



Islamabad POST

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Mohammad Rizwan declared ICC T20I Cricketer of the Year

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UK lawmaker says sacked for 'Muslimness'

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Berlusconi pulls out of Italian presidential race

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Shehbaz slams govt over urea crisis

DNA

LAHORE: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed grave concern over the acute shortage of urea fertilizer in the country. In a statement, he said how tragic it was that the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government was acting like a mute spectator to the ordeal of farmers who were running from pillar to the post in search of urea.

People helped Khan become PM

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said on Sunday that people, party and political struggle of 22 years aided Imran Khan become Prime Minister of the country and it was not him who helped him achieve the glory. Talking to the media during the inauguration of 20 water filtration plants under Punjab Aabe-Pak Authority (PAPA) here at the Governor's House, he said that only one person cannot help someone to be elected Member National Assembly (MNA), let alone Prime Minister of the country. - APP

Govt to bring judicial reforms

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farukh Habib on Sunday said the government was going to bring changes in the judicial system of the country in days to come. Talking to PTV, he said the opposition should support the government for bringing improvement in the system instead of just criticism. He said PM Imran Khan has informed the people regarding development initiatives taken by the government and given a hope to the people about their bright future. The minister said a continuous struggle was behind the success of the PM against the status quo.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Netherlands Wouter Plomp taking a selfie of his hiking group on the Margalla Hills. Even the harsh rainy weather could not stop them from their hiking spree. - DNA

OSLO INITIATIVE Taliban, Afghan civil society talks

OSLO: The first Taliban delegation to visit Europe since returning to power in Afghanistan began talks Sunday with Afghan civil society members focused on human rights, Norway's foreign ministry said. Headed by Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, the delegation was to dedicate the first day of their three-day visit to talks with women activists and journalists, among others, before meeting Western diplomats on Monday and Tuesday. The talks, facilitated by Norway, were taking place behind closed doors at the Soria Moria Hotel on the outskirts of Oslo. The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated drastically since August, when international aid came to a sudden halt in the country which is

Continued on Page 06

PM highlights Afghan crises

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday raised his voice at an international initiative to create awareness about the looming humanitarian crises in Afghanistan in the shape of starvation. On his twitter handle, the prime minister shared a trending hashtag '#SaveAfghanLives' by adding his voice in support of the Afghan people, especially the Afghan children,

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PM has accepted failure: Maryam

Says he has nothing to do except being revengeful

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Vice-president Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Maryam Nawaz on Sunday said that the Prime Minister Imran Khan sounds like person who is not only defeated but has accepted his own failure. Maryam Nawaz took it to twitter and registered her review in response to Prime Minister's address during the Aap Ka Wazir-e-Azam - Ap Kay Saath programme. The PML-N leader stated that PM has been in the government since four years but he has nothing to say about it, he is still whining. She added that the companions of the PM who stay at left and right have captured 220 million out of which the kitchen of the PM is being run. Maryam added that no proof on the claims that were alleged against the Sharif family and PML-N were proved. The PM must not blame the judiciary; he has nothing to do except being revengeful and blaming. The PML-N leader said that the PM was the inevitable man, whatever he spoke it reeked failure. PM is the part of the history which we will be taught as a lesson of those who rely more on conspiracies than the power of people. Moreover, she mentioned that the new hopes of PM costed the inefficiency and incompetency stricken people of the country their lives.



NO NRO FOR NAWAZ PM assures price hike to end soon

Says people came on roads in Kazakhstan to protest price hike; assures early resolution of poor people's problems; asks media to project govt positive things as well

SHUJAAT HAMZA/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said price hike was a worldwide phenomena, which had adversely affected all and sundry. He also gave example of Kazakhstan where people came on roads in order to protest hike in daily use items. The prime minister expressed these views during public interface on the national hook up. He further said government was about to introduce sweeping reforms in the judicial and criminal justice system. He said in few months these reforms shall be put in place. He added, the dilemma of this country is that the big fish always managed to go scot free while the poor people are made to suffer. The prime minister cursed the previous ruling elites including Nawaz Sharif and PPP leaders for damaging the economy of the country. Prime Minister Imran Khan has commenced a live session to interact with the public via telephonic calls today (Sunday). The premier is currently answering phone calls from citizens and his conversation with the public is being telecast live on television, radio and digital media.



Speaking to a caller, the premier lauded his government for exceeding the tax collection target. Addressing the media of the country, the premier said that while it is the right of the media to criticise the government, it should refrain from resorting to propaganda and fake news. "Our government is against mafias, and unfortunately, some elements within the media have also sided with them to spread negativity," he said. The Prime Minister said corporate sector earned a profit of 930 billion rupees.

Continued on Page 06

Thai embassy donates to PSH on Armed Forces Day

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Defense Attaché of Thailand Embassy in Islamabad, Col. Adisak Showichien, has felicitated the Pakistani friendly people on the auspicious occasion of Royal Thai Armed Forces Day, which is celebrated on 18th January every year. In a video message he announced that the official ceremony has been cancelled in view of rising Covid-19 cases. He also said that year 2022 marks 70th anniversary of Pak-Thailand diplomatic relations, which will be celebrated accordingly. He said the Thailand Embassy is also undertaking a donation campaign for Pakistan Sweet Homes.



Weapons found in S. Waziristan IBO, says ISPR

According to the army's media wing, during an intense exchange of fire, two terrorists were killed in the IBO

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have recovered a huge cache of weapons and IED preparation material during a raid at a terrorist hideout in the South Waziristan district of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Sunday. According to details shared by the ISPR, while acting on information of a terrorist hideout, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Sarwakai area of the South Waziristan district. During a search of the area, the army's media wing said that a large number of weapons, ammu-



munition and IED preparation material was recovered from the hideout. "Recovered cache of weapons and ammunition includes Sub Machine Guns, RPG-7, hand grenades and a large quantity of ammunition of multiple calibres."

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FM Qureshi visit a turning point in Spain-Pak ties

Ambassador of Spain Manuel Duran says Spanish citizens not at all discouraged to travel to Pakistan; it is in the interest of every member of the OIC to see Afghanistan recover

EXCLUSIVE

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Ambassador of Spain Manuel Duran talked to Daily Islamabad POST regarding the recent visit of Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi to Spain. The ambassador talked in detail as to how the visit shall further strengthen bilateral relations. Here is the text of the interview.

1) Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited Spain and met with his counterpart besides having important meetings with other dignitaries. How do you see this visit with regard to further strengthening of bilateral relations?

This visit is a turning point in our bilateral relations. I have the feeling that we are now witnessing the most eventful moment since our two countries established diplomatic relations 70 years ago. Our Foreign Minister, Mr Albares, came to Pakistan last September and met with

Mr Qureshi, General Bajwa and with the Prime Minister. Qureshi's visit to Spain has been the natural follow-up to that visit and has been incredibly rich in exchanges. He met with the third authority of our Country, the President of our Parliament, and also with the Minister of Commerce. Apart, naturally of his long encounter with our Foreign Minister. Different agreements and MOU's will soon be reality thanks to this visit. Our Authorities also insisted on thanking Pakistan for helping Spain in the evacuation of those afghan citizens who had worked for our country for years when we had a presence in Afghanistan

2) FM Qureshi also took up travel advisory issue review for Pakistanis. Do you think Pakistanis may have good news in this regards?

The travel advisory for Pakistan has changed enormously since the days when most European countries warned their citizens against visiting Pakistan on account of the security concerns. Now, most European countries only highlight those areas in Pakistan in which there is a certain level of insecurity, but our citizens are not at all



discouraged to travel to Pakistan. We keep updating these recommendations and every time there is a change, it is always in a positive and constructive sense.

3) The matter of dual citizenship also came under discussion. Recently Norway has allowed Pakistanis to

keep both nationalities i.e Pakistani and Norwegian. Can we expect same arrangement with Spain as well?

Mr Albares was very clear when this issue was raised during the press conference that took place after the encounter between the two Ministers. The issue of Double nationality, like all issues con-

nected with Spanish nationality, is contemplated in our Civil Code. A change of legislation is constitutionally complicated. Having said this, the Minister committed himself to creating a Working group in which both the Embassies will try to make the lives of the Pakistani community living in Spain easier.

4) Let me avail this opportunity to have your insight about the recently held OIC meeting on Afghanistan. How do you see this event and do you think it can help overcome humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan?

I really hope this important meeting will raise awareness about the vital importance of addressing the Humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. I tend to be optimistic, and in this case, there are reasons for hope, because during the Conference one could feel that everyone was in favour of helping the Afghans stand on their feet again. The end of this terrible Humanitarian crisis is the only way of creating a peaceful environment for the whole region. It is in the interest of every member of the OIC to see Afghanistan recover and rebuild itself.

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UAE schoolbooks earn high marks for cultural tolerance - Page 05

Nadal survives epic tiebreak to power into quarters - Page 06

Romanians celebrate the Union of the Romanian Principalities today - Page 07

'Top Kyrgyz journalist on narcotics charge' - Page 08

Briefs

ANP to support PPP's DIK mayorship candidate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: During a telephonic contact between the leaders of Awami National Party and Pakistan People's Party, it has been decided that the ANP will support PPP's candidate for Dera Ismail Khan's mayorship during the second phase of local government elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Reportedly, a telephonic contact was held between PPP leader Nayyar Hussain Bukhari and ANP leader Aimal Wali Khan. They exchanged views on the election of mayor in Dera Ismail Khan by the end of March. Mr Bukhari said that the ANP decided to back PPP candidate Faisal Karim Kundi for the DIK mayorship. Aimal Wali informed that the ANP would run Kundi's election campaign openly and its provincial organization would help the PPP candidate.

Bukhari, on behalf of his party, expressed his gratitude to the ANP for extending support to the PPP contestant.

PTI leader Sardar Idrees to join JUI-F on Jan 28

DNA

ABBOTTABAD: Yet another leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has changed his loyalties by deciding to join Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F). This time it is former KP local bodies' minister Sardar Idrees, who has told JUI-F provincial Ameer Senator Maulana Aatur Rehman that he will formally join the party at a large public gathering to be held in Abbottabad on January 28. While talking to a private television channel Sunday, JUI-F KP Secretary General Maulana Aatur Haq Darwesh has confirmed that Idrees is going to join the party. He has also expressed the optimism that after former KP minister's entry, the support base of JUI-F, which, as per his claim, is already the province's most popular party, will also broaden in Abbottabad.

8 killed, 16 hurt in rain-snow related incidents: PDMA

PESHAWAR: At least 8 people died and 16 others have been injured in rain and snow related incidents in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a report shared by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) here on Sunday.

According to a spokesman of the authority 16 houses have received partial damages while one has been completely destroyed. Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has directed all concerned district administration and authorities for acceleration of relief operation in the affected areas.

The highest number of casualties occurred in District Shangla wherein five persons including three children died while one house was also damaged completely. Similarly, one child died in Charsadda, D.I. Khan and Hangu districts respectively.

Four houses were partially damaged in Khyber, 3 in Charsadda and two each in Buner, Upper Dir districts and one each house in D.I. Khan, Hangu, Karak, Peshawar and Tank respectively. In Charsadda, three cattle have also perished.

The authority has started distribution of relief goods including tents, kitchen sets, hygiene sets, water cooler, tarpal sheets and plastic sheets in the affected families in Charsadda and Karak districts. Similarly, district administration and other concerned authorities were busy in taking steps for re-opening of the closed roads.

It said that the authority is consecutively monitoring the overall situation and in close contact with district administration and other concerned authorities. — APP

Traders hail increase in Afghan exports in Pak Rupee

The SCCI delegation gave detailed proposals and mechanisms to further improve Pak-Afghan bilateral trade and transit trade via Afghanistan

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: The exporters and importers doing business with Afghanistan have welcomed the government's decision to increase the number of export items to Afghanistan from four to 16 in Pakistani currency to enhance the quantum of trade with the neighbouring country. The traders hoped the export to Afghanistan would further improve after this important decision of the government of Pakistan. They urged to include more export items to Afghanistan in Pakistan rupees. However, they urged Islamabad

to expedite the negotiation process with the present Afghan government regarding promotion of barter trade and bring it into logical end and practicality.

These matters were discussed during a meeting between IGFC Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Major Gen Adil Yamin and a traders delegation, mostly exporters, that was led by Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) acting president Imran Khan Mohmand, according to statement issued here on Sunday

The delegation was consisted of Chairman, SCCI's Standing Committee on Pak-Afghan Bilateral and Transit Trade Promotion, Shahid Hussain, former

president Faiz Muhammad Faizi, PAJCCI Vice president and the chamber former senior vice president Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, pattern in chief Khyber Chamber of Commerce and Industry Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi, former president Khyber Chamber Shakirullah, Col retired Sadiq and others.

The DG IGFC and Commandant Khyber Rifle were also present during the meeting. The meeting discussed the administrative matters, bringing speediness in movement of export-goods laden vehicles, hurdles that were impeding Pak-Afghan bilateral and transit trade.

The SCCI delegation gave detailed pro-

posals and mechanisms to further improve Pak-Afghan bilateral trade and transit trade via Afghanistan.

The meeting hailed the federal government and Federal Board of Revenue for increasing the number of export items to Afghanistan from four to 16 in Pakistani currency to enhance the quantum of trade with the neighbouring country.

The traders want to finalize negotiations with the present Afghan government regarding promotion of barter trade and bring it into logical end and practicality. They also urged an immediate solution of DTRE issues to ease difficulties to traders and exporters.

Over 1.3 million kids to be administered polio drops



ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: As many as 1.3 million children up to age of five years would be administered polio drops during the special anti polio campaign which would continue from January 24 to 28 in the district and 4869 teams would be performing duty during the campaign. The anti polio campaign in district has been inaugurated here on Saturday at Hilal e Ahmar Maternity Hospital. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad inaugurated the anti polio campaign by administered the polio vaccine drops to the children. CEO DHA Dr. Bilal Ahmad and other officers were present on the occasion. Expressing his views, Deputy Com-

missioner said that the anti polio campaign required deep attention and utmost responsibility to completely eradicate the polio virus from the country.

He directed that each and every child of upto five years age should be vaccinated besides approaching the nomads. He said that he would himself check the performance of polio teams by visiting different areas of district. He emphasized upon continuing wide awareness campaign for the information of the parents. Deputy Commissioner said that the anti polio campaign could only be made successful with the cooperation of the parents and all out source of publicity should be utilized for mobilizing the parents to get their child admin-

istered polio drops. He said that administrative machinery would remain active during the polio campaign for the supervision health department teams performance. Deputy Commissioner asked the DHA that the polio teams would reach to each and every child of under five year of age for giving the polio vaccine to rule out any chance of polio virus in future. He informed that comprehensive security plan had also been devised for the protection of polio teams and the officers of district administration would also remain in the field to supervise the arrangements. CEO DHA informed that all arrangements had been finalized for successful implementation of micro plan of anti polio campaign.

1988 new corona cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE: As many as 1988 new cases of corona virus were reported on Sunday whereas 5 persons lost their lives due to the pandemic during the last 24 hours. According to the data shared by the spokesperson of Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD), the number of corona virus cases in the province reached to 462,369 while total number of deaths recorded 13,102 so far. The P&SHD confirmed the maximum number of corona virus cases were reported in Lahore with 1323 cases while 4 cases were diagnosed with the virus in Attock, 1 in Bahawalnagar, 21

in Bahawalpur, 7 in Chakwal, 1 in Chiniot, 6 in Dera Ghazi Khan, 83 in Faisalabad, 22 in Gujranwala, 9 in Gujrat, 3 in Hafizabad, 1 in Jhang, 4 in Jhelum, 10 in Kasur, 1 in Khanewal, 3 in Khoshab, 2 in Layyah, 6 in Mandi Bahauddin, 1 in Mianwali, 32 in Multan, 1 in Muzaffargarh, 1 in Nankana Sahib, 2 in Narowal, 6 in Okara, 3 in Rajanpur, 347 in Rawalpindi, 27 in Rahimyar Khan, 16 in Sahiwal, 13 in Sargodha, 17 in Sheikhpura, 2 in Toba Tek Singh, 2 in Vehari and 11 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Sialkot district during the last 24 hours till filing of this news. — APP

Meeting reviews welfare measures

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: A high level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad regarding implementation of public welfare measures on the instructions of Chief Secretary Punjab. Deputy Commissioner directed the WASA, PTCL and SNGPL to conduct the comprehensive survey regarding existing manholes and uncovered mainholes should be covered on a priority basis. He also stressed to engage the nearest shopkeepers and residents to watch the mainholes cover and in case of uncovering mainhole informed the DC office and mainhole would be covered as a priority. He said that on stole, buy and purchase of cover the FIR of attempt murder would be registered thus spread the wide publicity among citizens to also identify such elements. He further said that IT base soft ware was also preparing for information. The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to keep abreast of the implementation report at the next meeting. He said that the waste workers and staff of PHA should assigned the task of identifying manholes. He urged the District Education Authority to mobilize scouts from public and private schools to help students for safe road crossings. He also directed the Assistant Commissioners, Administrators, Local Government and Chief Officers of Municipal Committees to carry out a survey of street lights functional and installation of lights at new places and also to activate 100% traffic signals.

Prime Housing Society launched for PR employees

PESHAWAR: Prime Housing Society in partnership with Partner Leaf Organization launched a special housing society for the employees of Pakistan Railways at Turlandai (Nisata) locality of district Charsadda on Sunday. In first phase of the scheme 5000 registered employees of Pakistan Railways would be allotted plots in the scheme. Special Assistant to KP CM on Mineral Development, Arif Ahmadzai and MPA Zahir Shah Toru participated in the launching ceremony. The employees of Pakistan

Railways would be allotted plots on soft installation while in next phase, employees of other public sector organizations and general public will also take benefit of the scheme. — APP

ANF seizes heroin from parcel booked for Norway

DNA

JHELUM: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) on Sunday foiled a drug smuggling bid in Jhelum. According to details, 479 grams of heroin packed in a parcel that was to be sent to Norway from a private courier service in Jhelum. The ANF on a tip-off recovered the heroin. The heroin was concealed in the sole of the shoes that were to be sent to Norway. The ANF said that the parcel was booked by a resident of Gujrat for Norway. Further investigation is underway in this context. Last year in the month of October, the Airport Security Force (ASF) had foiled a major bid to smuggle over 1500 kilogram's of heroin out of the country and arrested an alleged smuggler from Karachi airport. According to ASF officials, the heroin was recovered from the passenger willing to travel to Dubai from Jinnah International Airport, Karachi.

Talent Hunt competitions on January 25

KAMRAN GUJJAR

JHELUM: Competitions in the categories under the Punjab Talent Hunt Program in Jhelum district will be held on January 25, 2022 at Government Post Graduate College Tahlianwala. The competitions include music, painting, literature, crafts, theater, folk dance, etc. The chief guest of the event will be deputy commissioner Naaman Khafiz. The Punjab Council of the Arts Rawalpindi Division has issued a regular schedule of district competition regarding the Chief Minister Punjab Talent Hunt Program. The first position in the competition will be given a cash prize of Rs 20,000, second position 15 thousand rupees and the third position will be given a cash prize of Rs 10,000.

Winter tourism flourishes in KP

NATHIAGALI: The winter tourism has started flourishing in upper areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where its most scenic Galiyat, Kaghan, Kalam and Malam Jabba attracted tourists, adventure sports and snowfall lovers in droves.

Nathiagali, a scenic hilly station of Galiyat in Abbottabad has witnessed an influx tourists, snowfall and trout fish lovers on weekend arrived from width and breadth of Pakistan especially, from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Following the Met Office's snowfall forecast for weekend, the domestic tourists along with families thronged to Nathiagali, Dongagali, Ayubia, Bagnotar and Thandyani where they enjoyed light to moderate snowfall with erratic rainfalls over the snow-clad mountains along with cool breezes taking them into a state of ecstasy. — APP



PESHAWAR: Mr. Khurshid Barlas, Founder Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry receives Appreciation Award from Mr. Yasir Masud Chairman AH Group of Companies. — DNA

Pak-Sri Lanka Forum vows to increase trade ties

"Collective efforts and the wisdom of the political leadership between both the countries will take the businesses to new heights", minister said

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Members of Pakistan-Sri Lanka Business Forum (PSBF) in a Business to Business assembly held at a local hotel highlighted the importance of business-friendly environment between the two countries. H.E. Dr Bandula Gunawardana, Minister of Trade Sri Lanka addressing the participants said that it is the need of the hour to boost level of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Sri Lanka by creating a conducive and healthy business environment as both countries are encountering unprecedented challenges. "Collective efforts and the wisdom of the political leadership between both the countries will take the businesses to new heights",

minister said. Majyd Aziz, Founding Chairman PSBF said that Pakistan, said that both countries should continue to be strong proponents of peace in the region, both should adopt each other's causes for peace and stability. Both should make bilateral trade and investment the cornerstone of their mutual bilateral relationships both should devise schemes for setting up exclusive Special Economic Zones for each other's investors, and both should be on the same page at global forums where the interests of both are mutual and complementary. Majyd Aziz called for a revisit of the Pakistani-Sri Lankan Free Trade Agreement because the bilateral trade is less than \$500 million. He also suggested the setting up of Ceylon Tea House to promote

Sri Lankan tea. He also said that transfer of technology and professionals and economic connectivity between two countries will embark industries to new heights. Pakistani can benefit from Sri Lankan medicinal care products and enhance imports of tea, betel leaves, spices and coconut products. Both sides were of the view that every possible effort should be taken to get optimum advantage of our economic and manpower potential in order to give boost to economies. Majyd Aziz also stressed light on the need for formidable marketing of Sri Lankan products in Pakistan. Aslam Pakhali, President PSBF, in his welcome address offered the service of PSBF for those Sri Lankan businessmen who are interested in trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia through Pakistan. He

advocated the need to remove constraints in order to enhance trade. Director General of Economic Affairs, Prof. A Saj U. Mendis in his address said "The best time has arrived to invest in Sri Lankan market as the economy of our country is gearing ahead with the passage of time and the position of our stock market was phenomenal in 2021." "I believe if we take concerted efforts in trade and business for further promotion, both countries will get a huge economic benefit", he added. The speakers at the event were of the view that in order to encourage Foreign Direct Investment, both nations need viable industrial and commercial infrastructure, transfer of technology and to augment current trade volume between two countries, which they termed 'below potential of both countries'.

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Briefs

AIOU
announces
results of
BA, BS, B.Ed.
programs

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced results of various academic programs offered in Spring 2021 semester. These programs include BA, BA Associate degree, BS, and B.Ed. Students can check their results online by visiting AIOU website.

According to Examination Department students can view their result by pressing "view grade" and then "my grade" option after clicking on exam and grade tile under CMS.

The university has informed all the desiring candidates for admission in the first stage of Spring 2022 semester that admissions forms and prospectus of all the programmes are available at the University's website. Last date for admissions of Matric, FA and I.Com programs has been set as February 22 whereas admission forms of BS, M.Sc, MS/M. Phil and Ph.D will be submitted online till 14 February, 2022. - APP

Mobile phone
imports
increases 16pc
in six months

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed an increase of 16.17 percent during the half of fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$1090.621 million during July-December (2021-22) as compared to the imports of US \$938.819 million during July-December (2020-21), showing growth of 16.17 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones also rose by 8.92 percent during the month of December 2021 when compared to the same month of last year.

The import of mobiles into the country during December 2021 were recorded at \$233.891 million against the exports of \$214.736 million in December 2020. - APP

ICF, PAL
to organise
literature
festival

ISLAMABAD: Indus Cultural Forum (ICF) in collaboration with Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) would organise a two-day Pakistan Mother languages literature festival from February 19. According to PAL, The festival would be held at PAL. The festival is free and open to all. The well-known scholars and language experts would participate in the festival. The festival aimed to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and to preserve, protect and promote the languages of the country. The festival will provide a platform for celebrating more than 70 languages of Pakistan and encourage language communities to take action for saving these languages from extinction. - APP

SMEDA to
organize
training

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) will organize a one day training program on "Financial Management for SMEs" for profitable business growth on 26 January. The session will be organized by SMEDA under National Business Development Program (NBDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to sources in the authority. The training program will provide information about understanding concept of financial management, why it is important to a small business, financial management practices, rules and tools that are commonly available to small business, how these financial management practices, rules and tools work, financial management basics for a small business, understanding working capital, good practices for providing and recovering customer credit and basics of financing for a growing business. - APP

Construction work on Lai
Expressway to start soon

RDA spokesman said the 38.3 kilometer long Ring Road would be the most feasible, economical and viable project to connect N-5 at Banth to M-2, Thallian Interchange

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The construction work on two mega projects of Rawalpindi, Nullah Lai Expressway and Ring Road would be started soon as all the preparations are being finalized and the administrative approval for both the project has been given by the Planning and Development (P&D) Board, Punjab.

Talking to media, the spokesman of Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Hafiz Muhammad Irfan informed that all-out efforts would be made to complete them within the shortest possible time. He

said the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) had already approved the mega Nullah Lai Expressway and Flood Channel project. The Revenue Department and the Land Directorate of the RDA, he said, were also working on the project, which would be completed under public-private partnership. The outlines of the plan to start the work were being worked out, he said, adding the land acquisition process for the project at the cost of Rs 24,960.70 million had almost been completed.

He said senior officers of RDA worked day and night to complete PC-I to

ACs directed to
remain in field

RAWALPINDI: ACs of all tehsils of Rawalpindi district have been directed to remain in the field to provide relief to the citizens. According to a district administration spokesman, DC Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq has ordered the ACs to regularly visit different areas in their jurisdiction to implement the directives issued by the Chief Secretary Punjab Office for Water and Sanitation Agency, Rawalpindi Waste Management Company, Health, Education and other departments. The DC directed the authorities concerned to set their daily goals and reports of the assigned tasks should be submitted to DC office on daily basis. The directives issued to cover manholes, cleanliness arrangements, road safety, price control, protection of green belts, repair of old bridges and roads, street lights, provision of necessary facilities at bus stands, action against smoke emitting vehicles and others should be implemented in letter and spirit, he added. - DNA

acquire land for Lai Expressway, which had been cleared by the Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP), the Planning Commission, the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) and ECNEC. He said in the next phase, tendering process would be completed after which the construction work on both the projects would be kicked off.

He said the Nullah Lai Expressway would help control flash flooding during heavy rains in the city, particularly in low-lying areas, besides resolving the traffic congestion problem on the roads including Murree Road. The city environment

would also be improved after the project's completion, the spokesman said. The Nullah Lai Expressway project would cost Rs 100 billion, he added.

The RDA spokesman said the 38.3 kilometer long Ring Road would be the most feasible, economical and viable project to connect N-5 at Banth to M-2, Thallian Interchange.

Land acquisition and construction on the alignment for Rawalpindi Ring Road had also been approved, he added. The project, he said, would not only help reduce the traffic congestion in the twin cities but also provide a clean, healthy and safe environment to the residents.

ITP continues
crackdown against
wrong parking

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) taking strict action against vehicles over wrong parking for smooth flow of traffic in Federal Capital. Following directions of Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Mazhar Iqbal, Islamabad Traffic Police reviewed arrangements to ensure smooth flow of traffic in the city. A large number of Vehicles were fined during this Campaign for involvement in wrong parking. The SSP (Traffic) directed all Zonal DSPs to ensure implementation of traffic laws through courteous attitude with citizens. He said that people should be treated politely and briefed them about traffic laws. The SSP (Traffic) said that it is the right of pedestrian to use footpath and no parking would be allowed there. He said that vehicles should be parked at lots specified at shopping centers while awareness campaign has been also launched to educate those citizens coming for shopping activities there. The SSP (Traffic) Mazhar Iqbal said that it is our top priority to ensure convenience for road users by maintaining traffic discipline and every possible effort would be made for the purpose. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of European Union Androulla Kaminara keenly observes paintings during an exhibition at the Gallery 6. - DNA

RCB by-elections: hearing
to complete on Jan 24

RAWALPINDI: The hearing process of the appeals and objections on the nomination papers submitted for Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) by-elections would be completed on January 24 and the revised list of the candidates would be posted on Jan 25. The Returning Officer (RO) of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) Ward 2 by-elections had received total 10 nomination papers of Zain ul Abidin son of Muhammad Ijaz, Rashid Mahmood s/o

Muhammad Sharif, Shoukat Ayub s/o Muhammad Ayub Khan, Syed Imran Ali Kazmi s/o Syed Qurban Hussain Kazmi, Muhammad Qasim s/o Ali Muhammad, Tahir Ayub s/o Abdul Qayyum Malik, Muhammad Aamir s/o Wali Muhammad, Asghar Khan s/o Jan Muhammad, Shoukat Ali Butt s/o Muhammad Rafique Butt and Aamir Rauf s/o Abdul Rauf. The local government elections were postponed in RCB Ward 2 due to death of a female candidate. The

nomination papers were issued from January 3 and collected during January 10 to 13 in accordance with the schedule issued by Election Commission of Pakistan for the by-elections. The final list of the candidate will be released on January 27. The code of conduct already issued for the candidates will be in force for the by-elections. An election cell has been set up here in RCB headed by Secretary, Qaiser Mahmood. The candidates will be able

to withdraw their nomination papers on Jan 26 and the final list of candidates will be posted on Jan 27 according with election symbols. The polling will be held on Feb 9 from 8 am to 5 pm. Provisional results will be released on the same day, while final results by the returning officers will be released on February 12. According to Returning Officer, RCB, Imran Gulzar, all the arrangements for the by-elections were being finalized.

4451 acres
of Railways
land leased

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has leased out around 4451 acres of its land during the last three years to transform the department into profitable entity by generating more revenue. According to an official, leased-out land was located in seven divisions including Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi Multan and Sukkar. The official also divulged details of a plan, aimed at exploiting 25 mega sites of Pakistan Railways commercially under public-private partnership. An expression of interest to hire the consultant for the purpose was given in the newspapers last year, he said. Likewise, a second phased was also on the cards under which some 111 new commercial sites were identified for commercial use through public private partnership.

To a question, he said Pakistan Railways has also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups and even business organizations using it for residential, commercial and agriculture purposes for decades.

"The encroachment operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the provincial governments," he added.

He said that PR has retrieved over 478 acres precious land worth billion of rupees from illegal occupants under its anti-encroachment operation across the country during the present government tenure. He said the government was taking several steps to retrieve encroached land from the land grabbers including detailed survey was being carried out to identify the encroached land, occupied by the individuals and under illegal occupation of various government departments.

Govt's steps given boost to
construction sector: Qadri

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Dr Noor ul Haq Qadri has said that solid steps taken by PTI government had given a boost to the construction sector. He said that the government was trying to provide the citizens affordable houses under Naya Pakistan Housing scheme. Several cities of Pakistan expanded considerably during last 10 to 15 years but, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, twin cities were fastest growing towns of Pakistan during the period, he added. In a statement issued here Sunday, the minister said that the government was working to provide low-income segments of the society their own houses. The people who could never afford, were now owning their houses under Naya Pakistan Housing project, while no government in the past cared for the low-income segments of the society who had no shelter, he said. The minister said that Rawalpindi Ring Road project which was inevitable for the city would be launched and completed by the incumbent government. It was delayed due to some technical reasons but the government would launch work on it soon, he added. He said, the PTI government has taken a right step towards affordable housing for all and the PTI government's initiative for long-neglected housing sector was lauded. The government was utilizing all available resources and geared up work to address annual requirement of a large number of housing units in the country, he said. The Prime Minister encouraged the banks to come forward and play a role to make the Naya Pakistan housing project a success. He said, after a long period, the housing sector was given a boost and the construction industry was at boom and was flourishing as per the vision of the Prime Minister. - DNA

Winder Dam to irrigate
over 10,000 acres
barren land in Lasbela

ISLAMABAD: The Winder Dam would bring over 10,000 acres of barren land under cultivation in water scarce areas of Lasbela which would help to ensure food security by increasing agricultural production in the region. The government has expedited the construction work on Winder dam project to complete it within its stipulated time period which was initiated in the fiscal year 2019-20 in Lasbela district of Balochistan. The construction of Winder Dam after Hub Dam is considered as an important step towards development of agriculture sector in the province, said Deputy Director of the project Engineer Ahmad Farooq. Winder Dam project would be completed in four years at an estimated cost of Rs 15230.76 million which would boost the agriculture and livestock progress in the area. The Winder Dam has the capacity of 36,167 acre feet live storage to conserve flood water of Winder River to ensure annual avail-

ability of water for developing agriculture sector. The project would also produce 300 KW of energy while controlling the flow of Winder River would help save the loss of life and property in the area during heavy floods season. "The Dam will also provide water supply to the agricultural lands through canals. Some 919 square miles catchment area of Winder Dam will irrigate the area through 21 kilometers (km)'s main canal alongwith its four branches of 16 km each," he said. The water supply will be also used for drinking and other domestic purpose after proper purification and treatment for human use. The water storage and seepage from the dam will also recharge the ground water reservoirs and increase the ground water level. The project will bring socio-economic uplift of the people in the area by creating employment and business opportunities as it would greatly increase the development of fisheries in the area. - APP

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Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165

ITP starts
crackdown
against
amateur
drivers

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has constituted special squads to take action against amateur drivers and bike riders not using helmets. Following directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Yunis, Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Mazhar Iqbal who has also appealed the parents to refrain handing over vehicles or bikes to their under-age children, said a news release. SSP (Traffic) has also directed all Zonal DSPs for strict action against amateur drivers and to ensure steps for safe road environment in the city. He directed to ensure renewed efforts for awareness about traffic rules among citizens by ITP education wing. He directed ITP's teams to visit educational institutions to create traffic sense as several students have joined ITP as traffic volunteers.

The SSP (Traffic) said that purpose of action against amateur drivers and motorcyclists with helmets is to ensure their own safety as it should not be considered a punitive measure. - APP

Railways
transport
25,054
tons per day

ISLAMABAD: The freight sector has shown considerable improvement through transporting 25,054 tons per day from Karachi during the year 2020-21 as compared to the 23,051 tons per day during 2019-20 due to the consistent efforts of Pakistan Railways. The official said that competitive freight rates to attract more traffic have been introduced while high capacity trucks have been inducted in the current fleet for swift movement/unloading of coal, an official told APP.

He said the outsourcing of freight trains has also been initiated under Pakistan Railways Freight Transportation Company (PRFTC) to earn more revenue for the department. "The commercial management of luggage vans and brake vans with different trains has been outsourced under public private partnership and online e-ticketing through Jazz Cash, UBL Omini and credit cards has been introduced to facilitate traveling passengers at their door steps and to attract more passengers," he added.

The Freight Deposit Account (FDA) based agreements with different companies have been signed.

He said the efforts have been undertaken to reduce trespassing, at un-manned level crossings and un-authorized locations. In this regard, 40 un-manned level crossings have been upgraded and manned and 1561 un-authorized locations (trespassing sides) have been closed.

As a result, the official said the number of accidents has drastically reduced from 145 in 2020 to 53 in 2021 during first six months of financial year 2021-2022.

"Pakistan Railways is trying its utmost to improve the efficiency of the trains and every train is being monitored," he said. - APP

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Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

Walkable cities

UNDER the new smart traffic management system formally known as the Islamabad Master Plan Commission, the city will be transformed into a walk-friendly zone. This step away from automobiles is important considering how congestion has contributed negatively to the social climate and environment of Islamabad. Our approach to urban development needs to change and it is good to see the district administration take the initiative to evolve our ways.

The project to promote non-motorised transportation in the city is the first comprehensive plan that has been created in some time. The aim is to manage traffic through empowering the pedestrians by creating cycling lanes, walking lanes, creating crossings wherever possible, cordoning off the entry of vehicles in certain commercial areas, and even encouraging the use of carpool services just as much as public transport. Many cities across the globe follow this same blueprint, a major example being London. The proximity of citizens to car-free spaces is rather impressive as a culture of walking has been nurtured throughout the course of time. This is what we must strive to achieve.

There is also a custom of having multiple cars in one household, which actively contributes to road congestion for which the government has planned to impose fines to deter people from congregating in one place. For those who absolutely have to use their cars, the authorities plan on constructing at least six different parking plazas so that people may park their cars and then walk to their destination without being disruptive. We must ensure that this initiative is followed through and that more is done in the long-term.

Similar projects must be launched in other cities like Lahore and Karachi as well. Public transport must be improved and made more accessible through lower charges and multiple routes. Currently, there is only one metro bus line in Islamabad and barely any other form of public transportation. While these avenues are being improved, the government must also work on improving the social climate of the cities so that people are able to walk securely, especially women.



Counter Extremism Policy

THE series of condemnable incidents that took place in the latter half of 2021, including the lynching of a Sri Lankan national in Sialkot and the rise in terrorist attacks, demonstrates the urgent need for countering violent extremism. In this regard, the government, through the National Counter-terrorism Authority (NACTA) has formulated the first-ever National Counter Violent Extremism Policy of Pakistan (NCVEP 2021).

The policy document, which is currently under review, is well-rounded and covers certain areas which were previously controversial or ignored. For example, the policy stresses the need to regulate mosques and prevent the abuse of the pulpit by imams, priests, zakirs and gurus etc, and states that the messages delivered by these religious leaders, belonging to any religion, should be based upon positivity and purged of all political, sectarian, and violent extremism content.

Moreover, the policy acknowledges the role that sports, film, art and cultural activities in countering extremist activities and encourages creative art and education to be taught in schools, and more inter-faith and cultural events to be held. This correctly identifies how extremism and violence take root early during adolescence and advocates a solution. Moreover, it is important to note that the policy advocates for some ambitious steps, like the establishment of dedicated counter-violent extremism units to streamline changes in legal policy with regards to extremism.

The policy states that the local government will keep a check on sermons being given by religious leaders; yet it does not delineate any transparent process through which this can occur, indicating that this step might largely go ignored. Similarly, extremism is not defined in detail—it is stated as the use of violence to propagate economic, social, political or ideological objectives.

A more specific emphasis on the kind of violent extremism, such as the Sialkot lynching incident, would have made this policy more impactful. Nonetheless, this policy draft is a good first step in adopting a framework for the future. The real challenge lies in its implementation.

UAE schoolbooks earn high marks for cultural tolerance

James Dorsey

There is little reason to believe that much has changed since Mr. Bohl's experience and every reason to assume that those principles have since been reinforced

AN Israeli NGO gives the United Arab Emirates high marks for mandating schoolbooks that teach tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and engagement with non-Muslims. "The Emirati curriculum generally meets international standards for peace and tolerance. Textbooks are free of hate and incitement against others. The curriculum teaches students to value the principle of respect for other cultures and encourages curiosity and dialogue. It praises love, affection, and family ties with non-Muslims," the 128-page study by The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) concluded. However, at the same time, the report appeared in its evaluation of Emirati textbooks to hue closely to Israeli policy towards the UAE and, more generally, most states that populate the Middle East.

As a result, the report, like Israel that seemingly sees autocracy rather than greater freedoms as a stabilizing factor in the Middle East, skirts the issue of the weaving of the principle of uncritical obedience to authority into the fabric of Emirati education. That principle is embedded in the teaching of "patriotism" and "commitment to defending the homeland," two concepts highlighted in the report. The principle is also central to the notion of leadership, defined in the report as a pillar of national identity. Ryan Bohl, an American who taught in an Emirati public school a decade ago, could have told Impact-se about the unwritten authoritarian principles embedded in the country's education system.

There is little reason to believe that much has changed since Mr. Bohl's experience

and every reason to assume that those principles have since been reinforced. One of a number of Westerners hired by the UAE to replace Arab teachers suspected of sympathising with the Muslim Brotherhood, Mr. Bohl described in an interview teaching in Emirati classrooms as "following the autocratic method, very similar to the ruler and the ruled."

It's in classrooms, Mr. Bohl said, "where those political attitudes get formed, reinforced, enforced in some cases if kids like they do, decide to deviate outside the line. They understand what the consequences are long before they can become a political threat or an activist threat to the regime. It's all about creating a chill effect."

Seemingly to avoid discussion of the notion of critical thinking, the IMPACT-se report notes that students "prepare for a highly competitive world; they are taught positive thinking and well-being."

The report's failure to discuss the limits of critical thinking and attitudes towards authority that may be embedded in the framing of education rather than in textbooks raises the question of whether textbook analysis is sufficient to evaluate attitudes that education systems groom in their tutoring of successive generations.

It also opens to debate whether notions of peace and cultural tolerance can be isolated from degrees of social and political tolerance and pluriformity.

The report notes positively that the textbooks "offer a realistic approach to peace and security," a reference to the UAE's recognition of Israel in 2020, its downplaying of efforts to address Palestinian aspirations, and its visceral opposition to any form of political Islam with debilitating consequences in countries like Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. It would be hard to argue that intervention by the UAE and others, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, France, and Russia, in whatever form contributed to peace and security. The report notes that "support for the Palestinian cause continues but no longer (is) seen as key to solving the broader range of regional challenges. Radicalism and hate are the chief threat. Iranian expansionism is a threat."

This is not to suggest that IMPACT-se's evaluation of textbooks should judge Emirati policies but to argue that rather than uncritically legitimising them, it should explicitly instead of implicitly acknowledge that the

country's next generation is being shaped by a top-down, government-spun version of what the meaning is of lofty principles proclaimed by Emirati leaders.

To its credit, the report implicitly states that Emirati concepts of tolerance are not universal but subject to what the country's rulers define as its national interests.

As a result, it points out that "the People's Republic of China is surprisingly described as a tolerant, multicultural society, which respects religions" despite the brutal crackdown on religious and ethnic expressions of Turkic Muslim identity in the north-western province of Xinjiang. IMPACT-se further notes that the textbooks fail to teach the Middle East's history of slavery. The report insists that the Holocaust and the history of Jews, particularly in the Middle East, should be taught but makes no similar demand for multiple other minorities, including those accused of being heretics.

However, UAE recognition of Israel does not mean that a map of Israel is included in the teaching of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. To be fair, Israel may not yet feature on Emirati maps, but Jewish life is increasingly part of public life in the UAE. Kosher restaurants are open for business, as is a Jewish cultural center. Large memorials were lit in city squares to celebrate the Jewish feast of Hanukkah in December, and a government-funded synagogue is scheduled to open later this year. Meanwhile, Arab Jews who once fled to Israel and the West are settling in the UAE, partly attracted by financial incentives.

Striking a mildly critical note, IMPACT-se research director Eldad J. Pardo suggested that Emirati students, who were well served by the curriculum's "pursuit of peace and tolerance," would benefit from courses that are "equally unrelenting" in providing "students with unbiased information in all fields." Mr. Pardo was referring to not only to China but also the curriculum's endorsement of traditional gender roles even if it anticipates the integration of women into the economy and public life, and what the report described as an "unbalanced" depiction of the history of the Ottoman Empire.

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

AUKUS alliance and China

Dr. M Akram Zaheer



The agreement will help Australia to build nuclear-powered submarines that are faster and harder to detect than conventional navies. These submarines can stay underwater for months and also can fire long-range missiles

AUKUS is a trilateral security agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States for the Indo-Pacific region. Under the agreement, the United States and Britain will help Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines. The agreement was designed to counter Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region. But, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson later told parliament that the move was not intended to conflict with China. The agreement also includes cooperation on "additional cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and underwater capabilities". According to the agreement, Australia will purchase modern and long-range capabilities for its air force, navy and army. The agreement is big opportunity for these states with like-minded alliance to promote security, prosperity and other shared interests in Indo-Pacific Region.

The agreement will help Australia to build nuclear-powered submarines that are faster and harder to detect than conventional navies. These submarines can stay underwater for months and also can fire long-range missiles. However, Australia has declared that it has no plans to develop and to use nuclear weapons. Australia will become a seventh country in the world that may operate nuclear-powered submarine. With the help of this technology and nuclear-powered submarines Australia will also be shared by cyber capability, artificial intelligence and other undersea technology. The alliance reflects in views of several scholars and policymakers that it would have to face challenges and resistance from the regional powers and their allies of other forum. AUKUS agreement's intentions may to deter the growing influence of China in Indo Pacific Region. When the USA was busy in Middle East and Afghanistan then China was struggling to modernize and expand its nuclear capabilities increase its influence in the region and beyond the region as well. China has established significant involvement in the South China Sea which is a main concern of Western powers because 1/3 maritime shipping of the world passes through it and US\$3 trillion trade every year. The strategy of AUKUS indirectly may protect the interest of America and Europe by using the shoulder of Australia. With the submarines deal, Australia may feel secure from the any aggression from the People's Liberation Army after the deal of Nuclear

Submarines. The two countries with nuclear weapon may not attack on each other for the fear of mutual annihilation but the controversy would create long distance for trade and investment activities among the regional and beyond the regional powers. However, the strategy carries many challenges in the region to the AUKUS alliance.

Although the agreement is an attempt to draw a line before Chinese aggressive moves in the region but separate New Zealand and Canada from United States, United Kingdom and Australia who are members of the Alliance of Intelligence sharing Five Eyes. This machismo has been working during the cold-war and has proved as a successful intelligence alliance. The AUKUS agreement will focus on military capability and intelligence sharing. The government of New Zealand has responded that it would ban Australian Submarines from its water under the present policy of nuclear-powered Submarines.

The agreement might also lead towards Cold-war mentality and ideological prejudice. Chinese state media particularly Global Times took more extreme position on AUKUS and wrote that Australia's deployment of nuclear-powered submarines will "potentially make Australia a target of a nuclear strike if a nuclear war breaks out, even when Washington said it won't arm Canberra with nuclear weapons, because it's easy for the U.S. to equip Australia with nuclear weapons and submarine-launched ballistic missiles when Australia has the submarines. As well as North Korea said nuclear submarines-agreements may spark a regional arms race. Malaysia has also said the deal serves as a catalyst for a nuclear arms race and once arms race started, and then it will be difficult to overcome.

Although this is not the place to discuss the merits of this competitive version of the Australian National Strategy but it's worth noting that when Australia really relies on submarines, it will only face China. If the United States remains a major power in Asia then Australia has no need of it because the United States will be there. If USA is not a super power now, it will all be a part of the confrontation between Australian forces and the People's Liberation Army. So it makes sense to upgrade all of Australian forces and capabilities to defend Australia. This also interprets that the deterioration of the United States has started.

The AUKUS controversy illustrates that the close friends can be divided if trade concerns are at stake. But, Britain and the United States have other ideas, as their own military-industry would be the one that would have benefited from the deal the most as France had planned. But the most disturbing reality that emerges from this conflict is the deployment of nuclear ships in the Pacific.

Unfortunately, after false military adventures in the Persian Gulf and humiliated defeat of the world's strongest military in Afghanistan, it gives the impression that the Western bloc is now attempting to test the waters of East Asia and the Pacific coast. It might be to take forward Obama's "Pivot to Asia" policy rather than to relax military muscles. According to Carl von Clausewitz famous dictum "War is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means" same is happening and I think such developments are an unending series of Tom and Jerry show.

Will Presidential system work?

Mustansar Siam



On the contrary, people who favour the presidential system believe that it would bring adequate economic and political development to the country

THERE are rumours that a presidential system of government will be introduced very soon. The opposition is persistently accusing the government of its attention to imposing a presidential system. The opponents of the presidential

system say that it would destroy democracy in Pakistan. It would also bring some serious consequences for the federation in the country. Furthermore, they claim that the parliamentary system causes dynastic politics, legislative flip-flopping and party fragmentation. They often ignore that the presidential system is neither against democracy nor against the federation. An evident example in this context is the United States, where the presidential system does exist with stable democracy and federation. Moreover, dynastic politics also does exist in some countries simultaneously with economic and political development. Karl Jandoc offers an exciting analysis while exploring the relationship of political dynasties with economic growth. He has analyzed the case of the Philippines in this context and concluded that the relationship of political dynasties on economic performance is very weak. Mary Grace Lu has analyzed that dynastic politics largely impacted inherently inefficient societies. Inefficient institutional delivery often leads to economic underdevelopment. It is the fundamental reason behind the economic backwardness of the communities where conceptions like father, like son, prevail and exist.

On the contrary, people who favour the presidential system believe that it would bring adequate economic and political develop-

ment to the country. Moreover, they used to inculcate the parliamentary system for Pakistan as it could not deliver in recent times. Both systems are working and producing socio-political and socio-economic development in different countries. The parliamentary system works in Canada, Latvia, Great Britain and New Zealand. At the same time, the presidential system is working in the United States, Argentina and Mexico. Economic and political development can be witnessed in the countries mentioned above. There are some specific pre-requisites for any political system's successful working and delivery. These pre-requisites include structural differentiation, system adaptability, checks and balances, and stable political edifice. Scholars including Lucian Pye, JR Pennock and Leonard Binder have identified and discussed these proximate variables of political and economic development.

Any system can effectively work and deliver in a workable political and economic fabric. Pakistan's unfortunate experience with 58(2b) and rise in poverty and bad governance during the past three perpetual democratic regimes indicate that country needed institutional transformation rather than a specific political system.

—The writer is an Mphil scholar at the Department of Political Science, Government College University Lahore

Briefs

Ukraine to target Russian influence

KYIV: Ukraine vowed to counter destabilising Russian influence over the country's political and economic spheres Sunday in the wake of British accusations that Moscow is looking to install a Kremlin-friendly president in Kyiv. The UK alleged this weekend it had information Moscow was "looking to install a pro-Russian leader" in Ukraine and accused several former politicians in Kyiv of harbouring ties with Russian intelligence. The claims are adding to tensions between Russia and the West over European security, with a recent bout of failed negotiations bringing little relief over a build-up of Russian troops around Ukraine. Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's chief of staff, said the revelations were part and parcel of Russia's approach towards Ukraine and said Kyiv would push back. "Our state will continue its policy of dismantling any oligarchic or political structures that could be working to destabilise Ukraine" or "aid" Russia, he said in written comments to AFP. Podolyak said the Kremlin had for some time followed a formula of selecting individuals in business or politics and then using those people to "promote Russia's interests." "This British information clearly follows along in this logical chain," he added. London said it had seen evidence that several former Ukrainian politicians had maintained links with Russian intelligence services, and that former MP Yevgen Murayev was being considered as a potential leader. — APP

Afghanistan beat Dutch by 48 runs in second ODI

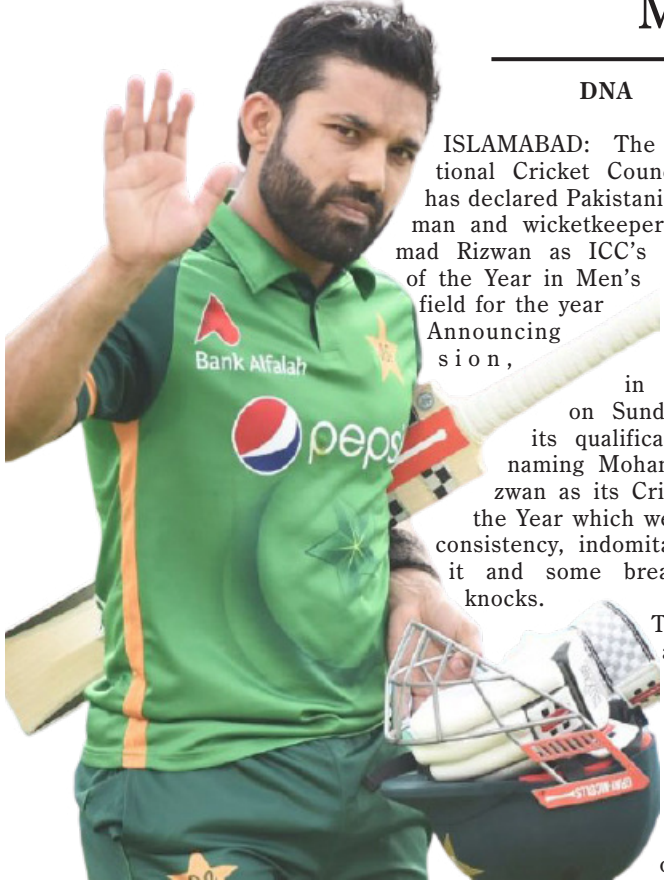
DOHA: A second one-day hundred from opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz fired Afghanistan to a series-winning 48-run victory over the Netherlands in the second ODI in Doha on Sunday. Replying to Afghanistan's 237 for six from their 50 overs, the Netherlands were bowled out for just 189 in 47.4 overs. The Afghans, who won the first of the three-match series on Friday, batted first for the second match running on a sluggish pitch and, boosted by Gurbaz's 103 from 127 balls and 54 from captain Hashmatullah Shahidi, posted a challenging 237 for six. Gurbaz, who turned 20 in November, struck six fours and three sixes as he went on to his second ODI century — his first came on debut against Ireland in January last year. Kent left-arm seamer Fred Klaassen (2-51) and 21-year-old leg-spinner Philippe Boissevain (2-39) were the most successful of the Dutch bowlers. The Netherlands again relied heavily on their Tonga-born opener Scott Edwards who followed his 68 in the opener with a solid 86 from 120 balls. He added 90 for the third wicket with Bas de Leede before he was bowled by Fa-reeed Ahmad for 34. Edwards chalked up his third ODI half-century before falling leg before to Yamin Ahmadzai to leave the Netherlands on 147 for four in the 39th over. — APP

Weapons found...

FROM PAGE 01
Recently, the security forces conducted an Intelligence Based Operation (IBO) on the reported presence of terrorists in Thal, North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province, said Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement. According to the army's media wing, during an intense exchange of fire, two terrorists were killed in the IBO. The terrorists were identified as Ghayoor and Bahaudin. A huge cache of weapons and ammunition was also recovered from the terrorists, said the ISPR. The terrorists were involved in terrorism activities against security forces, target killing and kidnapping for ransom, it added.

Mohammad Rizwan declared ICC T20I Cricketer of the Year

The ICC also declared that the year 2021 was a memorable one for the Pakistani star. Rizwan defeated Jos Buttler, Wanindu Hasaranga and Mitchell Marsh to win the ICC's prestigious award



DNA
ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has declared Pakistani ace batsman and wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan as ICC's Cricketer of the Year in Men's T20I 2021. Announcing its decision, in a tweet on Sunday listed its qualifications for naming Mohammad Rizwan as its Cricketer of the Year which were sheer consistency, indomitable spirit and some breath-taking knocks.

The ICC also declared that the year 2021 was a memorable one for

the Pakistani star. Rizwan defeated Jos Buttler, Wanindu Hasaranga and Mitchell Marsh to win the ICC's prestigious award. In a tweet, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) also congratulated Mohammad Rizwan on winning the ICC award. Earlier, Pakistan's Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Rizwan were nominated for Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year. The ICC had announced that the 2021 edition of the ICC Awards, celebrating and rewarding the top performances across men's and women's international cricket throughout the year will be unveiled on all of ICC's channels and platforms this week. The individual awards for excellence in women's and men's international cricket will be revealed on the ICC channels on January 23 and 24. This year's awards will comprise a total of 13 individual awards. Players that have had the most impactful performances in the period under consideration — January 1 to December 31 were nominated for these awards. The ICC Voting Academy, comprising a wider selection of global cricket journalists and broadcasters, had voted for their first, second and third choices, while an overwhelming 1.2 million global cricket fans also sub-

mitted their votes to choose their favourite cricketers of the year. The result of the ICC Voting Academy selections and the fans' vote will be combined to determine the winner in each of these categories. The Emerging and Associate categories listed above did not feature shortlists and were determined solely by the ICC Voting Academy. List of awards and nominees: Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year: Shaheen Afridi, Joe Root, Mohammad Rizwan, Kane Williamson. Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year: Tammy Beaumont, Lizelle Lee, Smriti Mandhana, Gaby Lewis. ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year: Joe Root, Kyle Jamieson, Dimuth Karunaratne, Ravichandran Ashwin. ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year: Shikib Al Hasan, Babar Azam, Janneman Malan, Paul Stirling. ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year: Tammy Beaumont, Lizelle Lee, Hayley Matthews, Fatima Sana. ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year: Jos Buttler, Wanindu Hasaranga, Mitchell Marsh, Mohammad Rizwan. ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year: Tammy Beaumont, Gaby Lewis, Smriti Mandhana, Nat Sciver.

Taliban, Afghan ...

FROM PAGE 01
already suffering the effects of several severe droughts. No country has yet recognised the Taliban government since it stormed back to power in August. Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt stressed last week that the talks would "not represent a legitimisation or recognition of the Taliban". The international community is waiting to see how the Islamic fundamentalists intend to govern Afghanistan, after having largely trampled on human rights during their first stint in power between 1996 and 2001. On Monday, the Taliban will meet representatives from the United States, France, Britain, Germany, Italy and the European Union, while Tuesday will be dedicated to bilateral talks with Norwegian officials. — APP

PM highlights Afghan crises

FROM PAGE 01
currently facing economic woes leading to hunger and famine like situation. The prime minister also urged the people to join the international initiative in this regard. "I will add my voice also and want people to join an international initiative to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Afghanistan, putting at risk of starvation millions of Afghans, especially children. #SaveAfghanLives, the prime minister posted. On Saturday, the prime minister in a tweet had called upon the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief to the millions of Afghans who were facing an imminent danger of starvation. In a previous tweet, the prime minister also reminded that providing immediate relief to impoverished Afghanistan was also obligatory under the unanimously adopted UN Principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). "One pillar of R2P is to help protect people from mass scale humanitarian crisis left in the wake of a prolonged conflict. Right now millions of Afghan ppl (people) are in danger of starvation. It is duty of int (international) community to provide humanitarian assistance," he added.

The prime minister also tagged a news story published in the Guardian daily, UK, carrying excerpts from an article written by former British premier Gordon Brown to UK foreign secretary, Liz Truss, calling on her to help convene a donor conference to raise \$4.5bn (£3.3bn) for Afghanistan. Brown, in his article, had warned that more than 23 million people were at risk of starvation if aid did not materialize. The former UK prime minister said: "We are witnessing a shameful but also self-defeating failure to prevent famine", adding that the UK should urgently take a lead in resuming the delivery of aid dramatically halted after Taliban announced their government.

PM assures price hike to end soon

FROM PAGE 01
He said tax collection recorded over six thousand billion rupees, exports 31 billion dollars, and foreign remittances over 30 billion dollars. He said all the economic indicators show that the economy is performing well and the media should refrain from spreading uncertainty in the society. Replying to a caller, Imran Khan urged the people to strictly observe wearing of masks at public places to prevent spread of Omicron variant of Covid-19. He, however, made it clear that the government is not thinking of closing the businesses as it will cast a negative impact on our poor people. Answering a caller, the Prime Minister said inflation is a worldwide phenomenon and Pakistan is not an exception. He said it should be kept in view that our government inherited the biggest current account deficit of 20 billion dollars in Pakistan's history and we have to focus on stabilizing the economy. He said as a result of stabilizing efforts, dollar's value went up, which caused higher prices of imported items. Secondly, Covid-19 pandemic created supply shortage. He said the media should do balance reporting on the issue of inflation.

Cameroon says 16 killed in nightclub fire

YAOUNDE: Cameroon's government said Sunday that 16 people were killed in a fire caused by fireworks in a nightclub in the capital Yaounde, the tragedy occurring as the nation hosts the Africa Cup of Nations football tournament. "The initial report shows 16 dead and eight seriously injured" after the "accidental fire" broke out Saturday night, the communications ministry said in a statement. The fire engulfed the main room of Liv's Night Club in the capital's upmarket Bastos district, home to embassies and diplomat residences. "The tragedy, which was caused by explosions from the fireworks often used in these places, first consumed the building's ceiling, resulting in two very loud explosions, causing panic and a stampede," the ministry said. "When we arrived it was a panic, there was a strong fire with lots of smoke," an official with the firefighters told AFP on condition of anonymity. "We counted 16 dead and five injured," the official added. A security guard present for the fire said that "it happened very quickly". "It was a little after 2:00 am and most customers arrive around 3:00 am... there are many victims," the security guard said. There were some burnt objects out the front of the club that suggested a fire, but the building's facade was not destroyed or charred, an AFP journalist said. — Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir President ICCI Inaugurate the First ICCI Open Rapid Chess Tournament along with Sh.Jamshed Akhter SVP, Ashir Hafeez Convenor Sports Committee, Naveed Malik Former SVP, Ashfaq Chatha Former VP & Representatives of Islamabad Chess Association at ICCI. — DNA

TikTok to sponsor official anthem of HBL PSL 7

LAHORE: TikTok, the leading short-form video platform, has announced it will sponsor the official anthem of the HBL Pakistan Super League 7. This season's anthem will be sung by Atif Aslam and Aima Baig and produced by Abdullah Siddiqui. This year, TikTok will add the flavour and excitement around the upcoming season of the HBL PSL by bringing its most-awaited anthem to the fans. TikTok will be the first digital platform where the teaser and anthem will officially be launched. The powerful duo of Atif Aslam and Aima Baig coupled with the gifted Abdullah Siddiqui and TikTok as the driving force behind the anthem is sure to instill a sense of celebration, joy, entertainment and passion among cricket fans in Pakistan. This sponsorship will further cement TikTok's position as one of the world's most loved entertainment platforms. TikTok is transforming entertainment experiences into something that's truly personal, while celebrating the joy of discovery. This is fueled by the TikTok community that



creates content that brings joy, celebrates creativity, shapes culture and transcends boundaries. Chief Operating Officer PCB Salman Naseer said on Sunday: "The HBL Pakistan Super League anthems have a fan base of their own and each season we have produced quality anthems that have ignited passion and excitement both in Pakistan and around the world. This season, we are upbeat and excited about a brilliant collaboration between Pakistan superstars Atif Aslam and Aima Baig with Abdullah Siddiqui.

"We want to thank TikTok for coming onboard with us as the anthem partner, the TikTok platform is synonymous with entertainment and I am confident this anthem will help generate great excitement on the platform. In recent days, we have made two strategic partnerships with TikTok and I am confident that these two partnerships will provide Pakistan cricket and entertainment fans some world-class content." Head of Brand Marketing TikTok, Middle East, Turkey, Africa and Pakistan Paul Katrib said: "It brings us real excitement to sponsor the official anthem of the HBL PSL this season. TikTok is fast becoming the home of cricket fandom in Pakistan. We know what cricket means to our Pakistani community and want to bring them closer to their most favourite sporting event of the year. "This sponsorship is another major step in that direction. The TikTok community in Pakistan is very talented and we are excited to see the content they will be coming up with using the anthem and our official hashtag for the campaign #KhelegaPakistan." — APP

Pakistan's top skier eyeing first winter Olympic medal

BEIJING: Pakistani skier Muhammad Karim is eagerly waiting to participate in the coming Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games in China and hoping to win first medal for him and the country. Karim from Naltar, a village in Gilgit-Baltistan is the only Pakistani skier to have competed in two Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia and Pyeongchang, South Korea. Karim, 26 is excited and looking forward to this year Olympics Games, which will put Pakistan on the international sports map. "I want to further improve my skiing skills at the Beijing Winter Olympics and at the same time encourage Pakistani children to take up the sport," he said in an interview with APP. Sharing some details about his career, he said that basically, skiing in Pakistan is very expensive and hard sport because of lack of supplies and facilities as compared to Europe and other countries. "I like to thank Pakistan Air Force for sponsoring him and providing with all facilities all the way through," he added. About starting skiing, he said, he started skiing from wooden skis. "During the winter, the schools were closed and I used to go slope with my elder brother who was also in the Alpine Skii Team of Pakistan." In 2005, Karim got the chance to be in the Skii Team of Naltar of Pakistan Air Force and won a bronze medal there and got into the spotlight. In 2008, he got scholarship training from Austria for three months. From there he started his professional career. "From 2010, I participated in national competitions and won a gold medal in my first competition. Afterwards, I have participated in Sochi Olympics, South Asian Games and Pyeongchang Olympics. — APP

Nadal survives epic tiebreak to power into quarters

Nadal is chasing a men's record 21st Grand Slam and coming off a curtailed 2021 season caused by a chronic foot injury followed by a bout of Covid-19 in December

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal came out on top of an epic 28-minute opening-set tiebreak in sapping heat to power past Adrian Panatta into the quarter-finals of the Australian Open on Sunday. The 20-time Grand Slam champion needed all of his experience and resolve to go on and claim a 7-6 (16/14), 6-2, 6-2 victory in 2hr 40min on Rod Laver Arena to reach the last eight. It is the 35-year-old Spanish great's 14th quarter-final in his 17th visit to Melbourne. The sixth-seeded Nadal will next face 14th seed Denis Shapovalov in the quarters after the Canadian leftie stunned German third seed Alexander Zverev in straight sets. "I was a little bit lucky at the end of the tiebreaker, I had my chances but then he had a lot of chances too," Nadal said. "That crazy first set was so impor-



tant and the service break at the beginning of the second set too. "He had been playing some fantastic tennis during the whole tournament, winning against amazing

players, and today the first set was super difficult. "His ball was very difficult to control, very flat, very fast and I am very happy that I survived that."

Nadal is chasing a men's record 21st Grand Slam and coming off a curtailed 2021 season caused by a chronic foot injury followed by a bout of Covid-19 in December.

Nadal was effusive in his praise of his next opponent, 22-year-old Shapovalov, who he leads 3-1. "He is one of the players with the biggest potential on the tour," he said. "He has a lot of amazing things on his game, and his results say that. When he's playing well, it's very difficult to stop him." The story of the match was the extraordinary opening-set tiebreak, where Nadal held seven set points and Frenchman Panatta four. It proved an epic in the searing heat, before Nadal prevailed 16-14 after winning a furious rally. The 69th-ranked Panatta appeared to injure his groin or abdomen in chasing down a drop shot during the tiebreak and needed treatment courtside. The effort of the draining 81-minute opening set told on Mannarino, who lost his opening service game of the second set and another break followed in the fifth game as the outcome became inevitable with Nadal taking command.

Briefs

Pak exports to China surged by 69% in 2021

BEIJING: Pakistan export to China was increased by 68.9% in 2021 and crossed the historical figure of \$3.58 billion while the total import and export between the two countries stood at \$27.82 billion. It was reported by Gwadar Pro on Saturday quoting official data from the General Administration of Customs (GACC) of China. Pakistan's export to China crossed \$365.35 million in December 2021, up 17 percent, while in the same period of the previous year, it was \$312.33 million, which is the second-highest figure of the year. Pakistan's exports made the highest gain in November 2021 when its export volume to China was \$379.17 million. Last year, the highest value was in December 2020 when its export volume was \$312.33 million. Overall, from January to December 2021, China's imports from Pakistan totaled \$3.58 billion irrespective of COVID-19, while in the same period of last year it was \$2.12 billion. This year China's export to Pakistan was increased by 57.8% to \$24.23 billion, while last year it was \$15.36 billion and in 2019 it was \$16.17 billion. Shan Saeed, Chief Economist at Jwaji IQI, said trade between the two countries has made significant progress as both export and import volumes are on the rise. This is a testament of China's commitment to BRI projects with CPEC under the limelight. The trade and commerce volumes signify that China wants to provide unconditional support and import more from Pakistan in order to uplift the economy of Pakistan. - APP

Dozens of Indian turtles die in suspected poisoning

MUMBAI: Deliberate poisoning is likely to blame for the death of dozens of turtles at a lake near Mumbai, Indian wildlife experts told AFP Sunday. Conservation workers were alerted to the incident after a local politician asked them to investigate a foul smell around the body of water in Kalyan, about 50 kilometres (30 miles) east of India's entertainment capital. Suhaz Pawar of the Wild Animal and Reptile Rescue conservation group said 57 Indian flapshell turtles had been killed while another six were rescued. He told AFP that locals likely killed the reptiles to stop them from eating fish they were illegally breeding in the lake. "Everything is being investigated now, a post-mortem and scientific analysis will reveal the exact cause of these deaths," Pawar said. He added that Covid-19 restrictions over the past two years had likely led to a surge in the local turtle population. "Restrictions on human activity likely increased the fish stocks at the lake and these turtles were now growing in numbers by feeding on them, which angered some locals," Pawar said. Indian flapshell turtles are not particularly rare but are a protected species under the Wildlife Protection Act. - APP

One dead, three hurt in Hungary hospital fire

BUDAPEST: A fire at one of Hungary's largest hospitals in Budapest killed one person and injured two Sunday, according to Hungarian police. The blaze began in a ground floor detoxification unit at the Szent Imre hospital around 07:30 (CET), a police spokesperson Angeli Molnar told the Hungarian news agency MTI. The cause of the fire, which spread to an adjacent room, covering the surroundings with soot, is under investigation, she said. Staff moved 56 patients in nearby wards out of danger, but firefighters who put out the blaze later found the victim, a young female, an emergency services spokesperson Mate Kisdi told MTI. Three people are also being treated at another hospital for suspected smoke inhalation, Pal Györfi, a spokesperson for the national ambulance service, told MTI. A smaller fire last November at the same facility, one of the main hospitals in the Hungarian capital, was extinguished without fatalities or injuries. - APP

Romanians celebrate the Union of the Romanian Principalities today

The union of the Principalities was a process that began in 1848, based on the strong cultural and economic rapprochement between the two countries. In 1848, the customs union between Moldavia and Wallachia was established, during the reigns of their respective rulers, Mihail Sturdza and Gheorghe Bibescu

JANUARY 24, 1859 is a special day in the heart of every Romanian as the day when the so-called "The Little Union" took place, the union of the Romanian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) under the leadership of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. The Little Union of 1859 was the first important step on the way of forming the unified Romanian national state. The union of the Principalities was a process that began in

1848, based on the strong cultural and economic rapprochement between the two countries. In 1848, the customs union between Moldavia and Wallachia was established, during the reigns of their respective rulers, Mihail Sturdza and Gheorghe Bibescu. On January 5, 1859, Alexandru Ioan Cuza was unanimously elected ruler of the Principality of Moldavia and on January 24, 1859, the Assembly of Wallachia

elected Cuza as the ruler of Principality of Wallachia, as well. The act of 24 January 1859 was initially considered by the Ottoman Empire and the Austrian Empire as a violation of the Paris Convention, but the text of the convention adopted in 1858 did not stipulate that the rulers elected in the two Principalities should be 2 different persons. Thus, Alexandru Ioan Cuza became ruler of the two Romanian Principalities and the Unification was

later recognized by all European Powers. In 1862, with the help of the unionists from the two countries, Alexandru Ioan Cuza unified the Parliament and the Government, thus achieving the political union. The reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, although short (1859-1866), was a period of maximum development of modern Romania. By recognizing the full Union, creating the first Parliament of Romania and the first unitary

government, through its reforms - adoption of the first Romanian Constitution, electoral reform, secularization of monastic wealth, agrarian reform, education - the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza laid the foundations of modern development of Romania. The development of the country further continued after Cuza's removal from power in 1866. The country was strengthened by bringing Prince Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to the

throne of Romania. The constitution adopted on July 1, 1866, enshrined the official name of the newly formed state, Romania. On December 1, 1918, the rest of Romanian provinces, Transylvania, Banat, Crisana and Maramures also joined Romania. This second union event is commemorated as "The Great Union", the embodiment of the long-sought dreams and hopes of the Romanian people and represents the National Day of Romania. - DNA

Guterres reaffirms UN stand on Kashmir's settlement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has reiterated the world body's position on the Kashmir dispute that it should be resolved on the basis of the UN Charter, Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements between India and Pakistan. Antonio Guterres reaffirmed the stance in reply to a question at his first press conference as he began his second term as the UN chief in New York. He hoped that human rights would be respected in the disputed territory. "Well, the position of the UN and the resolutions that were taken are the same, remain the same," he said in reply to a question from a Pakistani journalist, who reminded him of the statement he made on August 8, 2019. The Secretary General pointed out that the United Nations has a peacekeeping operation in Kashmir, the UN Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan, which monitors the Line of Control in the disputed region. He said he had offered his good offices to resolve the dispute several times, and we hope that this is something that can be solved peacefully. Pakistan has always wel-

comed the UN Secretary General's offer of mediation, but India always rejected it. Meanwhile, Pakistan has urged the United Nations to step up its efforts and urgently resolve the Kashmir dispute in order to halt Indian atrocities in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and prevent a threat to regional and global peace and security. Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Munir Akram, while commenting on the report of the UN chief on the work of the Organization told the UN General Assembly that peace and security must remain at the core of the functions of the United Nations. "We urge the Security Council and the Secretary General to exercise their considerable authority to promote an early and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and to end the Indian reign of terror against the Kashmiri people," the Pakistani envoy said in his speech.



Ambassador Munir Akram said, the United Nations and the Secretary General can do "much more" to address peace and security threats by fully using the authority provided by the United Nations Charter, such as in Article 99, and by taking action in the General Assembly if the Security Council is unable to do so. The Pakistani envoy said, the primary threat in South Asia is posed by the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir and India's attempt to annex and transform the Muslim majority IIOJK into a Hindu majority territory, a grave violation of Council resolutions that promised the Kashmiris their right to self-determination through a United Nations supervised plebiscite. Ambassador Munir Akram condemned the extensive illegal actions taken by India in IIOJK and urged the Council and the Secretary General to promote an early, peaceful end to the dispute. He deplored that so far, there has been no accountability for India's

crimes in IIOJK. Draconian Indian laws provide complete impunity to the 900,000 troops India has deployed in the occupied territory, he pointed out. "Pakistan condemned the increasing harassment, illegal arrests and registration of fake criminal cases against journalists and civil society activists such as Khurram Pervez, in IIOJK. The recent attack and ban on the Kashmir Press Club is another manifestation of India's entrenched use of brute force and coercion to silence all those who raise their voice against its criminal and genocidal acts in the occupied territory," Ambassador Munir Akram said. He cited the rise of racial and religious hate and violence, with Islamophobia among its gravest manifestations, notably as characterized by lynching and calls for genocide of Muslims in India. "The worst manifestation of Islamophobia is the officially-inspired campaign of the 'Hindutva' adherents in India against Muslims," he said. The Pakistani envoy also drew attention to the statement made recently by the Head of "Genocide Watch", Professor Gregory Stanton, in which he stated: "We are warning that genocide could very well happen in India."

EASA refuses to lift ban on PIA flights to EU

EASA Executive Director Patrick Ky said the ICAO audit has no link with the Agency evaluation of the PIA and the European agency will evaluate the PIA itself

ISLAMABAD: The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Saturday refused to lift the ban on the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flights to European Union countries maintaining that the ICAO audit of PIA has nothing to do with the EASA. PIA authorities pinned many hopes on the ICAO audit for resumption of flights operation for Europe as PIA CEO had tweeted that ICAO audit as some sort of decisive step in resumption of flights but now in the latest development the EASA refused to accept the ICAO audit of PIA. EASA Executive Director Patrick Ky wrote a reply letter to PIA CEO Arshad Malik and informed him about the update. The EASA, in its response to letter of PIA, said that it was pleased to hear that International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was able to remove the Significant Safety Concern (SSC) that was raised against Pakistan Personnel Licensing (PEL) following the on-site Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program (USOAP) activities performed in Pakistan from 29 November to 10 December 2021. "The closure of this SSC was an important step towards a potential lifting of the suspension of PIA Third Country Operators (TCO) Authorization (TCOA)," EASA Executive Director Patrick Ky said the ICAO audit has no link with the Agency evaluation of the PIA and the European agency will evaluate the PIA itself. He wrote, "EASA will consult other authorities to take the final decision to lift the ban on Pakistani airlines routes to the EU. EASA will conduct the audit of the Civil Aviation." However, EASA showed satisfaction with the PIA flight safety management and system. - DNA

Pak-Belarus mull collaboration in music and performing Arts



DNA

MINSK: Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan visited the Belarusian State Academy of Music and met with the First Vice Rector Ms. Elena Kurakina. The meeting was

also attended by the Vice Rector for Scientific work Ms. Nelly Mazaberidze and the Head of the International Cooperation Department Ms. Ruzanna Avanesyan. The Rector provided a detailed briefing on the Academy work, scope and the

performance followed by which a tour of facility was arranged. The Academy is celebrating the 90th anniversary of its establishment this year. The Ambassador briefed the Vice Rector on the peculiarities of the educational process in Pakistan.

The parties discussed ways and means for closer collaboration and the possibilities of creating institutional linkages through MOUs between the National Academy of Music and Performing Arts Pakistan and the Belarusian Academy.

Pak-Kyrgyz ties to milestone in regional integration

Sardar Azhar said that main items of our exports included, machinery and equipment, products made of non-precious metals, plastic products, leather products and cosmetics

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Kyrgyzstan Sardar Azhar Tariq Khan on Sunday said that Promoting bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan could be a milestone in regional and global trade integration and connectivity. The geo-strategic position of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan also highlights their geo-economic importance, which could play a significant role in promoting trade connectivity

amongst different regions and potential markets of the world, Ambassador of Pakistan to Kyrgyzstan Sardar Azhar Tariq Khan told APP here on Sunday. The ambassador said that due to its geostrategic importance, Pakistan is currently a major player in global and regional trade, bordering the Middle East and South Asian states on the one hand and the global economic power China on the other. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan, due to its very important geographical location, has a distinctive place among the Central Asian states (CARs). He said that geographical location of Kyrgyzstan offers many opportunities for trade with Pakistan as it is the shortest entry point of Pakistani products to the 'Eurasian Economic Markets' of 182-million people com-

prising Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia. Sardar Azhar said that goods once exported to Kyrgyzstan can be further transported to the Eurasian markets without payment of customs duties. Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan has flourishing construction and hoteling industries, he added. Given the strategic location of Kyrgyzstan and its membership of Eurasian Economic Union, a trade delegation may visit Kyrgyzstan to look for new markets for our products, he said. The Pakistan's envoy said that many high rising buildings for shopping malls, apartments and hotels are currently being constructed mostly by Turkish firms for which raw material is being imported from other countries. He said that construction material from Pakistan can also be exported.

As per figures provided by the host Foreign Office, the trade turnover of the Kyrgyz Republic with Pakistan amounted to US\$ 5.9 million in 2021 with Pakistan's exports amounting to US\$ 5.3 million and imports US\$ 0.6 million, he said. Sardar Azhar said that main items of our exports included, machinery and equipment, products made of non-precious metals, plastic products, leather products and cosmetics. Pakistan imported beans, canned meat and fish, wood products, tanned leather and aviation kerosene, he said. The ambassador said that Pakistan basically exports pharmaceutical products, oranges, rice, sports items, surgical instruments, textiles and garments to Kyrgyzstan. In addition, Pakistan could export its surplus fresh fruits and vegetables especially during

winter season when there is acute shortage of fresh fruits and vegetables in Kyrgyzstan, he said. Replying to a question, he said the Pakistan embassy in Kyrgyzstan also organized Mango Exhibition at the City Centre of Bishkek for introduction of our Mangoes to general public. Since Mango is a rare fruit in Kyrgyzstan, the Embassy put up a stall decorated with introductory banners, he said. While strictly following the social distancing SOPs, Mango was not served to the people instead it was gifted to approximately 400 persons. "We had also invited owners of prominent supermarkets and importers of fruits to the event" he informed. "I have personally received many calls and messages of thanks from the Government functionaries, Ambassadors and other dignitaries." - APP

Pakistan to attract \$2.5b investment in FY22

Anjum Nisar says rising FDI reflects improved security, better policies

DNA

KARACHI: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) on Sunday said that increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the first half of the current fiscal year reflects the improvement in security situation, implying that investors had started coming back to Pakistan as the country has attracted FDI of over \$1 billion, up by 20 percent owing to government's efforts to create a conducive environment for investors. FPCCI's Businessmen Panel Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that the country's liberal policies offered one of the most attractive investment regimes in the region, anticipating that Pakistan might attract \$2.5 billion in foreign inflows in fiscal year 2021-22. Although the FDI data was encouraging, it might be difficult to keep the pace of FDI inflows at present levels for the next half year if Covid-19 challenges continued to mount, he said.

Thousands protest in Belgium against curbs

BRUSSELS: Thousands of demonstrators marched through Brussels on Sunday to protest anti-coronavirus rules as the Omicron wave causes infections to reach record highs. AFP reporters said the sprawling crowd appeared far larger than previous demonstrations that have paraded through the Belgian capital to the seat of the European Union and seen clashes with the police. Protesters carried signs slamming Belgium Prime Minister Alexander De Croo and the Covid Safe pass proving you are vaccinated or have tested negative that is required for entry into numerous venues. Organisers including the World Wide Demonstration for Freedom and Europeans United for Freedom had called for people to come from other EU states. Flags from Poland, the Netherlands and Romania could be seen in the crowd. "What has been happening since 2020 has allowed people to wake up to corruption," said Francesca Fanara, who had travelled from Lille in northern France. - APP

Thai PM to visit Saudi Arabia

BANGKOK: Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-cha will this week make the first visit by a Thai leader to Saudi Arabia in more than 30 years following decades of diplomatic tension sparked by a jewel theft from a Saudi palace. Thai-born janitor Kriangkrai Techamong stole \$20 million worth of precious gems in 1989 from the home of a Saudi prince, triggering a feud between the countries dubbed the "Blue Diamond Affair" that has yet to be resolved. Thai police later returned some of the jewels but Saudi officials claimed most were fakes, while the whereabouts of the most precious gem - a rare 50-carat blue diamond - remains unknown. - APP

Briefs

Iran urges people to dress warmly to cut gas use

TEHRAN: Iran's oil ministry on Sunday urged people to wear warm clothes to reduce a surging demand for gas, as people turn up their heaters to cope with bitterly cold winter temperatures. Iran has the world's second largest gas reserves after Russia, and the fourth largest oil reserves. Gas is almost free in Iran because it is heavily subsidised. "Gas consumption can be managed by wearing warm clothes and turning off heating appliances when leaving home and work," Oil Minister Javad Owji said Sunday, according to the ministry's Shana news agency. "We ask people to save gas consumption so that we can pass the next 10 days without any problem." On Thursday, Iran's Meteorological Organisation issued weather warnings about low temperatures in several cities, including the capital Tehran. "Even though, thanks to God and to the efforts of the employees of the oil industry, the gas network is stable, the continuation of this situation requires the cooperation of dear compatriots and consumption management," he added. Owji said that in past 24 hours, the use of 692 million cubic meters of gas had been registered in "domestic, commercial and non-major industry sectors". - APP

Covid situation continues to worsen

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported 7,586 fresh cases of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours as the Omicron driven fifth wave of the pandemic continues to get worse, official figures showed Sunday morning. Pakistan registered its highest number of daily COVID-19 cases - 7,678 - on Friday since the pandemic started in 2020, the National Command and Operation Centre's (NCOC) statistics had showed. According to the NCOC, a total of 58,334 tests were conducted in the country during the last 24 hours, of which 7,586 came back positive, pushing the nationwide tally of the virus cases to 1,367,605. The country's positivity rate now stands at a record high of 13%. Meanwhile, 20 more patients succumbed to the virus during the same period, taking the death toll to 29,097. In addition to this, the country's active coronavirus cases surged to 70,263, making it the highest in over four months. Pakistan last reported 65,725 active cases on September 16, 2021. A day earlier, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) had revised COVID-19 protocols for mosques and announced that only fully vaccinated people will be allowed to pray inside the places of worship. The body leading Pakistan's COVID-19 response also announced on Friday that all schools with a high COVID-19 positivity ratio would remain closed for one week across the country.

1,497 fresh Covid cases reported in capital

ISLAMABAD: Health officials on Sunday said that 1,497 new Coronavirus cases were reported in the federal capital during the last 24 hours. According to an official of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), as many as 892 cases were reported on Saturday while 1,359 cases were reported on Friday. He said so far 117,436 cases were reported from the federal capital and 976 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) while 108,709 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, the government has waived off the booster shots fee for those visiting abroad, and now they can get free booster while showing their documents. This booster was already free for the general public. On the direction of the Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued surveillance of different areas of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. They also started taking action on a violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to the coronavirus while visiting marriage halls, markets, and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration had been asked to take action on the violation of SOPs at shops, workshops, and restaurants. The inspection teams had been directed to issue notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops in case of violation of SOPs. Commenting on the situation, an official of the Ministry of National Health Services said that several local-level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. He advised the citizens to continue to follow the social distancing, use of masks, and other precautionary measures to stop the increasing transmission of COVID-19 in the city. - APP

'Top Kyrgyz journalist on narcotics charge'

Charges framed days after he released an investigation into the fuel business of a powerful political family

WEB DESK

BISHKEK: A renowned investigative journalist in ex-Soviet Kyrgyzstan has been charged with possession of narcotics, police said Sunday, days after he released an investigation into the fuel business of a powerful political family. Bolot Temirov, whose YouTube channel Temirov Live is known for its hard-hitting anti-corruption investigations, was taken into custody Saturday night after police raided the media outlet's office. Around 200 supporters of Temirov including fellow journalists gathered outside the interior ministry on Sunday, with some calling for the minister's resignation.

In a statement Sunday, police in the Central Asian country's capital Bishkek said Temirov and his colleague Bolot Nazarov had been arrested on a charge of "possessing illegal narcotics". Temirov was charged and released following detention but is barred from leaving the country. Nazarov is still being held, a police spokesman confirmed to AFP. In footage of the journalist filmed during his arrest, Temirov said he believed police had planted drugs in his pocket. The investigation comes after Temirov Live released a report on alleged profiteering in the fuel industry by a relative of Kamchibek Tashiyev, Kyrgyzstan's

security committee chief, who came to power alongside current president Sadyr Japarov during unrest in 2020. Japarov said on Facebook Sunday he would ensure the case was "investigated fairly" but pledged support for Tashiyev, a long-term ally. "Kamchibek (Tashiyev) explained in detail ... that the accusations against him were completely false." Tashiyev during a Sunday press conference denied that his committee had influenced the investigation into Temirov and other employees of the channel, calling the investigation into his nephew's fuel business "a lie". "I have never been involved in cor-

ruption...that is my lifelong position," Tashiyev said. Tashiyev accused Temirov's colleague Nazarov of being "addicted" to narcotics and using a bong to smoke illicit substances without offering proof for the claim. Kyrgyzstan's vast, oil-rich neighbour Kazakhstan has been rocked by political unrest that authorities there said has left 225 people dead after protests against an energy price hike began at the turn of the year. But mountainous Kyrgyzstan has long been the region's most politically volatile country, with three of the country's six post-independence leaders forced out of office since 2005 amid street rallies over corruption, nepotism and rigged votes.

Record IT exports in 6 months: Faisal Javed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Senator Faisal Javed Khan on Sunday said that Pakistan hits its highest ever Information Technology (IT) Exports in 6 months. In a tweet, he said that "our IT Exports during Fiscal Year 21-22 surged to \$1.302 billion at the growth rate of 36% v/s \$959 million during the same period of 2020-21". "Hopefully we'll be able to cross \$3.5 billion mark during this financial year", he added. Faisal Javed Khan who is also Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's focus is on increasing exports to stimulate economic growth. "We will inshaallah double our IT industry in 2 years", he added. He said that TechZones are being set-up to create employment, economic transformation & attract intl investors. "We are now the third-largest gig economy globally", he added.

Murree Road closed as snow keeps on hitting upper areas



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: As snow is falling in Murree intermittently, the city administration has closed all connecting roads to the hilly station and banned tourists' entry after 5pm. A new spell of snowfall is continued in Murree and since morning, the hilly resort has received over 6 inches snow. After recent blizzard tragedy here in which at least 22 stranded tourists died, the administration has become very careful. The Rawalpindi Chief Traffic Officer said that as many as 1170 vehicles of tourists had entered Murree but the traffic police would not allow more than 8,000 vehicles. He said for the safety of vacationers, the administration had closed road from Kaldana to Gulyat. He asked the tourists to take a substitute route. He said after it becomes slippery the Masyari Link Road had also been closed. He said that vaca-

tioners could enter from Lower Topa. According to the Metrological office report, snowfall will continue to hit Murree for two days. Besides Murree, snowfall is also continued in Azad Kashmir, Rawalakot, Gulyat, Thandyani, Lipa Valley, Upper Neelum and Abbottabad. The land contact with Lipa and Upper Neelum valleys is disconnected. There is no electric supply in Gulyat, Thandyani. As almost one-foot snow has lashed Murree road, the administration has closed the road and other connecting roads. Chitral, Lawari Tunnel has also been shut due to slippery. A rainy spell has continued all across the country. The rains have brought chill to already cold weather. Intermittent rains are soaking Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Gujrat, Jhelum, Sargodha, Wazirabad, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Narowal, Sialkot, Arifwala and other suburban areas. Rain has also lashed Lahore since yesterday. The low-lying areas in the city have been submerged in rainwater.

Pakistan frees 20 Indian fishermen as goodwill gesture

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan on Sunday released 20 Indian fishermen in a goodwill gesture from a Karachi prison after they were arrested for fishing illegally in Pakistani waters. According to details, the Indian fishermen were imprisoned in Karachi's Landhi prison from where they would be transferred to Lahore via bus, to be finally shifted to India via Wagah border. The Edhi Foundation is bearing all the travelling expenditures of the Indian anglers. They will be brought to Lahore via bus. Then they will be handed over to the Indian authorities at Wagah border. Jail Superintendent of Landhi prison said that there were 588 Indian fishermen currently jailed in Pakistan with 42 of

them being under trial prisoners while 516 being convicted of their crimes. As many as 620 Pakistani fishermen and 10 others are also jailed in Indian prisons and waiting to be repatriated back to their country. In November 2021, Pakistan released 20 Indian fishermen from Malir Jail in Karachi. These fishermen, arrested for illegally fishing in Pakistani waters, were released from jail after they completed their convictions. Jail official Arshad Shah has said that these fishermen of India were awarded a four-year jail term and they have completed their sentences. "Indian authorities have confirmed the Indian nationality of these fishermen," the jail official further said. "All legal formalities have been completed for their release from jail. They are being released immediately from prison as a goodwill gesture," the jail superintendent said.

Berlusconi pulls out of Italian presidential race

NEWS DESK

ROME: Billionaire former premier Silvio Berlusconi withdrew from the race for Italy's presidency on Saturday, two days before voting starts, but repeated his opposition to Prime Minister Mario Draghi taking the job. The 85-year-old media mogul, who is still embroiled in legal proceedings over his infamous "Bunga Bunga" sex parties, insisted he had the support in parliament to win - something analysts doubted. But in a statement issued to the media, he said he was withdrawing in the spirit of "national responsibility", to avoid further controversy. Draghi, a former European Central

Bank chief who has led Italy's coalition government for the past year, remains the favourite to be elected head of state next week. The governing parties, which range from left to right, including Berlusconi's Forza Italia, have however yet to reach a deal - and with voting secret, the result is notoriously hard to predict. More than 1,000 MPs, senators and regional representatives will begin voting Monday, with several rounds - each taking a day - expected before a result.



Abbasi rubbishes claim of PML-N top four's deal talk

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has rubbished the government minister's talk about the PML-N's top tier four leaders' endeavor to strike a possible deal with 'someone' in case their party supreme Nawaz Sharif did not fit in 'their' power framework. In an interview with a private television channel on Saturday, Abbasi said there was no veracity in federal Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry's claim regarding the deal as he along with Kh Asif and



few others went to the residence of Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani where they met with Fawad Ch and other ministers. A few days ago, Fawad Ch told a presser that the PML-N's four top leaders met someone and told him that Nawaz Sharif did great wrong to the country [so] why

don't they consider them. The minister further revealed that an interesting race was going on within the opposition party. Abbasi while rejecting information minister's claim said mockingly that Fawad Ch had been employed to issue statements and his job was only to make (false) announcements. He was of the view that country's issues could only be solved if we abided by the constitution. In parliamentary form of government, opposition does the same as we are doing, he said adding that opposition was not an army or a platoon which could launch an attack on parliament and win it.

UK lawmaker says she was sacked for her 'Muslimness'

The scandals have drained public support from both Johnson personally and his party, presenting him with the most serious crisis of his premiership

NEWS DESK

LONDON: A British lawmaker has said she was fired from a ministerial job in Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government partly because her Muslim faith was making colleagues uncomfortable, the Sunday Times reported. Nusrat Ghani, 49, who lost her job as a junior transport minister in February 2020, told the paper she was told by a "whip" - an enforcer of parliamentary discipline - that her "Muslimness" had been raised as an issue in her sacking. There was no immediate response to her comments from Johnson's Downing Street office, but Mark Spencer, the government's chief whip, said he was the person at the center of Ghani's allegations. "These accusations are completely false and I consider them to be defamatory," he said on Twitter.



"I have never used those words attributed to me." Ghani's remarks come after one of her Conservative colleagues said he would meet police to discuss accusations that government whips had attempted to "blackmail" lawmakers suspected of trying to force Johnson from office over public anger about parties held at his Downing Street office during COVID lockdowns. The scandals have drained public

support from both Johnson personally and his party, presenting him with the most serious crisis of his premiership. "I was told that at the reshuffle meeting in Downing Street that 'Muslimness' was raised as an 'issue', that my 'Muslim women minister' status was making colleagues uncomfortable," the paper quoted Ghani, Britain's first female Muslim minister, as saying. "I will not pretend that this hasn't shaken my faith in the party and I have at times seriously considered whether to continue as an MP (member of parliament)." In his response, Spencer said Ghani had declined to put the matter to a formal internal investigation when she first raised the issue last March. The Conservative Party has previously faced accusations of Islamophobia, and a report in May last year criticized it over how it dealt with complaints of discrimination against Muslims.

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