission from the relevant authorities

**I**RANIAN Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei believes that his religious guardianship is all-encompassing, covering Shiites and Sunnis, clerics and the masses. Therefore, he sees Sunni scholars as being under his guardianship. This means that Iranian media outlets often use generalized titles that express universal legal and political jurisdiction when describing Khamenei's authority, such as "the leader," "leader of Muslims" and "the ruler of all Muslims," connoting total guardianship and absolute power. This pays no heed as to whether this supposed absolute guardianship is accepted by the masses, while there is no acknowledgement of any dissent against it. This insistence on absolute religious authority has impacted the Iranian regime's treatment of the country's religious and ethnic minorities, with the regime incessantly interfering in their affairs and exercising unwelcome guardianship over their rites and rituals. This was seen recently in the supreme leader's dismissal of the prominent Iranian Sunni scholar Mowlavi Hossein Gorgij, the Friday prayer leader in the city of Azadshahr, Golestan Province. Khamenei had decided, without consultation, to dismiss Gorgij and appoint another Sunni cleric, Mowlavi Mashout, in his place, although the latter refused to take over in protest at the former's dismissal. As a result of his refusal, Mashout was arrest-

ed by officers of the regime's infamous Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps intelligence division. The decision to dismiss Gorgij and appoint Mashout was taken without consulting either cleric or any other Sunni dignitaries or scholars and sparked massive protests in the Sunni-majority Iranian provinces. This incident shone a light on the dilemma facing Sunni scholars in Iran. This is not the first time that the regime has cracked down on a particular cleric or group of Sunni scholars. The regime has taken measures to restrict the movements of Sunni scholars inside Iran without permission from the relevant authorities. Commenting on the decision, Gorgij said: "Iran alleges that there's freedom at home. But the well-known Sunni scholars cannot travel to all the Sunni provinces (when they need to)." A number of points underline the gravity and importance of this approach toward Sunni scholars. Firstly, these restrictions clearly demonstrate the state of terror that the Iranian regime is constructing. Second, the regime's use of these measures underlines its fragility and its fear of Sunni scholars, particularly their influence on Iranian public opinion – Sunni and Shiite alike – and demonstrates the leadership's deep-seated concern over the possibility of sectarian or political rebellions against the political system in those regions of Iran where Sunni influence is dominant. These strategic Sunni-majority regions are mostly concentrated in the peripheral provinces in border areas, such as Kurdistan, Sistan and Balochistan, and Ahwaz, which all border Sunni-majority countries. The ruling elites in Iran are well aware of the central influence of religion on the Iranian people generally. Hence, they are keen to ensure that the country's Sunni scholars have no role in shaping and influencing the collective Iranian psyche. More importantly, the regime actively opposes any real unity between Shiites and Sunnis and foments hostility among the Islamic sects. The leadership in Tehran

does not wish to see the ideologically indoctrinated incubators of its doctrine reaching out to understand or listen to "the Sunni other" inside Iran, let alone uniting with Iranians of all sects in opposition to the regime itself. Therefore, the regime relies on maintaining a constant climate of sectarian hostility. Making each group mistrustful and resentful of the other is one of the central pillars of the Iranian regime's policymaking. The irony is that the regime is keen to promote fraternal slogans encouraging tolerance and "togetherness" with other Islamic sects overseas, while inflicting repression at home. In foreign policy, Tehran likes to promote itself as a unifying force striving to bring Shiites and Sunnis closer together – a PR strategy it uses to whitewash its actual, wholly sectarian, agenda. Another angle to consider is the regime's intimidation of Sunni scholars and jurists through its infamous Special Court for Clerics. This court summons Sunni scholars with the specific objective of intimidating them and restricting their movements. For example, it recently arrested a Sunni mufti in Iranian Kurdistan, Sheikh Hassan Amini, over his criticisms of the regime and his condemnation of its discrimination against Sunnis in terms of their lack of representation in government positions. In a nutshell, the regime has no genuine interest in Sunni-Shiite coexistence, unity and "togetherness" in Iran. Instead, it is far more concerned with maintaining its own narrow sectarian interests and perpetuating its hardline ideology. It is likely, therefore, that it will continue with its divide and rule approach, threatening the majority with the minority, threatening the minority with the majority, and prioritizing ideologically divisive and sectarian rhetoric for fear that any unity among the people or cooperation among clerics transcending ethno-sectarian affiliations and cutting across confessional boundaries would expose and undermine its ruling ideology and further weaken its legitimacy.

—Arab News



## Briefs

## Spezia stop AC Milan topping Serie A

NEWS DESK

MILAN: Emmanuel Gyasi coolly finished a 96th-minute counter-attack to give Spezia their first Serie A victory away to AC Milan, 2-1, on Monday night. Milan gave up a 1-0 lead as they missed a chance to overtake neighbours Inter at the top of Serie A, while third-place Napoli closed to within two points with a 2-0 win in Bologna. In the late game, Fiorentina crushed dispirited Genoa 6-0 to jump sixth. Milan dominated much of the game but spurned a host of chances. In the 44th minute, Rafael Leao escaped behind the Spezia defence but was flattened by goalie Ivan Provedel kicking wildly at the bouncing ball. Theo Hernandez fired the penalty wide. A minute later Leao escaped again and this time reached the ball first and lobbed Provedel to give Milan the lead. Spezia hit back when Kevin Agudelo, finding a huge hole in the home defence, tapped in a low Daniele Verde cross at the near post after 64 minutes. As the game entered five minutes of added time, Junior Messias put the ball in the net for Milan, but the referee had already whistled for a foul rather than allow the home team the advantage.

## Real Madrid great Gento dies aged 88

MADRID: Francisco "Paco" Gento, one of Real Madrid's greatest players and a European champion with Spain, has died at the age of 88, the club said on Tuesday. Having started his career at Racing Santander, Gento joined Real Madrid in 1953 and spent 18 years in the Spanish capital until his retirement in 1971. The left winger made 600 appearances for the club and scored 182 goals. Gento remains the only player to have won six European Cups and he also won 12 league crowns, two Copa del Rey titles and one Intercontinental Cup during his time at Real. "Real Madrid would like to express its condolences and its love and affection to his wife Mari Luz, his sons Francisco and Julio, his granddaughters Aitana and Candela and all his relatives, colleagues and loved ones," the club said in a statement. Gento won 43 caps for Spain and represented his country in the 1962 and 1966 World Cups. — APP

## Fawad slams Maryam...

FROM PAGE 01 meeting on Tuesday, he said that the government wanted to sit with the opposition on two or three issues but the opposition did not want and the opposition thinks that the government will fall soon but it will not happen. The minister said that the opposition leadership has been trying for the past four years to overthrow government and "I think the opposition will spend the next five years doing the same."

## Pak, UK agree for...

FROM PAGE 01 It was realized that the agreements are in the interest of both the countries and there is a need to accelerate progress in it. The two sides were also of the view that bilateral agreements will further strengthen co-operation between the two countries. On the occasion, the Interior Minister said Pakistan and the United Kingdom have long-standing ties and we give immense value to our ties with the United Kingdom. He said the Pakistanis residing in the United Kingdom are helpful in promotion of bilateral ties. The British High Commissioner said Pakistan and the United Kingdom have friendly multi-faceted relationship. He appreciated Pakistan's assistance in evacuation of foreigners and Afghan citizens from Kabul.

## Murray wins in Australia for 1st time since 2017

The 34-year-old Murray clinched it win on his third match point, he turned to the back of the court, closed his eyes and pumped his fists to celebrate

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Five years and five long sets later, five-time Australian Open runner-up Andy Murray finally has won another match at the season-opening Grand Slam tournament. The former No. 1-ranked Murray, playing thanks to a wild-card invitation as he continues his career comeback from hip operations and thoughts of retirement, beat 21st-seeded Nikoloz Basilashvili 6-1, 3-6, 6-4, 6-7 (5), 6-4 on Tuesday to reach the second round at Melbourne Park. He lost a five-setter in the first round in 2019 — a match he, and everyone else, thought might have been his last in Australia — after missing the 2018 edition with an injury. He missed the 2020 tournament with a pelvic injury and last year's event because of COVID-19. "It's been a tough three, four years. Put in a lot of work to get back here," Murray said in his post-match TV interview at John Cain Arena, which was formerly known as Hisense and is parochially referred to as the People's Court. "I've played on this court many times, the atmosphere is incredible. This is the one where I thought I'd played my last. "Amazing to be back, winning a five-set battle like that. Couldn't ask for more." Murray beat Basilashvili in a three-hour three-setter last week in Sydney, where he reached the final of the tuneup tournament. This one went almost four hours.



When the 34-year-old Murray clinched it win on his third match point, he turned to the back of the court, closed his eyes and pumped his fists to celebrate. After walking over to his court-side chair and dropping his racket, he returned to the court, punched the air and yelled "Let's go!" It was Murray's 49th win in an Australian Open singles match, moving him ahead of Andre Agassi and Ivan Lendl into fifth-place all-time. According to the International Tennis Federation, it's the most match wins at a Grand Slam tournament without

winning the title, surpassing Lendl's 48 at Wimbledon. Regardless, match win No. 50 in Australia is the immediate priority. He next plays Taro Daniel, a qualifier from Japan. "I think there's things in my game I can do better," said Murray, who lost the 2010 final to Roger Federer and four others to Novak Djokovic. "Would love to have a deep run here, if possible. "It's something I've not had in one of the Slams since I've come back from the injury, and it's something that's motivating me." Murray wasn't the only dramatic

five-setter that finished in the early evening on Day 2. Ninth-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime fended off Emil Ruusuvuori 6-4, 0-6, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, and Maxime Cressy overcame 20 double-faults to upset fellow American and No. 22-seeded John Isner 7-6 (2), 7-5, 6-7 (4), 6-7 (4), 6-4. Second-seeded Daniil Medvedev, one of the biggest potential beneficiaries of Djokovic's deportation, had a much more routine first round. Nine-time champion Djokovic was already back in Serbia — two days after losing his legal challenge to stay in Australia despite being unvaccinated against COVID-19 — when Medvedev went into Rod Laver Arena for a 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (3) win over Henri Laaksonen. Aiming to be the first man in the Open era to win his second major title in the very next Grand Slam appearance after his first such trophy, Medvedev joined No. 5 Andrey Rublev, No. 11 Jannik Sinner, No. 13 Diego Schwartzman and No. 15 Roberto Bautista Agut in the second round. That's where things could get more tricky: He next faces the mercurial Australian Nick Kyrgios. Nobody has dominated in Melbourne like Djokovic, who is unbeaten in the 18 combined semifinals and finals he's reached at the Australian Open, including last year's victory over Medvedev for the title. But Medvedev avenged that with his breakthrough major title at the U.S. Open, where his victory meant Djokovic's bid for a calendar-year Grand Slam finished one win short.

## Babar, Shaheen excited to face-off against each other

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: The HBL Pakistan Super League has thrown up riveting rivalries since its outset. It has pitted the best of the world against each other, and international teammates have come face to face which has made for fantastic viewing for the fans around the world. The seventh edition of the HBL PSL, which will be played from 27 January till 27 February, will present the fans more such exciting competitions and one of the most sought-after face-off will be between the country's best batter and pacer — Karachi Kings' Babar Azam and

Lahore Qalandars' Shaheen Afridi. Both cricketers have been an integral part of the national team's set-up and played a crucial role for the side in a record-breaking 2021 in which Pakistan won 20 T20Is — the most by any team in a calendar year. They enter the HBL PSL 7 in red-hot form. Babar added 1,779 in his tally of 7,471 T20 runs in the last year and was the second best batter — in terms of runs — behind his Pakistan opening partner Mohammad Rizwan. The right-hander struck two centuries and 18 half-centuries, averaged over 48 and scored his runs at a strike rate of 131.38. Shaheen was one of the

four pacers to take more than 50 T20 wickets in 2021. The left-armers' thunderbolts added 51 scalps — at 21.50 runs apiece — to his account at a strike rate of 16.4. He leaked 7.82 runs, on average, in 2021 — which is a testimony to his extraordinary control in all phases of the innings, considering how unforgiving this format has been for bowlers. Babar and Shaheen have faced-off seven times in the HBL PSL and the honours have somewhat remained even. Shaheen has bowled 46 deliveries to Babar in which he has gotten him out once — bowled, off stump knocked over, in the last HBL PSL. Babar has scored 73 against Shaheen, hitting 12 fours. Babar is yet to smack Shaheen for a maximum.

The two are expected to meet in the powerplay and both boast extraordinary record in the first six overs in an innings in HBL PSL. Shaheen's economy of 6.66 is the best amongst the pacers with at least 10 wickets and Babar averages a staggering 77.42 — the highest for a batter with 500 runs in this phase — and has only been dismissed seven times in 34 innings. What further spices up the rivalry between these two is the fact that Babar and Shaheen will be leading their sides after the 21-year-old pacer was recently appointed as Lahore Qalandars' captain.



## Lewandowski and Putellas win FIFA 'Best' awards

WEB DESK

PARIS: Bayern Munich's record-setting striker Robert Lewandowski retained FIFA's top men's player title Monday at "The Best" of 2021 ceremony as Barcelona captain Alexia Putellas collected the award for best women's player. The 33-year-old Lewandowski set a Bundesliga goal record last season, and edged Argentine Lionel Messi of Paris Saint-Germain and Egyptian Mohamed Salah of Liverpool for the award. "I'm happy and honoured to win this award, and I feel very proud," said Lewandowski who scored a total of 48 goals for club and country in 2020-2021. Lewandowski scored three

times for Bayern at the weekend taking his 2021-2022 season tally to 39 goals in 33 matches. The trophy was some consolation for the Polish striker who lost out to Messi for the older and rival award the Ballon d'Or in November. For Putellas, it marked an awards double as the Spaniard triumphed over Barcelona team-mate Jennifer Hermoso and Chelsea's Australian striker Sam Kerr, just as she did for the Ballon d'Or. The 27-year-old midfielder enjoyed an exceptional 2020-2021 season with Barcelona, leading the Catalans to the Spanish league and cup double as well as the Champions League. "This trophy is for everyone in the team," Putellas said. "The trophy will be an inspiration for us all."

The best starting women's 11 however featured no Barcelona player. Cristiano Ronaldo won the Special Award in recognition of setting a record of most international goals scored for his country, beating Ali Daei's long-standing mark of 109 for Iran. The 36-year-old Ronaldo now has 115 goals from 184 games with Portugal after making his debut aged 18 back in 2003. "I never expected to beat this record, and I thank my teammates from these past 20 years," said Ronaldo, who also holds the record for 140 Champions League goals. Chelsea's Senegalese stopper Edouard Mendy and Christiane Endler of Lyon won the coaching awards. Chelsea picked up both coaching awards through Thomas Tuchel and Emma Hayes.

## Raducanu survives Stephens test on Aus Open debut

Raducanu, who rocketed to fame in September with a fairytale run to the US Open title as a qualifier without dropping a set

AGENCIES

MELBOURNE: Britain's teenage sensation Emma Raducanu cleared a dangerous first-round hurdle at the Australian Open, seeing off experienced American Sloane Stephens 6-0 2-6 6-1 in a topsy-turvy contest on Tuesday. Raducanu, who rocketed to fame in September with a fairytale run to the U.S. Open title as a qualifier without dropping a set in what was only her fourth senior tournament, raced through the opening set in 17 minutes, leaking only four points. But former world number three and 2017 U.S. Open champion Stephens finally found her rhythm and range to take charge of the second set from 2-2, reeling off four games as errors began creeping in to 17th seed Raducanu's game. It looked ominous at that point for the 19-year-old Raducanu whose build-up to her Australian Open debut had hardly been ideal, having had COVID-19 and suffering a heavy defeat in her opening match in Sydney. But she showed the same coolness under pressure that swept her to the title in New York, settling down and finding another gear to dominate the decider with some precision baseline hitting as the Stephens game unravelled again. Stephens avoided another rout as she held serve at 0-5 but there was not to be another twist on a sparsely-populated Margaret Court as Raducanu closed out the win on serve despite a sixth double-fault on her first match point.

It was an encouraging start for Raducanu despite the second-set wobble and she will be heavily fancied to get past 99th ranked Danka Kovinic of Montenegro in the second round.



## Romanian star Halep still dreaming of more Slams

"I don't know what to say about the final. It's one of my dreams to get there, but I know it is difficult. I'm not going to think about that"

WEB DESK

MELBOURNE: Former world number one Simona Halep said she was still dreaming of more Grand Slam success Tuesday despite an error-strewn performance to reach the Australian Open second round. The fit-again Romanian 14th seed came into the tournament full of confidence after her first title in 16 months at the Melbourne Summer Set. But she struggled to find her groove against Poland's 102nd-ranked Magdalena Frech before banking the win 6-4, 6-3 on Margaret Court Arena to keep her hopes of a third major title alive. "I feel good physically, I have no problems. I think I'm fit. I worked hard in the off-season," she said when asked if she could go all the way to Melbourne Park. "I don't know what to say about the final. It's one of my dreams

to get there, but I know it is difficult. I'm not going to think about that." Halep, the runner-up in

2018 to Caroline Wozniacki and semi-finalist two years later, is on her way back after a truncated

2021 season when she struggled with calf and knee injuries. It was a far-from-convincing per-

formance against Frech, with both players struggling to hold serve in the opening set. The Pole was broken three times and Halep twice. Ultimately, the Romanian was stronger in the rallies and she finally sealed the set on serve with a trademark backhand down the line. Neither player's serve improved in the second set with Halep immediately breaking before Frech went on a three-game win streak as the error count mounted. Halep then reeled off five games in a row to ensure victory and a second-round clash with either American qualifier Katie Volynets or Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia. "The first match is always tough, I was very nervous," she said. "My serve is not that strong like other players that are very tall. "I didn't feel like it was a big minus today. Was not great, but was not bad."



## Top Houthi Gen killed...

FROM PAGE 01

Kingdom affirms its full stand with the brotherly United Arab Emirates in the face of everything that threatens its security and stability," the statement said. "The Kingdom also points out that this terrorist act, which is behind the evil forces of the Houthi terrorist militia, reaffirms the seriousness of this terrorist group and its threat to security, peace, and stability in the region and the world." The UAE and Saudi Arabia have been embroiled in Yemen's civil war since the Arab Coalition intervened in 2015.

## MBS condemns...

FROM PAGE 01

drones, setting off explosions in fuel trucks that killed three people and injured six others and causing a fire near the airport. And in another incident, eight explosive-laden drones were launched by the Houthis toward Saudi Arabia, all of which were intercepted. The two leaders affirmed that these terrorist acts that targeted the Kingdom and the UAE would increase both countries' "resolve and their determination to continue to confront those aggressive practices" carried out by the Houthi militia, who have wreaked havoc in Yemen, killing the Yemeni people and continue its "miserable and unsuccessful attempts to spread chaos" with the aim of destabilizing the region's security and stability.

## Blinken to visit...

FROM PAGE 01

transatlantic powers will discuss "joint efforts to deter further Russian aggression against Ukraine, including allies' and partners' readiness to impose massive consequences and severe economic costs on Russia," Price said in a statement. Blinken's trip "follows extensive diplomacy with our European allies and partners about a united approach to address the threat Russia poses to Ukraine and our joint efforts to encourage it to choose diplomacy and de-escalation in the interests of security and stability," Price said. It comes as Blinken's German and French counterparts also visit Ukraine, following travel to the frontlines by top EU diplomat Josep Borrell. Meanwhile Russian President Vladimir Putin will host his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi in Moscow on Wednesday, the Kremlin said, amid talks aimed at reviving the Iran nuclear deal. The meeting will be Raisi's most important official visit abroad since he took office in August, and the first visit by an Iranian president to Russia since 2017. The leaders will discuss the "whole range of issues of bilateral cooperation," including the 2015 deal that offered Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, the Kremlin said in a statement.

## PM directs to finalize...

FROM PAGE 01

are six times higher than Pakistan. The meeting was also briefed on the electricity transmission system. It was informed that first time in the history circular debt will witness decline from this year. The Minister said federal cabinet also recommended that Senate and National Assembly should constitute standing committees while keeping in view the element of conflict of interest. About Omicron situation, the Minister was briefed that daily cases of the virus have reached to five thousand per day while 30 percent increase of patients in ICU was recorded. Till date vaccination worth two billion dollars has been imported. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar said major reason of gas shortage in Sindh is the stay order taken by local industrialists from Sindh High Court. He expressed the hope that soon the stay will be vacated and around 100mm (standard cubic foot) will be added in the system for household consumers.



## Briefs

**UN chief calls to make 2022 true moment of recovery**

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday called on the world community to "stand together to make 2022 a true moment of recovery." Guterres made the remarks during his speech at the 2022 World Economic Forum (WEF) virtual session. While "the world is emerging from the depths of a paralyzing economic crisis," he warned that the recovery remains fragile and uneven amid the lingering pandemic and persistent labor market challenges, among others. He also said that the last two years have demonstrated a simple but brutal truth: "if we leave anyone behind, in the end we leave everyone behind."

"To chart a new course, we need all hands on deck," he said, adding that "we need to confront the pandemic with equity and fairness."

"Vaccination rates in high-income countries are - shamefully - seven times higher than in African countries. We need vaccine equity, now," the UN chief appealed. He also called on the global community to reform the global financial system so it works for all countries, and to support real climate action in developing countries.

**EU denounces violence in Sudan**

CAIRO: The European Union's foreign policy chief on Tuesday said Sudan's military rulers have shown an unwillingness to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the country's ongoing crisis, a day after security forces opened fire on anti-coup protesters in the capital, Khartoum. At least seven people were killed.

Across Sudan, the pro-democracy movement kicked off a civil disobedience campaign to protest Monday's killings. More than 70 people have been killed and hundreds of others have been wounded in mass protests since the military took over on Oct. 25, removing the country's civilian-led government.

EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell said that repeated calls for Sudanese authorities to refrain from violence against protesters "have fallen on deaf ears." The coup has upended Sudan's transition to democratic rule after three decades of repression and international isolation under autocratic President Omar al-Bashir. The African nation has been on a fragile path to democracy since a popular uprising forced the military to remove al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019. Borrell said the ongoing crackdown, including violence against civilians and the detention of activists and journalists, has put Sudan on "a dangerous path away from peace and stability." - APP

**Wheat production will drop this year: PBF**

DNA

LAHORE: President of Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), Mian Usman Zulfiqar said that the government functionaries are terming the shortage of urea a mere propaganda. "The relevant minister termed the fears of shortage mere propaganda. Our repeated pleas to keep agriculture out of politics fell on deaf ears. Now everyone is seeing the disastrous results," he added.

He said the artificial shortage of fertilisers in the different districts will affect the per acre yield of wheat in the ongoing season. Pakistan's wheat crop is under threat, as the farmers are facing acute shortage of urea since the start of the sowing season. Despite the government's claims, the farmers are still paying Rs2,500 to Rs2,700 for 50kg bags as against the officially fixed rate of Rs1,768. However, the government claims surplus availability of the commodity but the growers fear the persistent shortages will also hit the sugarcane and maize crops, which they termed a bad omen for the sugar and poultry sectors.

# Germany ready to pay high price to defend values

"Germany has reiterated that, in case energy is being used as a weapon, that this would have consequences on the (Nord Stream 2) pipeline," she noted

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: Germany is ready to defend fundamental values in the conflict with Russia over Ukraine, even if this means paying a high economic price, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said after talks with her Russian counterpart in Moscow on Tuesday. Baerbock travelled on to Moscow from a visit to Kyiv on Monday after talks between Russia and Western states on the Kremlin's deployment of tens of thousands of troops along Ukraine's border ended with no breakthrough last week. Russia has denied any plans to attack Ukraine, but Baerbock said it was difficult not to assess the Russian mili-

tary build-up on the border of Ukraine as "a threat." Pressure is growing on the German government to threaten to halt the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, intended to bring more Russian gas to Western Europe, if Russian troops invade Ukraine. Opponents of the project, including Ukraine and the United States, argue it would make Europe too dependent on Russia. "We have no other option, even if this means paying a high economic price," Baerbock told a joint news conference with Sergei Lavrov after the meeting. "Germany has reiterated that, in case energy is being used as a weapon, that this would have consequences on the (Nord Stream 2) pipeline," she noted. Ger-



man Chancellor Olaf Scholz has said Germany is open to sanctions against Russia but the pipeline, which has already been built but not yet approved for operation, is a private commercial project that should not be singled out. The news conference came as the U.S. State Department said U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken would travel to Kyiv and Berlin this week. The United States has warned Russia not to invade Ukraine and urged both countries to return to a set of agreements designed to end the war in the eastern Donbass region.

## Russia, Belarus to rehearse in joint drills

MOSCOW: Russia and Belarus will rehearse repelling an external attack when they hold joint military drills in Belarus next month, both sides said on Tuesday, at a time of acute tensions with the West over neighboring Ukraine. Russian military forces and hardware began arriving in ex-Soviet Belarus on Monday for the "Allied Resolve" drills to be held near Belarus's western border with NATO members Poland and Lithuania, and close to its southern flank with Ukraine. The West has voiced fears of a possible invasion of Ukraine by tens of thousands of Russian troops gathered near its border. Russia has denied such plans. "The goal of the exercise is to fine-tune the tasks of suppressing and repelling external aggression during a defensive operation, countering terrorism and protecting the interests of the Union State (Russia and Belarus)," the Interfax news agency quoted Deputy Russian Defence Minister Alexander Fomin as saying. - DNA

## Omani Commander hails Pak sacrifices in war on terror

Chairman JCSC emphasized the need to further enhance the existing defence and security cooperation and said that Pakistan-Oman co-op will have positive impact on peace and security in region



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Admiral Saif Nasser Mohsen Al Rahbi, Commander Royal Navy of Oman called on General Na-deemRaza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee at Joint Staff Headquarters,

Rawalpindi today. Besides security and regional issues, matters related to enhancing the level and scope of bilateral military engagements and cooperation in various fields between the two brotherly countries were discussed during the meeting. Chairman JCSC emphasized

the need to further enhance the existing defence and security cooperation and said that Pakistan-Oman cooperation will have positive impact on peace and security in the region. General Na-deemRaza reiterated that all regional countries need to work collectively to ensure long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan. The visiting dignitary remained appreciative of the role of the Pakistan Armed Forces in capacity building of Oman Armed Forces. He also acknowledged the sacrifices made by Pakistan in the war against terrorism.

## German arms exports hit record

WEB DESK

BERLIN: Germany's arms exports reached record levels in 2021, largely due to significant sales of maritime and air defense weapons to Egypt, officials said Tuesday. Preliminary figures released by the Economy Ministry show Germany exported arms worth 9.35 billion euros (\$10.65 billion) last year, an increase of 61% compared to 2020. This topped the previous record amount of 8 billion euros in 2019. Most of the exports - worth over 9 billion euros - were authorized by the previous government under former Chancellor Angela Merkel, the ministry said.

## South Korean president in Saudi Arabia, meets crown prince

DNA

RIYADH: South Korea's leader arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, where he was greeted in Riyadh by the kingdom's crown prince and an honor guard marching band. It was the second stop on a Mideast tour by South Korean President Moon Jae-in and his wife, who were greeted on the tarmac by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. All were masked and President Moon did not shake hands with the prince, in line with coronavirus social distancing practices. It is the latest visit by a head of state to Saudi Arabia as a growing number of world leaders resume bilateral meetings and trips abroad following COVID-19 vaccine rollouts in many parts of the world. Prince Mohammed bin Salman has largely taken over day-to-day rule of

Saudi Arabia from his father, King Salman. It was unclear whether President Moon would also meet King Salman, who has only made limited public appearances since the outbreak of the virus globally in March 2020.

The crown prince's Vision 2030 reform agenda, which lays out a blueprint for diversifying the kingdom's economy away from reliance on oil and modernizing its society, is a driving force for many of Saudi Ara-

bia's current economic initiatives. The prince is seeking investments for his mega projects, including in the construction, artificial intelligence, education and energy sectors. South Korea underwent its own economic diversification in the 1970s and is a global powerhouse in technology and manufacturing. Relations between South Korea and Saudi Arabia date back to the early 1960s, and have been underpinned since by South Korea's heavy reliance on oil and gas imports to power its energy-intensive economy, dominated by manufacturing industries from cars to petrochemicals. The kingdom also is Seoul's top trading partner, though over 90% of South Korea's imports from Saudi Arabia are concentrated in oil, according to a 2018 report published by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies on bilateral relations.



## NATO seeks broad practical co-op with Azerbaijan

"He reviewed NATO-Azerbaijan cooperation, including the resumption of cooperation with the Azerbaijan authorities within the Planning and Review Process partnership framework," official said

DNA

BAKU: NATO looks forward to a continued high-level political dialogue and broad practical cooperation with Azerbaijan in the coming period, Trend has reported quoting an unnamed NATO official. NATO urges Armenia and Azerbaijan to avoid actions that could result in the resumption of violence and welcomes dialogue between the sides both within the Minsk Group and outside this framework. "Armenia and Azerbaijan are both valued partners of NATO. Unresolved issues should be settled diplomatically. We hope to see steps towards a normalization of relations between the two countries," added the NATO official. The organization's representative said that during his recent visit

to the region, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Javier Colomina met a range of Azerbaijani officials. "He reviewed NATO-Azerbaijan cooperation, including the resumption of cooperation with the Azerbaijan authorities within the Planning and Review Process partnership framework," the official said. As for the situation in the South Caucasus, the NATO official noted that the Alliance hopes to see steps towards a normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It should be noted that Azerbaijan's cooperation with NATO began in 1994 under the Partnership for Peace framework document. President Ilham Aliyev has seven times been to the NATO headquarters and NATO secretary generals have visited Azerbaijan three

times. Aliyev also attended seven NATO Summits (Istanbul 2004, Bucharest 2008, Lisbon 2010, Chicago 2012, Cardiff 2014, Warsaw 2016, and Brussels 2018). NATO has always supported Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the ninth NATO Summit, the final documents of the event expressed support for Azerbaijan's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. The documents stressed the importance of resolving the conflicts in the South Caucasus, including the former Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, in line with norms and principles of international law. During the 44-day war in 2020, NATO repeatedly called on Azerbaijan and Armenia to maintain the ceasefire and continue negotiations. In October 2020, during a press conference with Armenian President Ar-

menSargsyan, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg reminded the Armenian president that NATO is not engaged in this conflict. In the post-conflict period, the new reality created by Azerbaijan as a result of the historic victory over Armenia was also accepted by NATO, and a paragraph referring to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict was removed from the final text of the NATO Summit in Brussels in June 2021. The main areas of practical cooperation between Azerbaijan and NATO include reforms in the defense and security sector, participation in international operations, emergency readiness, scientific and environmental issues related to security, and public diplomacy. Azerbaijan has taken serious steps to bring its armed forces in line with NATO standards. Since 2002,

more than 30 Azerbaijani officers have served at NATO headquarters and agencies. Practical projects between Azerbaijan and NATO, such as the Saloglu and Jeyranchoh projects on mine clearance have been successfully implemented. Azerbaijan has actively participated in NATO missions in Afghanistan since 2002. From 2015 to August 2021, Azerbaijan participated in the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. A total of 120 Azerbaijani servicemen served at Kabul International Airport during the Taliban takeover of Kabul. The Azerbaijani military has made a significant contribution to ensuring security at the airport and organizing the safe evacuation of the population. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg thanked Azerbaijan for its services in ensuring security at the airport in August 2021.

## Pakistan to facilitate Chinese investors

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on CPEC Affairs Khalid Mansoor and Minister of State, Chairman of Board of Investment (BoI) Muhammad Azfar Ahsan at a meeting agreed to facilitate and invite leading Chinese investors for B2B and B2G collaboration, taking all stakeholders on board. The meeting was specifically focused on Prime Minister's upcoming visit to China, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. During the meeting Muhammad Azfar Ahsan said that Pakistan accords top priority to the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It was agreed that the forthcoming visit would further strengthen the already impregnable bond with China. The two sides decided to collaborate and focus on projects currently in pipeline whilst exploring further avenues for investment. As Prime Minister Imran Khan is bracing for a three-day official visit to China during the first week of February 2022, Prime Minister Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and BoI have started interactions with other line ministries to finalize agenda of premier's meetings with Chinese leadership and private sector companies. In addition to geopolitical and defense cooperation at the highest level, Prime Minister will have high level interactions with the Chinese private sector to attract investment in the second phase of CPEC. According to the sources, BoI has been tasked by the National Security Division (NSD) to collect the data of notable Chinese companies with a definite plan to invest in Pakistan. - APP

Indonesia's foreign debt falls to 416.4 bln USD

JAKARTA: Indonesia's foreign debt in November 2021 was recorded at 416.4 billion U.S. dollars, down from the previous month's 422.3 billion dollars, the country's central bank Bank Indonesia (BI) said Monday. Of the 416.4 billion dollars, the government's foreign debt was recorded at 202.2 billion dollars, the private sector's debt was 205.2 billion dollars and the central bank's debt was 9 billion dollars, said BI's Head of the Communication Department Erwin Haryono. "The government's foreign debt contracted 0.7 percent year-on-year (yoy) after growing 2.5 percent yoy in the previous month," said Haryono. The contraction occurred mainly due to the adjustment of foreign capital flows in the state securities market when global sentiment pushed back the upward trend in U.S. Treasury yields following the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting, Haryono added. - APP

## UN will try to keep Tonga Covid-free in relief effort

GENEVA: The United Nations said Tuesday it would try to maintain Tonga's Covid-free status in the relief effort following the volcano eruption and subsequent tsunami that hit the Pacific island nation. Any humanitarian efforts to help the remote kingdom will follow the country's strict protocols for keeping out the coronavirus pandemic, UN agencies told reporters in Geneva. "Tonga is a zero-Covid country," said Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "They have very strict protocols for that. One of the first rules of humanitarian action is 'do no harm'," he said. "So we want to make absolutely sure that all necessary protocols for entry into the country will be followed." Tonga only recently reported its first and only coronavirus case. Sixty percent of the country's population of over 100,000 people are fully vaccinated against Covid-19, according to figures from the World Health Organization. - APP

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## Kyiv embassy working normally: Russia

MOSCOW: Russia said on Tuesday its embassy in Kyiv was operating as usual following a New York Times report that Moscow had begun evacuating the families of staff at its diplomatic missions in Ukraine, the Interfax news agency reported. The New York Times cited a senior Ukrainian official as saying that 18 people, mostly family members of Russian diplomats, had left Ukraine on Jan. 5. It said around 30 others left the embassy in Kyiv and the consulate in Lviv in western Ukraine over the next few days. The US newspaper also reported that diplomats at two other Russian consulates had been told to prepare to leave Ukraine. The Russian foreign ministry did not comment on its consulates in Ukraine but told Interfax that its embassy in Kyiv was operating normally. It did not provide further detail. The Ukrainian foreign ministry said it had not received any information from Moscow about the evacuation of employees from its diplomatic outposts in Ukraine. It added that Kyiv had no plans to evacuate Ukrainian diplomats from Russia. - APP



**Briefs**

**APNS, CPNE, PBA reject Fawad's tweet on media**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Top media associations including APNS, CPNE and the PBA have issued a statement taking serious notice of Federal Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry's tweet about media revenues and dismissed figures quoted by him as baseless and completely incorrect. "Subsequently the original source also clarified that the figures were printed erroneously due to a technical error," according to a joint statement issued by the media organizations. The joint statement called the information minister's tweet a classic example of fake news and an attempt to create a divide between media houses and the workers. The statement went on to specifically point out how the minister himself is spreading false news. "He has only exposed his own ignorance about the matter and also how ill-informed his ministry is," the statement said, demanding that the minister withdraw his tweet immediately.

**Businessmen, Afghan envoy agree on removal of hindrances**

PESHAWAR: An agreement was reached between businessmen and Newly appointed Acting Consul General of Afghanistan in Peshawar, Hafiz Mohibullah for joint efforts to remove hindrances in mutual trade and Transit Trade. The agreement was reached during a meeting of delegation of businessmen led by Vice President of Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi and Acting Afghan Consul General, says a press release issued here on Tuesday. The businessmen' delegation comprises of prominent importers and exporters of Pakistan and Afghanistan, transporters, custom clearing agents and people associated with trade between the two neighbouring countries. Newly appointed Commercial Attaché at Afghan Consulate, Waheedullah Himmat, Deputy Attaché, Hameedullah Fazil Khel, outgoing commercial attaché, Fawad Arsh and other officials were present on the occasion. The delegation members congratulated newly appointed officials from Taliban government and briefed them about the problems and difficulties being faced by businessmen of both the countries. Speaking on the occasion, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi who is also President of Frontier Custom Agents Association said that there are a lot of difficulties in Afghan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) as a result of which it is not finalized yet. He said around 90 percent work on APTTA has been completed and only 10 percent is remaining and there is need of involving stakeholders from both the countries. - APP

**EU parliament elects Metsola as president**

The support of Renew was significant, as some French MEPs had voiced qualms about Metsola's anti-abortion stance

BRUSSELS: A conservative Maltese lawyer who opposes abortion has been elected president of the European parliament, the first woman in 20 years to lead the assembly. Roberta Metsola, who is celebrating her 43rd birthday on Tuesday, is the youngest-ever president of the European parliament, winning a comfortable majority to serve a two-and-a-half-year term. A former civil servant first elected in 2013, she is the first person from Malta, the smallest member state, to lead any EU institution. Metsola, a member of the centre-right European People's party, had been serving as interim president after the untimely death of David Sassoli last week. Sassoli, a popular Italian Social Democrat, was due to end his term in this week's midterm reshuffle of top jobs. As the favourite to succeed Sassoli since her candidacy was announced last autumn, Metsola's victory was never in doubt after the parliament's three largest groups made a pact to support her on the eve of the vote. She won 458 of 690 votes cast, easily beating three rivals from smaller groups: the Greens, the radical left and conservative nationalists. The Socialists and Democrats, the second-largest group behind the EPP, threw their weight behind Metsola to gain a bigger number of 14 vice-president posts. Also joining the alliance was the centrist Renew group led by Stéphane Séjourné, ally of the French president, Emmanuel Macron. The support of Renew was significant, as some French MEPs had voiced qualms about Metsola's anti-abortion stance. - APP

**Indonesian coal exports support CPEC energy projects in Pakistan: Envoy**

By knowing exactly the nominal demand for coal along with the specifications, the demand for coal products will easily be consolidated through a consortium of Indonesian exporters to meet specific demands here



STAFF REPORT/DNA

LAHORE: The Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan Mr. Adam M. Tugio met with prominent businessmen in Lahore for promoting bilateral cooperation especially the Indonesian coals in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by several businessmen from different sectors, such as textile industry, steel, ceramic and cement, all of which have the potential to import coal for their energy generators. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Tugio said that since Indonesia is

refined in coal industry, it could provide coal for the power projects under the CPEC and to Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has been paying special attention to the development of infrastructure and energy supply as it is one of the Belt and Road Initiative countries, where coal is a major part of energy projects. "By knowing exactly the nominal demand for coal along with the specifications, the demand for coal products will easily be consolidated through a consortium of Indonesian exporters to meet specific demands



here", the Ambassador remarked. The figures show that Pakistan's demand for coal is continuously increasing every year. In 2020, the total import value of coal (coal, briquettes) was US\$ 1.233 billion (17,146 million tons), while Indonesia's exports to Pakistan are merely US\$ 224 million (3,520 million tons). Still Indonesia has the potential to increase export to meet Pakistan's coal market requirement around US\$ 1.008 billion. "Through modern approaches, it is hoped that the combination of large-scale Pakistani companies can maintain supply chain continuity and

control the quality of the imported coal, and the consortium of Indonesian suppliers will obtain certainty and continuity of orders from the group of Pakistani companies," Ambassador Tugio added. BP's Statistical Review of World Energy 2021 noted the volume of Indonesia's coal exports to the world in 2020 reached 8.51 million tons. This figure is equivalent to 26.8% of the total volume of coal exports in the world. Apart from Indonesia, Pakistan's coal imports came from South Africa amounting to US\$ 829 million, Russia US\$85 million, Aus-

tralia US\$ 45 million, Afghanistan US\$ 43 million, China US\$ 1.194 million and others. The meeting was held at the residence of a renowned businessman of Lahore. The gathering was initiated by the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad to promote diversified Indonesian products in Pakistan other than palm oil. It was also explored to convene business matching focusing on areas where Indonesia and Pakistan industries have complementarity such as in textiles and garments industry where cotton, yarn, polyester can be imported from Indonesia.

**PTI attaches importance to transparency, says Farrukh Akbar S. Babar could not produce any document or evidence, which could be presented in any court of law**

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said on Tuesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was the only political party that has attached importance to transparency in fund collection process. Talking to the media persons here he said that Akbar S. Babar was on the payroll of PML-N who has been exposed by the findings of the scrutiny committee. The minister said that according to Page 81 of this report, Akbar S. Babar could not produce any document or evidence, which could be presented in any court of law and now it was proven that he had created a storm in a cup of tea. He said that Akbar S. Babar used to claim that there was funding from India and Israel, but he could not present any proof. Similarly, he said Maryam Safdar used to come out of the Election Commission and claimed that PTI



received funds from India and Israel but she also faces embarrassment when the claim proved wrong as per scrutiny committee report. He said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was being run in a clean and transparent manner and opposition claims proved wrong. The PTI was

the details of their parties' accounts. He said that they (PML-N) should tell who were Bhoon Das and Shujat Azeem and how many amounts they deposited in the PML-N accounts. Bilawal also has to give an account of Rs350 million, he said. Maulana Fazlur Rehman should also disclose how he received funding from Libya. The minister requested the Election Commission of Pakistan to activate the scrutiny committee as soon as possible so that funding of all other parties including PPP and PML-N should also be scrutinized. The Election Commission should resolve this issue as per the decision of the Supreme Court, Farrukh Habib said. He hoped that the ECP would soon investigate the funding of PPP and PML-N. He said that there was mention of Walton Cricket Ground, but there was nothing unusual as friendly cricket match was played between Pakistani nationals and the money was transferred through the bank.

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**Bolan railway track blown up, four bogies derailed**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: At least four bogies of Jaffar express derailed on Tuesday when an explosive device placed along with Bolan railway track went off. According to Railways official, unidentified men blew up a railway track of Bolan district in Balochistan and damaged a small portion of the railway track due to which train service suspended for few hours, a private news channels reported. Law enforcement agencies (LEAs) along with the bomb disposal squad team reached the site and cordoned off the entire area. Further investigation was underway.

**Russian troops arrive in Belarus for combat drills**

MOSCOW: Belarus said Tuesday that Russian troops had begun arriving in the country for military drills announced against the backdrop of tensions between the West and Russia over neighbouring Ukraine. The Belarusian defence ministry said it was hosting the combat readiness drills because of the continuing "aggravation" of tensions "including at the western and southern borders of the Republic of Belarus." - APP

**IHC adjourns Maryam's appeals till Feb 10**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday adjourned hearing till February 10, on appeals of Maryam Nawaz and her husband Capt (R) Muhammad Safdar against their convictions in Avenfield Property reference. A division bench comprising Justice Amer Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhter Kayani heard the above mentioned appeals. Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N)'s Vice President Maryam Nawaz and Capt (R) Muhammad Safdar appeared before the court along with their legal team. At the outset of hearing, Justice Kayani observed that the situation of COVID-19 outbreak was dangerous and everyone should take care of it while arriving courts. Meanwhile, the NAB prosecutor submitted the written comments against the plea of Maryam Nawaz. The court asked the defence lawyer Irfan Qadir whether he had read the answer of NAB in reply he said he didn't yet. The bench instructed the lawyer to read the NAB comments and then give arguments. The court adjourned further hearing on appeals till February 10. - APP

**Sudanese barricade streets, close shops after 7 killed**

KHARTOUM: Sudanese shattered shops and barricaded Khartoum streets on Tuesday in a civil disobedience campaign to protest one of the bloodiest days since an October coup derailed the country's democratic transition. Security forces on Monday killed at least seven people during anti-coup protests by thousands, bringing the total fatalities from the crackdown on anti-coup demonstrations to 71, according to medics. Sudan's main civilian bloc, the Forces for Freedom and Change, called for two days of civil disobedience to begin on Tuesday. - APP

**Indonesia passes law to relocate capital to Borneo jungle**

JAKARTA: Parliament on Tuesday approved a bill to relocate Indonesia's capital from Jakarta to a site deep within the jungle of Kalimantan on Borneo island, the most significant advancement of an idea the country's leaders have been toying with for years. The new state capital law, which provides a legal framework for President Joko Widodo's ambitious \$32 billion mega project, stipulates how development of the capital will be funded and governed. "The new capital has a central function and is a symbol of the identity of the nation, as well as a new centre of economic gravity," Planning Minister Suharto Monoarfa told parliament after the bill was passed into law. The initial relocation will start from between 2022 and 2024, with roads and ports prioritised to enable access, with some projects operating as public private partnerships, the finance ministry said. - APP

**NAB handovers huge properties to KPK govt**

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR.. The National Accountability Bureau Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has handed over properties worth Rs. 1.117 billion to government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, NHA and Pakistan Post recovered in 5 cases. As per details, NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa started year 2022 with Anti-Corruption Awareness walk which was followed by best officers awards distribution ceremony and handing over of recovered properties to the concerned departments. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Shah Farman was the chief guest on the occasion. Brigadier (R) Farooq Nasir

Awan(SIM) apprised him of the performance of NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He informed the audience that NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 100% disposal rate of the complaints. He also highlighted that since inception National Accountability Bureau Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has completed 1940 inquiries and filed 371 references in Accountability Courts. So far approx Rs.15 billion has been recovered by National Accountability Bureau Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. NAB has a conviction rate of 57% which is highest among all anti-corruption agencies of Pakistan. Mr. Shah Farman, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa appreciated the performance of National Accountability Bureau.

He highlighted the importance of awareness against corruption in general masses so that mindset could be changed. Mr Habib ur Rehman Addl Director, Imran Ali Mangrio Addl Director, Israr Ul Haq Addl Director Staff, Tariq Babar Deputy Director, Mehvish Gul Assistant Director, Ali Hassan Assistant Director, Rafi Jan Assistant Director, Uzair Assistant Director were handed over best officers certificates. In the end, Chief Guest handed over properties worth Rs723 million to Addl Secretary Finance. Properties worth Rs212 million were handed over to Member NHA and properties worth Rs 180 million DG Pakistan Post.



ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani, Ambassador of Norway and others posing for the recipients of awards and profits during a ceremony organized jointly by the Serena Hotels and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Photo Shahid Raju