



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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WHO Board nominates Chief Tedros for May 2022 re-election

Detailed News On Page-08

Govt bringing poor into mainstream

Detailed News On Page-04

Nadal survives thriller to reach Semi-Finals

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Biden caught insulting reporter

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden was caught on a live microphone Monday calling a Fox News journalist a "stupid son of a bi*ch". As journalists were leaving the room after the event, a reporter from Fox News, asked whether inflation is a political liability. The Democratic leader, possibly unaware that his microphone was still on, began by deadpanning: "It's a great asset. More inflation." And then muttered, "What a stupid son of a bi*ch," before glancing briefly down.

German envoy wants kids vaccinated

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador to Pakistan Bernhard Bernhardt has emphasized parents to have their children vaccinated against polio. The German Ambassador in his recent tweet message on Tuesday expressed his cheerfulness on the anti-polio drive in Pakistan. He said, "Good to see nationwide anti-polio campaign kicking off! #Polio is a dangerous disease that can cause permanent paralysis." I encourage all parents to have their kids vaccinated."

PPP to give poor people rights

NAZIR SIYAL

LARKANA: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that he will save the Katchi Abadis across Sindh, and will give property rights to the residents there. He added that PPP has never opposed giving plots to any judge, bureaucrat or anyone else, hopefully, no will object on the poor getting their due share either. He was addressing an initial leasing ceremony for 150 people under a scheme to give property rights to residents.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs meeting of federal cabinet. – DNA

PDM to go ahead with long march

In a telephone conversation, Nawaz and Fazl mull spurring anti-govt campaign

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Despite the government's requests, Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on Tuesday that the opposition alliance would be moving ahead with its plan to hold an "anti-inflation" long march to Islamabad on Pakistan Day (March 23). He expressed these views while speaking to the media in Islamabad after a meeting of the heads of the PDM's component parties. Asked how the PDM would enter the federal capital on March 23 as security arrangements would be tight due to the military parade and a session of the Organisation of Islamic Organisation (OIC), he replied: "The PDM will enter. They [the government] knew that we were staging a long march on that date. Under what conspiracy did

Continued on Page 06

'Opposition has nothing to sell'

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said on Tuesday that no corruption case had come to light during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government so far. Responding to the press conference of PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and speech of PPP Chairman Bilawal Zardari, the minister, in a statement, said a



Continued on Page 06

Australia, Pakistan ties excellent: Envoy

Australian Charge D Affaires Bryce Hutchesson says Australia also looks forward to welcoming back many Pakistan students

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Australian Charge D Affaires Bryce Hutchesson has said on this Australia Day - when Australians celebrate their nation, its achievements and its diverse multicultural people - it is timely to reflect on the ties



between Australia and Pakistan and opportunities for further advancing the relationship between our two great countries. Our connections have continued to grow since Australia formally recognised the new state of Pakistan in 1947. We have much in common - including sustainable development challenges, transnational security interests, Commonwealth heritage and of course love of cricket - which provides a solid foundation for moving forward.

Continued on Page 06

Taliban detain dozens trying to leave country

It was not clear who had organised the flight

KABUL: Dozens of people were stopped from "illegally" leaving Afghanistan by air on Monday, a top Taliban official said, and several women among them are being detained until they are collected by male relatives. Tens of thousands of Afghans fled on evacuation flights from Kabul in August as the Taliban returned to power amid the hasty withdrawal of US-led forces. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted late Monday that a group had attempted to leave on a flight from the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif. "Forty people were arrested... who wanted to go abroad illegally by plane," he said. He said most were released, but some women "remain detained because their male relatives have not yet come to escort them". It was not immediately clear who had organised the flight. – APP

COAS lauds Owen for promoting football

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa appreciated former England ace striker Michael Owen for visiting Pakistan and promoting sports particularly football, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Tuesday. A statement issued by the military's media wing said that football legend Owen met the COAS today. "Sports promote peace and this initiative for developing football infrastructure and young talent in Pakistan is a welcoming step," said Gen Bajwa. Owen arrived in Islamabad on Tuesday on a three-day tour. He will meet with Pakistani PM Imran Khan and his Special Assistant Usman Dar to discuss GSV's football reform plan for the country. The former striker is also scheduled to attend a high-profile presidential dinner hosted by President Arif Alvi.

Low ranking due to rule of law: Fawad

Minister says that the report released by the international organization "isn't complete as it only shows the scores"



RANA FARRUKH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry clarified on Tuesday that Pakistan's low ranking on Transparency International's corruption perception index is because of the absence of rule of law in the country and state capture as opposed to financial corruption. The minister was speaking during a press conference after a session of the Federal Cabinet in Islamabad with Prime Minister Imran Khan in the chair. Referring to Transparency International's latest Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI 2021), in which Pakistan's rank has fallen 16 places to 140 from 124 out of 180 countries, Fawad said that the ranking has been assigned to the country not because of corruption but because of the absence of rule of law and state capture. Fawad said that the report released by the international organisation earlier "isn't complete as it only shows the scores." "All the agencies compiling the report maintained Pakistan's ranking; however, only the Economic Intelligence Unit reduced the score [of Pakistan]," he said. Fawad also shed light on other matters that came under discussion during the cabinet meeting and said that the next general elections will be held on the basis of a new census. "For the purpose, the government has approved a budget of Rs5 billion," Fawad said, adding that

Continued on Page 06

Pak further slips on corruption index

Pakistan's rank has fallen 16 places to 140 from 124 out of 180 countries

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has slipped further in Transparency International's latest Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI 2021), with the Opposition berating the Imran Khan-led government and demanding the prime minister's resignation. Pakistan's rank has fallen 16 places to 140 from 124 out of 180 countries, Transparency International's report showed Tuesday. In CPI 2021, Pakistan scored 28 out of 100. "The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople, uses a scale of zero to 100, where zero is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean," the organisation said. Responding to the development, TI Pakistan Vice-Chair Justice (ret'd) Nasira Iqbal said: "The absence of Rule of Law and State Capture has resulted in substantial low CPI 2021 score of Pakistan compared to CPI 2020, from 31/100 to 28/100 and rank from 124/180 to 140/180." The vice-chair noted that there is no change in CPI 2021 Scores of India and Bangladesh from CPI 2020. Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chair of Transparency International said: "Human rights are not simply a nice-to-have in the fight against corruption. Ensuring people can speak freely and work to hold power to account is the only sustainable route to a corruption-free society."



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa meets with former England ace striker Michael Owen. – DNA

Political climate turns rough as elections draw near

Time is running out for the PTI and particularly Imran Khan. They hardly have any time to make up for the lapses made during the past three years. They literally need a magic wand that could turn things in their favour

ANALYSIS

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The political climate of Pakistan has suddenly taken a new turn as the Prime Minister Imran Khan, during his live interaction with the public on the national hook up, chose to once again take the Sharif family to the task. The prime minister reiterated his 'commitment' to put them behind the bars and recover looted money. He also ruled out any National Reconciliation Order (NRO) with those who, according to him, had plundered national wealth and built huge empires abroad. The prime minister's body language suggested that he was not comfortable with the so far progress on the



cases pursued by the accountability commission spearheaded by Shahzad Akbar. And it transpired into reality the very next day when Shahzad Akbar tendered his resignation. Reports indicate that Imran Khan was not happy with him, especially the way he was handling the cases of the Sharif family and thus asked to step down. As the election time is drawing near, frustration of the incumbent PTI is getting deeper and deeper for it knows very well that with this baggage it will simply not be able to put up any good show. Defeat in the recent KPK local bodies' elections is a clear manifestation of the ruling party's lackluster performance in its stronghold. The prime minister during his interaction with masses held indiscreet issuance of party tickets responsible for the local bodies' election debacle however critics take this only as a face saving argument. The removal of Shahzad Akbar may further sever relations between the

government and the establishment because Shahzad, as reports suggest, was a nominee of the powers that be. The PTI leadership construed Shahzad Akbar's inability of establishing a strong case against the Sharif family just because he had 'instructions' from some quarters to try to prolong the case as long as he could. The Capital is also abuzz with reports of Sharif family's striking a deal for the safe return of Nawaz Sharif. There are also reports that PML-N may be an alternative in case the PTI govt calls it a day or is shown the door. Prime Minister Imran Khan is probably well aware of all these developments. There is a section of society that has suddenly came up with the idea of the presidential form of government as an alternative to the prevalent system. Political parties rightly stood up against these prepositions for if it happened, it would eliminate their role from Pakistan's politics. The move is also considered as an

attempt to pressurize political parties to reach an understanding with the powers that be for any future set up in case the PTI government departs. Prime Minister Imran Khan, according to sources, is being convinced to spearhead the movement for the presidential system with this bait that he will be chosen as the President of Pakistan once the system would be put in place. I personally don't think the presidential form of government can really help us get out of the mess we have mired in badly. The reason is obvious. The same people shall be picked up to run that system. Even the parliamentary form of government can deliver the goods provided it is run by a team of honest people. Practically out of 74 years of its existence Pakistan has been governed with a presidential system for almost 46 years. The dictatorial regimes, as a matter of fact, represent a presidential system where only one man calls the shots with a team of his own choosing.

Time is running out for the PTI and particularly Imran Khan. They hardly have any time to make up for the lapses made during the past three years. They literally need a magic wand that could turn things in their favour. Elimination of corruption was a solemn vow that PTI sold to its voters to win elections but as we witnessed the party has not been able to materialize its vow. Consequently Pakistan has dropped 16 places in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2021 compared to the previous year, ranking 140 out of 180 countries, according to Transparency International latest report. Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry outright rejected the impression that corruption index slide was due to any financial wrongdoings. Summing up, Imran Khan may have an earnest wish to bring about a revolution but perhaps lacks in required strength, authority and a do-gooder team needed in this regard.

Inside...

Concerns showed over high prevalence of stroke – Page 02

Sri Lankan high level trade delegation visits RCCI – Page 03

Proposal to establish COMSATS campus in Quetta: Ali Muhammad – Page 04

Ukraine crisis could produce an unexpected winner: Iran – Page 05

Nadal survives Shapovalov thriller to reach semis – Page 06

Central Asia hit by large scale power blackout – Page 07

Lahore High Court declares Ravi River Project illegal – Page 08

Briefs

Mariyum should apologize to whole nation: Buzdar

DNA

LAHORE: Chief Minister of Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar on Tuesday strongly condemned the indecent words used against Prime Minister Imran Khan.

In a statement, the Chief Minister said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Mariyum Aurangzeb has disheartened each and every Pakistani by showing her moral degradation. Usman Buzdar continued to say that it is not unusual for the PML-N leaders to use this kind of language. Chief minister further demanded that Mariyum Aurangzeb should apologize to the whole nation for using such absurd language.

The reaction came after Mariyum Aurangzeb said Imran Khan knows that time of his ouster is approaching. Addressing media persons, Mariyum said that Imran Khan cannot escape his inevitable accountability by the people of Pakistan who have suffered during his term.

Responding to PM Imran's statement that he will be more dangerous if he is not in power, the PML-N leader said that Imran Khan's threats of protests do not have any value. Imran Khan will find no one along his side as soon as he is removed from the position, she added.

Ashrafi for promoting int'l interfaith harmony

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Interfaith Harmony and Muttahida Ulema Council (MUC) Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi Tuesday held a meeting with Sri Lankan Trade Minister Bandula Gunawardena.

Both of the leaders discussed to further develop the cordial relations in all spheres of life particularly in the international interfaith dialogue and harmony. Ashrafi offered condolence on the sad demise of Sri Lankan citizen Priyantha Kumara in the Sialkot factory incident. The Sri Lankan trade minister appreciating the immediate steps of the Pakistan's government for bringing the culprits of Sialkot incident to justice said the Sri Lankan government and the people had expressed great satisfaction over the strong reaction of the Pakistan's government and people into the matter. He said there should be close association between the religious scholars of the two countries. — APP

COURT NOTICE

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informed to you through
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of reconciliation will be
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ISLAMABAD: January 25 – Minister of Trade of Sri Lanka, Dr. Bandula Gunawardhana and State Minister for Regional Cooperation, Tharaka Balasuriya call on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — APP

Concerns showed over high prevalence of stroke

5.9 million annual deaths worldwide are associated with stroke only, while hypertension and smoking were the most prevalent risk factors for the fatal disease

DNA

KARACHI: The experts at the international seminar have expressed serious concerns over the high prevalence of stroke in Pakistan, and Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), and said that stroke was the leading cause of chronic disability and a leading cause of mortality worldwide.

There are 5.9 million annual deaths worldwide are associated with stroke only, while hypertension and smoking were the most prevalent risk factors for the fatal disease, they said, adding that there is an urgent need to improve awareness of risk factors and implement healthy lifestyle habits, especially in Pakistan.

These scholars were speaking at the COMSTEC-ICCBS International Seminar on 'Improving Stroke Care in Low and Middle-Income Countries' held at the LEJ National Science Information Center, International Center for Chemical and Biological

Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi on Monday evening. The seminar was jointly organized by COMSTEC and ICCBS - University of Karachi.

Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Director of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, and COMSTEC Coordinator General, Dr. Mohammad Wasay, Professor at the Aga Khan's Section of Neurology, Department of Medicine, Iranian scholar Dr. Mehdi Farhoudi, Dr. Ashfaq Shuaib, Professor at the University of Alberta, Canada, and Dr. Maria Khan from Rashid Hospital, Dubai, spoke on the occasion.

Prof. Iqbal Choudhary informed the participants that this seminar was designed to draw attention to the burden of stroke in low and middle-income countries.

Talking about COMSTEC, he said that the core mandate of COMSTEC was to strengthen cooperation among the OIC Member States in science and technology (S&T). It aims to draw up programs and initiatives to develop the capabilities of the

least-developed Muslim countries in science and technology (S&T) through inter-Islamic cooperation, he maintained.

He mentioned the major programs which COMSTEC had initiated for science and technology and healthcare research for the capacity of OIC African countries.

Prof. Mohammad Wasay said, "Increased stroke incidence is largely associated with aging and urbanization and propelled by the increasing prevalence of key risk factors, especially in LMICs, including, inactivity, obesity, dietary factors, diabetes, smoking, hyperlipidemia, and hypertension.

He said that screening for stroke risk factors provided an excellent opportunity to identify and educate those at high risk. Dr. Mehdi Farhoudi said that the situation pertaining to the burden of stroke was worse in LMICs than High-Income Countries (HICs). Dr. Ashfaq Shuaib pointed out, "Stroke remains the leading cause of chronic disability and death in LMICs."

He emphasized the need for coordination of

care and development of stroke units and rehabilitation programs in the public sector and said that the establishment of stroke units should be a national priority. The promotion of healthy dietary habits, physical activities, and provision of access to clean air are some suggestions for reducing the burden of stroke in LMICs, he said.

Dr. Maria Khan, in her presentation on "Stroke in Women", said that worldwide, stroke incidence, prevalence, and mortality were higher in men than women in developing countries, except in the Middle East and North Africa, where women have higher stroke mortality. "Access to secondary prevention and to rehabilitation is worse for women compared to men," she said.

In the end, a panel discussion on the same issue was held, in which Dr. Abdul Malik, Liaquat University of Medicine and Dentistry, Dr. Fowzia Siddiqi, Aga Khan University, Dr. Ossama Yassin, Egypt, Dr. Mehdi Farhoudi, and Dr. Husnain Hashim, Fouji Foundation hospital, participated.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland Bénédicte de Cerjat in a meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Farman. — DNA

PEDO accelerates work on seven hydel power projects

PESHAWAR: Provincial Energy Development Organisation (PEDO) has accelerated work on seven hydro power projects worth 230.6 megawatt to bolster power production in the province.

Officials in KP Energy Department told APP on Tuesday that the seven hydel power projects include 10.2 MW Jabori, 11.8 MW Karora, 40.0 MW Koto, 84 MW Matlatan, 69 MW Lavi, 10.5 MW Charkhel and 5.6 MW Baranda would help arrest the menace of load shedding. The official said work on 300 MW Balakot hydel power project would be initiated this year with the financial support of the Asian Development Bank.

The World Bank, he said, would provide assistance in construction of 88MW Kabral Kalam and 157MW Madain hydel power projects. He said work on 197MW Kalam-Israt and 215 MW Israt-Kaedam hydel power projects is being started in Swat on public private partnership with assistance of the Korean Government. To generate inexpensive electricity, he said the KP Government has introduced a unique model by establishing its own grid company for provision of electricity from new power projects. — APP

Punjab talent hunt winners get awards

KAMRAN GUJJAR

ISLAMABAD: According to the Chief Minister of Punjab, the first phase of the district competition of the Punjab talent hunt program organized by the department of information and culture for the promotion of art and culture in the province was held in Government Post Graduate College Tahliawanala Jhelum.

In the first phase, students of different schools and colleges across the district participated in competition by singing, painting and short story writing. Chief guest of the national assembly, Chaudhry Farrukh Altaf said that Punjab talent hunt program 2022 is a great step for the government to promote art welfare, such healthy activities are very important for young generation. Deputy commissioner Jhelum Nauman

Hafeez said on the occasion that by highlighting the natural talent present in our young generation from Punjab talent hunt program, national and international being taken forward internationally, holding such competitions in youth is a welcome thing. Director Punjab arts council Rawalpindi Waqar Ahmed said that Punjab talent is a unique program of its kind, which is promoting Pakistan's soft image. He said that the purpose of the talent hunt program was to encourage youth because the future of Pakistan is related to these youth. Ali Haider, Mudasar and Dua Zehra got the first, second and third position respectively in the singing competition. In the painting competition, Majda got first position, while Tabasam second and Maha Gul got the third position. In the short story competition, Mohammad Mubashar was considered to be the first prize winner, while Mohammad Omar got second and Faizan third positions.

**KP attracts around \$10bn investments at Dubai Expo**

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to attract an estimated \$10 billion investment at Expo 2020 Dubai, in key sectors, including energy and tourism, top KP investment official said. The expo, which began in October 2021, is offering lucrative opportunities to countries to showcase their projects to attract foreign investment. Around 92 countries, including Pakistan, are participating in the mega exhibition dubbed as the "event of the century" to display their economic and cultural potential. Pakistan's pavilion at the expo has been highlighting the presence of investment opportunities, tourism potential and cultural magnificence of the country. In January, its highlight is the north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Provincial government officials say they are "very happy" with the outcome of the event so far.

"The quantum of investment is around \$8-\$10 billion and we are very happy with the response we have got from the investors," Hassan Daud Butt, chief executive officer of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BOIT) said in an interview with Arab News.

"We are signing a few more agreements for investment in the IT sector", Butt said. "The Expo 2020 in Dubai has given Pakistan and its provinces a great opportunity to showcase their culture, environment, initiative and [enabled them to] pitch investment projects." The KP-BOIT chief said the province was well prepared for the exhibition to grab opportunities by showcasing projects. "We have crafted our entire month's program, starting from the cottage industry and moving on to special economic zones, mines and minerals, agriculture, and the IT sector," Butt said. — APP

DC directs to cover Polio unattended cases

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Tahir Farooq Tuesday directed the officials of the District Health Authority to give special attention to polio refusal and unattended cases and convince the parents that polio drops were not harmful. Chairing a meeting to review the ongoing anti-polio campaign started on January 24, he directed the officials to monitor the anti-polio drive and ensure that every child must be vaccinated. He said a healthy child was essential for a healthy society, and it was our collective responsibility to make the country free from polio virus. On the occasion, the health officials briefed the deputy commissioner that around 450,000 children have been administered the anti-polio drops while the set target to cover 731,000 children under five years of age would be achieved till January 28.

KP schools having unvaccinated to be shut

DNA

PESHAWAR: Minister for Schools Shahram Tarakai on Tuesday announced that educational institutes having below 99 percent unvaccinated students will face closure after February 16 as per the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) guidelines. Taking to Twitter, Shahram Tarakai said that currently no educational institutions are being closed in the KP province and the teaching process will continue in a usual manner.

"All private schools in the province must complete vaccination of children aged 12 and above [as soon as possible]," he said while reminding that the vaccination campaign will begin from February 01 and continue till February 15. He warned that all educational institutions falling short of vaccinating 99 percent of their students by February 16 will be closed under the NCOC's guidelines.

On January 19, the country's nerve centre for Covid-19 response had announced a string of restrictions to curb rising Covid-19 cases.

1,773 new corona cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE: Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare (P&SH) Department Secretary Imran Sikandar Baloch Tuesday said that during the last 24 hours, 1,773 new cases of coronavirus were reported across the province.

In a press statement issued here, he said that 1,175 positive cases were reported in Lahore, 200 in Rawalpindi, 61 in Faisalabad, 45 in Sialkot, 37 in Multan, 30 in Gujranwala, 26 in Sargodha, 21 in Sheikhupura, 15 in Jhelum, 14 in Bahawalpur, 12 in Okara, 11 in Kasur, 10 in Gujrat, 9 in Sahiwal, 8 each in Nankana Sahib, Jhang and Dera Ghazi Khan, 7 in Rahim Yar Khan, 5 in Chakwal, 4 each in Mianwali and Vihari and 3 each in Toba Tek Singh and Chhnot. The secretary said 9 deaths were reported across the province, pushing the death toll to 13,114. He said that so far total number of cases has reached 466,210. The total number of patients who have fully recovered so far is 431,987. He said that during the last 24 hours, total number of active cases was in the province was 21,109. He said that 20,041 tests were conducted in last 24 hours and a total of 9.38 million tests were conducted altogether. Baloch said the overall rate of COVID-19 incidence in the last 24 hours was recorded as 8.60 percent in the province, adding Lahore had 15.8 percent, Rawalpindi 12.5 percent, Faisalabad 4.7 percent, Multan 5.5 percent and Gujranwala 2.5 percent. — APP

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Briefs

NAB
recovers
huge
amount

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Rawalpindi on Tuesday apprehended former Municipal Commissioner Korangi Masroor Memon, two accomplices and recovered huge amount from their possession. The NAB had to use note counting machines to calculate the huge amount recovered. The money was made in the procurement of oil and other items for Korangi Municipal Corporation. In a major operation conducted in Karachi, Accounts Officer Vakash and Audit Officer Dharmaveer were also arrested. Receipts of several million TTs, gold bricks, buttons, dollars, dirhams and riyals were recovered during the operation. Contracts were awarded by getting bribes, in return less quantity oil was given to official vehicles by charging exaggerated money and giving inflated receipts accordingly. Money was deposited in fake accounts, a huge amount was also transferred abroad. - APP

Construction
of Kurram
Tangi dam
expedited

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The construction work on Kurram Tangi Dam Stage-I project has expedited to complete it within its stipulated time period which is expected to be complete by June 2023. The Kurram Tangi Dam would control floodwater and irrigate barren land 35,000 besides making the province self-sufficient in food. According to an official of WAPDA, the Kurram Tangi Dam, being constructed in the North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, would generate 84 megawatts of electricity and help to ensure food security by increasing agricultural production in the region. He said that currently the scarcity of water was the main problem in the area and the Dam would bring a positive revolution in the life of millions of people. He said with the construction of the dam and utilization of water, the water share of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would not be affected. The construction of Kurram Tangi Dam is considered as an important step towards development of agriculture sector in the province. 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

NH&MP
establishes
Regional
Control Room

ISLAMABAD: National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) has established Regional Control Room at NH&MP Regional HQ North Region, Rawalpindi. In a tweet, Inspector General NH&MP Inam Ghani said that he inaugurated the newly established Regional Control Room. "With all NH&MP Vehicles tracked through trackers & all officers on road supervised through body worn video cameras, we'll have improved policing on the motorway & highways", he added. The inauguration ceremony was also attended by senior officers of the North Region Rawalpindi National Highways and Motorway Police. The Motorway Police is using technology to monitor and verify all violations of traffic regulations, including on major highways and the entire highway system. Following the innovative technologies, the National Motorways and Highways Policy also established two mobile applications named Hamsafar and Mashwara to assist the road users and give the details of the road circumstance in real-time, blockage notification, substitute's routes and a choice for worried users to call for support. - APP

Proposal to establish COMSATS
campus in Quetta: Ali Muhammad

"Inclusion of the project in the portfolio of Province of Balochistan's prospective projects in the Year 2022-23 will help its consideration and approval by the Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Division," he said

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan Tuesday said the federal government was considering a proposal to establish a campus of COMSATS University Islamabad in Quetta aimed at providing more opportunities to the youth of the Balochistan province in getting higher education. During question-hour in the Senate, he said if there was any legal hurdle in the

establishment of the federal institute's campus in Balochistan, the rules could be relaxed as per the legal provisions. For setting up the campus, the minister said, the Balochistan government had allotted 150 acres of land at Mahal Moza Noshar, Tappa Noshar, Saddar, District Quetta in October 2015. Later, the matter was brought before the Board of Governors of erstwhile COMSATS Institute of Information Technology. The BoG accorded approval in



its meeting held on February 12, 2016. Following this, the National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) was hired for preparing the master plan of the campus. The NESPAK prepared the master plan in interactive consultation with COMSATS University, Islamabad (CUI), which was finalized and approved by the Central Works Committee, CUI in October 2017. Answering a question, the minister said the CUI had submitted PC-I of the project to the Ministry of Science

and Technology first in July 2015 and later, it was recast incorporating the updated project estimates and submitted afresh to the Higher Education Commission in January 2022. "The updated cost of the PC-I is Rs 6773.012 million." "Inclusion of the project in the portfolio of Province of Balochistan's prospective projects in the Year 2022-23 will help its consideration and approval by the Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Division," he said.

Dualization of
Karachi, Quetta,
Chaman to start

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications and Postal Services Murad Saeed on Tuesday informed the Senate that dualization work of 796 kilometers long Karachi to Quetta and Chaman road would be started next month. Responding to a calling attention notice regarding an alarming number of traffic accidents on RCD Highway, N-25, which runs from Karachi to Quetta and Chaman, he said, "Contract has been awarded for the construction of the first section of 330 kilometers of the highway and Prime Minister Imran Khan will perform groundbreaking of the project next month".

About the remaining two sections, the minister said that one is at feasibility, while the other is at the designing stage. He said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has completed work on 2,032 kilometers of road projects and also started work on an additional 7879 km of roads network. He said that the road projects started in Balochistan were including Zhob Kuchlak, Nokandi Mashkeel, Khuzdar Bisimah, Ziarat Morr Kuch Harnai, Hoshab Awaran, Dera Murad Jamali Bypass, Quetta Bypass, and Kuchlak Khuzdar. He said that 3800 kilometers long roads were being constructed only in Balochistan province. The minister said groundbreaking of 300 kilometers long Hyderabad-Sukkur motorway would be performed in April this year. Murad Saeed said the second phase of Swat Motorway as well as Peshawar-Dera Ismail Khan, and Dir-Chitral motorways would be constructed. He said the government was committed to bringing backward areas at par with other parts of the country for the utmost facilitation of the people.



ISLAMABAD: An elderly gypsy on his way after collecting valuables from different parts of the city. Waste collectors typically poor want to earn money to support the family. Waste collection means the transfer of solid waste from the place of disposal to the place of treatment, and it is a part of the waste management process. Waste collectors perform this job. Often, the job of waste collector is reserved for those on the lowest rung on the socioeconomic ladder. By and large, waste collectors are immigrants from Afghanistan who first came to Pakistan during the Soviet War in the 1980s, leaving behind their homes, ancestral lands, and probably wealth. As a result, they were unemployed and had no homes. Then, someone had this brilliant idea to collect recyclable waste, sell it to different companies, and earn money, which benefited companies and waste collectors alike. - APP

'Govt under 'Ehsaas umbrella'
bringing poor into mainstream'

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Dr Sania Nishat Tuesday said that the government under 'flagship Ehsaas umbrella program' was bringing deprived segments of society into mainstream of development and computerized all projects to ensure transparency. In an exclusive interview with PTV news channel, the SAPM said that multifaceted Ehsaas programmes are aligned with the manifesto of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government to fulfill the basic needs of the deserving people and to give students financial access to education. She said such historic steps were real services of masses, adding, all the projects under Ehsaas are corruption free. Sania further explained that the government had recently launched the 'Ehsaas Taleemi Wazaif' mobile application to easily register their eligible children for different scholarship programs under the Ehsaas Taleemi Wazaif. Using Taleemi Wazaif app of Ehsaas, families can easily enroll their children without visiting any

office, she added. This landmark step will also help poorest families in saving their time and costs," SAPM mentioned. Under the Ehsaas Taleemi Wazaif, male primary students will receive a quarterly stipend of Rs. 1,500 females will receive Rs. 2,000. Male secondary students will get Rs. 2,500 and females will get Rs 3,000. Male higher secondary students will receive Rs. 3,500 and females will receive Rs. 4,000, she added. She said female students to get double scholarship amount as compared to male, adding, Ehsaas Taleem wazaif program was being expended all over the country to enrolled more students and encourage them to get education. Sania also laid emphasis on educating women to enable them to advance in society and grow economically. She said an educated mother can resolve half of problems in society, however, equal education opportunities under Ehsaas Taleem wazaif program is our topmost priority. While explaining another project of Ehsaas Rashan, the SAPM said that more than one million and forty thousand eligible persons have been registered successfully with Ehsaas Rashan Program. - DNA

Pakistan's exports
reach \$3 billion
per month

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan Tuesday informed the Senate that the country's exports have reached \$3 billion per month due to prudent policies introduced by the incumbent government. "The exports remained at the highest level of around \$2 billion per month during the last tenure of the PML-N government, which has now increased \$ 3 billion per month," he said during question-hour in the Senate. Currently, he said, all economic indicators were on the growth trajectory and the national economy was moving in the right direction, which was duly acknowledged by international rating agencies and analysts. Despite the economic slowdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic that badly affected the global economies, Pakistan achieved a record Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rate of 5.37 per cent and the current account deficit was at the lowest level of around \$ 1.9 billion as compared to the last tenure of PML-N. He said when the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government took over in 2018 after the PML-N, the current account deficit was \$20 billion and foreign exchange reserves were \$9 billion. "Today, the reserves are around \$ 20 billion and the country has the import bill for three months, which is considered necessary for any country," he said. He said Pakistan's exports in goods were picking up pace and went up by 13 per cent to \$ 25.3 billion in FY 2020-21 from \$ 22.53 billion over the last year. - APP

Ruet-e-Hilal to
meet on February 2

ISLAMABAD: The meetings of zonal and district Ruet-e-Hilal committees for sighting the moon of Rajab-ul-Murajab 1443 AH will be held on Wednesday, February 2 (Jama'at-us-Sani 29) at their respective headquarters. According to an official of the religious ministry on Tuesday, Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Moulana Abdul Kabir Azad will join Zonal Ruet-e-Hilal Committee here at the religious ministry office. However, the rest of Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committees' members will participate in their respective district and provincial Ruet-e-Hilal committees' meetings. The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee chairman will finally announce the decision about the Rajab's moon sighting or otherwise, subsequently on the basis of information received to this end. - APP

CPEC Western alignment to
be completed in three years

ISLAMABAD: Work on various road projects of the the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Western Route is in full swing and the projects are expected to be completed within three years, according to official sources. As per details, on the CPEC Western Route, the completed projects on the Western alignment of CPEC include the 297 km Hakla-D I Khan Motorway, the 235 km Qutta-Sohrab road, the 449 km Surab-Hoshab road, and the 193 km Hoshab-Gwadar road. Whereas, the under construction projects on the CPEC Western Route include the 305 kms Zhob-Quetta road, the 110 km Basima-Khuzdar road, the Nokundi-Mashkeel road and the 146 km Hoshab-Awaran road. The projects on the Western Route that are in the pipeline include the 360 kms Peshawar-D I Khan motorway, the 460 kms Karachi-Quetta-Chaman road, the 200 kms Mashkeel-Panjgur road, the 163 kms Awaran-Khuzdar road, the 228 kms Panjgur-Awaran road, and the 136 kms Awaran-Jhal Jao-Bela road. Work on the 210 kilometer D.I. Khan (Yarik)-Zhob Road (N-50) and Zhob-Quetta (N-50) roads have already been completed while work on the 431 km Khuzdar-Quetta-Chaman Section of N-25 is also in progress. The Surab-Hoshab at N-85 and Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab (M-8) are already operational. Similarly, the sources said that work on the 106 km Basima-Khuzdar road, Quetta to Khuzdar road and Khuzdar to Awaran and Hoshab road has also been started and would complete soon. The sources added that the work on the western alignment routes of CPEC would be completed within three years. - DNA

Fog shrouds federal capital amid freezing cold

"The process of fog permeates into the atmosphere during low sun elevation that turns the environment conducive for aerosols to get dew point temperature transforming the cold ambience into a smoky and hazy air," he said

ISLAMABAD: After the plains of Punjab and Sindh, the spell of thick fog also shrouded the scenic federal capital suburbs as the temperature declined due to heavy winter rains and snowfall in its adjoining hill station of Murree. Although it was a rare phenomenon a decade ago, yet recent rapid construction and vehicular and industrial emissions both fog and smog were witnessed in this beautiful and environment-friendly city resting along the foothills of Himalaya. Meteorological experts also see it as an outcome of cold wave as well

as rising emissions as suspended particulate matters thicken the normal air atmosphere turning it into thick fog or smog. "Generally we do not see fog in the capital like plain areas of Punjab. Fog seen on Tuesday was due to cold wave," said Chief Meteorologist Muhammad Riaz. "In plain areas soil moisture is much more than the capital's soil that creates thick fog with poor visibility." When asked about foggy and misty weather in the capital a few days back, he said, it was smog as it had mixing of particu-

late matters. "Vehicular and other emissions were gradually polluting capital's environment. If we did not take timely measures, capital would also be a polluted city like others." Head of Department of Environmental Sciences at NUST, Professor Dr Muhammad Fahim Kokhar says that fog occurs when aerosols or cloud condensation nuclei and condensed gaseous combine with over 75% humidity and relatively low temperature. And if there is concentration of pollutants in the air, fog turns into smog. "The process of fog permeates

into the atmosphere during low sun elevation that turns the environment conducive for aerosols to get dew point temperature transforming the cold ambience into a smoky and hazy air," he said. The average temperature in Islamabad throughout the week remained below 10°C on average whereas humidity remained above 90% during the past week due to continuous rain and snowfall. Environmental Quality Standards expert and Director Labs at Pak-EPA Dr Mohsina Zubair said increasing vehicular emissions, dust and smoke particles in the

air ambience in recent years was resulting in fog in the capital. "Fog and smog have peculiar traits and are distinctive in nature as the latter has a different soot feeling like that of a combustible material of affluence," she said. "Bulging size of road traffic was a matter of concern in terms of deteriorating ambience that may result in smog in coming years." The Islamabad Excise and Taxation office data reveals that more than 1.3 million vehicles are registered with it as the number is increasing with every passing day. - APP

'Country's
exports
increase
25 percent'

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan on Tuesday informed the Senate that the country's exports had increased by 25 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year due to prudent policies introduced by the incumbent government. Responding to Calling Attention notice regarding the trade deficit of Pakistan that has reached 24.787 billion US dollars in the first six months of the current financial year, the minister said only in December the exports remained at \$2.761 billion with a 32 percent surge as compared to the same month of the fiscal year 2020-21. "The exports remained at the highest level of around \$2 billion per month during the last tenure of the PML-N government, which has now increased \$ 3 billion per month," he said. He said that during the tenure of PML-N the export figure was 2 billion dollars per month, while the PTI government is touching 3 billion dollars figure per month. The minister said, that when the Pakistan Muslim League government had left the government, the country had only 9 billion dollars foreign exchange reserve, while now the country's reserves had reached 19.5 billion dollars. He said that by the end of the current financial year, the foreign exchange reserves will touch the figure of 24 billion dollars. He said that debt to GDP had also been brought down. He said that the surge in imports came amid a booming commodity demand after COVID-19 recovery, the sharp increase in global commodity prices mainly in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), petroleum, energy, coal, and food-related essential items. "Imports of vaccines have been made due to the spread of Covid-19 in the country, which has a significant impact on the import bill." - APP

NCA pays
homage to
Ustad Mian
Shaukat
Hussain

ISLAMABAD: National College of Arts (NCA) on Tuesday paid homage to renowned Tabla player (late) Ustad Mian Shaukat Hussain Khan. In the spirit of commemoration and remembrance, National College of Arts pays homage to the national heroes including poets, writers and academicians. NCA national heroes of Pakistan including Poets, Writers, Artists, and Academicians. NCA celebrate these personalities by designing and displaying an exclusive panel every week, to acquaint the public with these gleaming stars, said a press release. This week, NCA extend tribute to Ustad Mian Shaukat Hussain Khan. Mian Shaukat Hussain (2930 -25 January 1996) was a Tabla player who belonged to the Punjab Gharana of Tabla-playing music artists. He was a disciple or student of renowned tabla maestro Mian Qadir Baksh, founder of the Punjab Gharana of tabla players who also was the teacher of many tabla players that later gained international recognition. - APP

IG NHMP to
hold 'Khuli
Katchery'
on Jan 27

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) would hold online 'Khuli Katchery' (open court) on January 27 from 1330 p.m. to 1530 p.m for resolving the complaints of Motorways and National Highways users. According to an announcement made here on Tuesday, the IG NHMP would listen the complaints through social media and will issue orders to concerned officers for redressal. The initiative was taken on the special directives of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Ministry of Communications. Inspector General NHMP would be live on NHMP official page www.facebook.com/NHMP-official and NHMP FM-95 and sms 4474. For direct contact, people can call on 0519250737.

Plight of fisherfolk

LAST week, 20 Indian fishermen behind bars in Pakistan for unknowingly having crossed over to this side were released from the District Prison and Correctional Facility, Malir. The innocent fisherfolk were in jail for the duration of three to five years until they were released as a goodwill gesture on part of the Pakistan government. This is commendable on part of the government as these fishermen are often victims of their circumstances.

This has however been a longstanding issue that has evaded a permanent resolution. Even after the release of these 20 prisoners, there are still 568 Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails. Talks for the resolution of this issue go as far back as 1985, without any significant progress to date—though the two sides came close to an agreement in the early 2000s. There has been recognition in both camps that a solution to this issue is important. However, the Modi government's complete lack of interest in discussing matters of mutual interest with Pakistan has relegated this problem, like others as well, to the bottom of the agenda list.

The problem stems from the basic economic principle of scarcity, and goes on to take political hues once fishermen are caught encroaching on either side. The fisherfolk community on both sides of the border is driven by the need to catch enough to make ends meet. The situation on the Indian side is more severe because of the environmental degradation along the Gujarat coastline which has resulted in the depletion of resources. This means that fisherfolk often feel compelled to cross over into Pakistani territory, leading to their arrest and subsequent incarceration.

While a permanent resolution seems unrealistic at this point, an easy step to take is to develop a quicker mechanism for verification of identities, which can lead to earlier releases. Going forward however, the longstanding practice of annual exchange of prisoners must also be reevaluated. The relegation of this issue as a confidence building measure further perpetuates this cycle of fisherfolk being caught; therefore, this matter must be given more importance by both the sides.

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Thar health crisis

WORRISOME news is coming out of the district of Tharparkar as 36 children have died due to various illnesses that were not diagnosed or treated. The fact that this has been a recurring problem in Sindh speaks to the severe disparity in access to vital resources needed for maintaining a healthy quality of life.

The government has been making tall claims that immense development progress is being achieved in the province but we are yet to see the fruits of this. An investigation must be launched into what exactly is happening and why innocent children who are entitled to at least a bare standard of medical services are dying.

In 2021, the total number of children who died in Sindh surpassed 600. The year before that, it crossed the death rate of 500. These figures are extremely concerning and should spark outrage on a national level. One should be further aggravated by the fact that Tharparkar is a Hindu majority area so not only are the authorities guilty of failing to cater to the medical needs of the population, but they have systematically neglected a group of individuals who already suffer from immense subjugation. This cannot be acceptable and the government must offer explanations as to how we have let this happen and what will be done in the future to prevent this.

The region has the lowest human development index rating in the country and it seems as though avenues to get basic facilities like healthcare, hygiene and nutrition are absent. In fact, children suffer and succumb to the most treatable diseases like anemia, pneumonia, measles and respiratory issues. Such expectations are the bare minimum of any government and the fact that it is taking the death of hundreds of children to bring this issue to light is rather unfortunate. More must be done and immediately; the people of Sindh must also hold the authorities accountable for the lack of development and infrastructure.

Ukraine crisis could produce an unexpected winner: Iran

James Dorsey

The officials said Iran was weeks away from acquiring the know-how and capability to produce enough nuclear fuel for a bomb quickly

IRAN potentially could emerge as an unintended winner in the escalating crisis over Ukraine. That is, if Russian troops cross the Ukrainian border and talks in Vienna to revive the 2015 Iranian nuclear agreement fail.

An imposition of tough US and European sanctions in response to any Russian incursion in Ukraine could likely make Russia more inclined to ignore the fallout of violating US sanctions in its dealings with Iran. By the same token, a failure of the talks between Iran and the United States, Russia, China, the European Union, France, Germany, and Britain to revive the accord that curbed the Islamic republic's nuclear program would drive Iran closer to Russia and China in its effort to offset crippling US sanctions. US and European officials have warned that time is running out on the possibility of reviving the agreement from which the United States under then-President Donald J. Trump withdrew in 2018.

The officials said Iran was weeks away from acquiring the know-how and capability to produce enough nuclear fuel for a bomb quickly. That, officials suggested, would mean that a new agreement would have to be negotiated, something Iran has rejected. No doubt, that was in the back of the minds of Russian and Iranian leaders when they met last week during a visit to Moscow by Iran's president, Ebrahim Raisi. It was the

first meeting between the leaders of Russia and Iran in five years.

To be sure, the road to increased Russian trade, energy cooperation, and military sales would open with harsh newly imposed US sanctions against Russia even if restrictions on Iran would remain in place. That does not mean that the road would be obstacle-free. Mr. Putin would still have to balance relations with Iran with Russia's ties to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. If anything, Russia's balancing act, like that of China, has become more complicated without the Ukraine and Vienna variables as Iranian-backed Houthis expand the seven-year-long Yemen war with drone and missile strikes against targets in the UAE.

The Houthis struck as the Russian, Chinese and Iranian navies started their third joint exercises since 2019 in the northern Indian Ocean. The two events were not related.

"The purpose of this drill is to strengthen security and its foundations in the region, and to expand multilateral cooperation between the three countries to jointly support world peace, maritime security and create a maritime community with a common future," Iranian Rear Admiral Mostafa Tajoldini told state tv. US dithering over its commitments to security in the Gulf has persuaded Gulf states like Saudi Arabia and the UAE to hedge their bets and diversify the nature of their relations with major external powers.

However, a Russia and potentially a China that no longer are worried about the fallout of violating US sanctions against Iran could put Riyadh and Abu Dhabi on notice that the two US rivals may not be more reliable or committed to ensuring security in the Gulf. So far, neither Russia nor China have indicated an interest in stepping into US shoes. This leaves Saudi Arabia and the UAE with few good choices if Russia feels that US sanctions are no longer an obstacle in its dealings with Iran.

Russia is believed to want the Vienna talks

to succeed but at the same time has supported Iranian demands for guarantees that the United States would not walk away from a revived deal like it did in 2018.

By the same token, Iranian officials, including Finance Minister Ehsan Khanduzi and Oil Minister Javad Owji, spoke of agreements signed during the Moscow visit that would revive a US\$5 billion Russian credit line that has been in the pipeline for years and produce unspecified energy projects.

"It's unclear if these are new projects or ones that have been previously discussed and even agreed to, such as the one Lukoil stopped working on in 2018 after the US pulled out... Lukoil was concerned about being targeted by US sanctions," said international affairs scholar Mark N. Katz. Theoretically, the dynamics of the Ukraine crisis and the prospects of failed Vienna talks could mean that a long-term Russian Iranian cooperation agreement could get legs quicker than its Chinese Iranian counterpart.

Negotiating with a Russia heavily sanctioned by the United States and Europe in an escalated crisis in Ukraine could level the playing field as both parties, rather than just Iran, would be hampered by Western punitive measures.

Tehran-based Iranian scholar and political analyst Sadegh Zibakalam suggested that it was time for the regime to retire the 43-year-old Iranian revolution's slogan of "neither East nor West." The slogan is commemorated in a plaque at the Foreign Ministry. Asserting that Iran has long not adhered to the motto, Mr. Zibakalam suggested that the plaque be removed and stored in the basement of a hardline Tehran newspaper. "It has not been used for a long time and should be taken down," he tweeted.

—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.

The HEC Pakistan is on an imported ventilator

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad

The splitting of the teaching community is indeed a crime of the HEC as the theory of one nation two systems has been declared to have a bad end that has been achieved, so no more wait

THE university teachers have been divided by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) into two different categories even having the same nature of duties and qualifications. This odd division still is not justified though the same is introduced in 2004. The HEC has amazingly spent a lot on supporting the unnatural division of faculty in two groups of Basic Pay Scale (BPS) 90% and the Tenure Track System (TTS) 10% but luckily did not get any achievements based on this illogical discriminatory division as was expected.

Surprisingly, even the policymakers are now seeking and in search of merging the same created groups. Why was the same division done? Who did it? Who is responsible for it? Why did it badly fail? Is it expected that it may bring some positive change or shall ruin more the system and the high esteemed universities? Why it has been supported by illegal discriminatory notifications? Why the proverb regarding failed and outdated theory of One Nation Two Systems is exercised only in Pakistan? Who is the real culprit? Why are standards of teaching declining? Why research is not fruitful for the country, though millions of research papers are being published? Why fake research is promoted? Why do we pay for publication instead to earn from it? Why even published papers are declared as withdrawn due to fake facts? Why is each faculty forced and pushed to research though hired for teaching? Why HEC only requires and loves research? Why does HEC not consider teaching even for re-appointment in the name of promotion? Are universities only research institutions or shall have to keep a standard of higher education? Why are the standards of higher education declared as substandard of top-ranking universities even evaluated by the Higher Education Commission (HEC)? Why each day new universities are established even the existing ones are facing financial and administrative problems. Why the HEC ordinance is being violated even for the basic right of promotion of teachers? Why are only the teachers are depriving of the right of promotion just in the name of blind love for research? Why is HEC not launching and supporting national journals and forcing teachers for publishing and waste public money for international publication? Why HEC did not try to earn through such tactics of publication? Why does HEC prefer internationally published papers over national? Why a balance in teaching and research is not maintainable? Why do neither we receive the values of research, nor we could maintain the values of higher education? I am sure that an endless series of more such questions shall soon be continued and

the officials of HEC after reading this article shall admit its failure instead to defend it.

For all such and other basic questions, each Pakistani has the right to ask the policymakers, in this case, the HEC and especially the commission. The said commission was established with the aims to magnify the standard of higher education and research values in the country, but unfortunately, it failed to do so, as HEC has recently issued itself a report that even the top-most ranked universities of the country have almost no standard of higher education. Why do we face such a miserable condition even spending a lot on universities? Indeed, all is answered with a simple observation that the policy of HEC is not standard, and it requires a quick revision.

The splitting of the teaching community is indeed a crime of the HEC as the theory of one nation two systems has been declared to have a bad end that has been achieved, so no more wait. The division motivated the faculty towards the undesirable race for artificial research that is of no or less use and unfortunately has pushed the teachers to ignore the values of standard teaching. The HEC has created a game of promoting the undesired research that is required for re-appointments of BPS faculty in the name of promotion though the same must be granted on quality teaching for which the faculty is hired. Why balance in these is not maintained? Why is teaching not granted the required values? Why is research given more importance though the same is dependent only on quality teaching? Why are the hired teachers forced to concentrate only on useless research and teaching is not considered for appointment and promotion? What portion of published millions of articles in high impact factor expensively paid journals has been used for the benefits of the country? The current policy is indeed beyond the level of common sense as may not have been designed by the educated peoples. The HEC is completely failed to achieve its goals due to not understanding the real situation of blind love for research and its consequences on the quality of teaching. Actually, research is a slow process that requires a long time for stability and its utilization in the real sense, while quality teaching is essential throughout the system including research.

A quick and simple solution to resolve such a situation is to honor the teachers and restore their dignity through the HEC ordinance. The drama of re-appointment in violation of the ordinance must be stopped immediately otherwise the situation shall be worst as most of the teachers are now on peaceful protest under the umbrella of APUBTA that may lead to a country-wide strong protest. Furthermore, the incumbent BPS faculty must be granted the right to backdate financial benefits on deserving positions to secure their seniority and can balance the discrimination among the two categories of teachers. Otherwise, a law-and-order situation in universities shall soon be observed due to the discriminatory policies of HEC in violation of the HEC ordinance.

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Pakistan should invoke universal jurisdiction for India's crimes

Hassan Aslam Shad



Stoke White has asked the Metropolitan Police to investigate the death of a minor who was illegally detained by Indian authorities

WHAT'S in a name: Who called the lands 'Palestine'?

Despite the patchy record of international accountability, universal jurisdiction offers a way of setting the wheel of international criminal justice in motion. When it comes to dealing with any international issue, a country can adopt one of the following two approaches: take a back seat and let the issue evolve on its own in an unpredictable trajectory or, act proactively to tackle it head on. The first approach leads to unwanted consequences, while the latter, although it initially requires more hard work,

is more rewarding in the long term.

I mentioned this to His Excellency Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, when I met him in September 2020, to discuss Pakistan's lawfare options in international law matters. I told the prime minister about an important lawfare vertical: the concept of "universal jurisdiction". I advised him that Pakistan should tap into the resources of international law, and invoke universal jurisdiction against Indian officials accused of committing international crimes in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

While I can't be sure if Pakistan heeded my advice, an important international development – the equivalent of a legal tsunami for India – has taken place in the UK, which shows that the world is slowly but surely waking up to India's atrocious crimes in India-administered Kashmir.

On January 20, a London-based law firm, Stoke White, filed an application with the UK Metropolitan Police for the investigation and arrest of India's Army Chief Manoj Naravne, and Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah for the torture, kidnapping, and killing of activists and civilians in India-administered Kashmir. In a 40-page report titled "India's War Crimes in Kashmir", Stoke White seeks the commencement of legal proceedings against India's Army Chief and Home Affairs Minister, on the basis of the principle of "universal jurisdiction".

Stoke White has asked the Metropolitan Police to investigate the death of a minor who was illegally detained by Indian authorities, and the systematic torture of a human rights defender.

The firm claims to have collected more than 2,000 testimonies on a range of abuses and violations of international and domestic laws. Secondly, Pakistan should identify state-affiliated or sponsored individuals who have been involved in committing international crimes in Kashmir at India's request. A trove of evidence exists within the public domain, NGOs and human rights organisations. This evidence can form the basis for filing universal jurisdiction claims against Indian officials.

Thirdly, Pakistan must identify suitable jurisdictions for filing cases with an eye on the ease of registering criminal complaints, issuing arrest warrants, and arresting perpetrators, as well as the duration of legal proceedings, and likely criminal penalties. Finally, Pakistan should enlist the help of international lawyers who can advise Pakistan on the full ecosystem of universal jurisdiction, as the proceedings require the meticulous crafting of legal cases so that the full power of the law can be brought down on perpetrators. India is hell-bent on committing egregious crimes against Kashmiris. Ultimately it is time for Pakistan to add non-kinetic costs on India that can emasculate the Hindutva project and stop it from realising its sinister designs against Kashmiris.

To do this, Pakistan must pursue strategies that resonate with the international audience and coincide with existing trends and practices. As such by leveraging the full scope of universal jurisdiction, Pakistan can launch a preemptive legal strike on India. The time to act is now.

—Courtesy: TRT World

Briefs

UK police to investigate lockdown parties

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The London Metropolitan Police force on Tuesday said it would investigate a series of events held at Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Downing Street offices during strict coronavirus lockdowns. The criminal probe follows allegations surrounding Downing Street parties that the police force had previously declined investigating. Cressida Dick, the head of the Metropolitan Police, revealed the decision had been taken partly as a result of information passed to police from a Cabinet Office inquiry being carried out by the UK Civil Service. The investigation had also been launched because of officers' own assessments, Dick said. "I can confirm that the Met is now investigating a number of events that took place at Downing Street and Whitehall in the last two years in relation to potential breaches of COVID-19 regulations," Dick told a Greater London Assembly meeting. She said police had waited to start an investigation because it would "not normally be a proportionate use of officers time" to probe allegations that surfaced so long after they were said to have taken place. One of the parties – a birthday celebration for Johnson himself – allegedly took place during the first COVID-19 lockdown in June 2020. At that time, social gatherings indoors were banned.

Coalition in Yemen begins operations in Sanaa

RIYADH: The Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen said on Monday that it had begun "military operations" against "legitimate targets" in the capital, Sanaa, Saudi state TV reported. The coalition said the operation is in response to threats and out of military necessity to protect civilians from hostile attacks. The Iran-backed Houthi militia launched missiles toward Saudi Arabia and the UAE earlier on Monday, sparking widespread condemnation from the international community. Meanwhile, the coalition said it carried out 14 operations targeting the Houthi militia in Marib and Al-Bayda during the past 24 hours, killing more than 50 fighters and destroying nine military vehicles. – APP

At least 19 dead after clash in Papua

SORONG: At least 19 people were killed in a clash at a nightclub in the town of Sorong in Indonesia's West Papua province, police said Tuesday, with most dying after the venue caught fire. One victim was stabbed and 18 more died in the blaze at the Double O nightclub, officials said. "The clash broke out last night (Monday) at 11 pm. It was a prolonged conflict from a clash on Saturday," Sorong police chief Ary Nyoto Setiawan said in a statement. The fight that erupted between the two different ethnic groups involved machetes, arrows and Molotov cocktails, according to Ahmad Ramadhan, the Indonesian police's spokesperson. "The West Papua Regional Police immediately coordinated with religious and traditional leaders to avoid further clashes," he said, adding that officials were investigating who was behind the fight and what ignited the fire. Police said the incident did not involve locals from remote West Papua, where there is a long-running insurgency. The nightclub, a large red and white building, was left gutted by the blaze and a burnt-out vehicle was seen lying on its side by the blackened entrance. "The club was burnt from the first floor," police chief Setiawan said. "We tried to evacuate as many people as possible, but after the fire-fighters extinguished the fire this morning, we found some bodies there." A misunderstanding had set off the fight between the two groups, Setiawan said. "We tried to mediate between the groups, as we called their leaders before last night's clash." – APP

Central Asia hit by large scale power blackout

Electricity was restored across Kyrgyzstan after a massive power outage there and in Central Asian neighbours Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

WEB DESK

ALMATY: Millions of people were left without power after a huge blackout hit three Central Asian countries Tuesday following an unspecified accident, officials in the ex-Soviet region said. The capitals of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan as well as Kazakhstan's economic hub Almaty suffered power cuts at around lunch-time local time, with media and officials reporting that

the blackouts had extended far into the provinces of the three countries. Uzbekistan's energy ministry said in a statement on its official Telegram channel that the power outage had been triggered by an accident in Kazakhstan's power grid. "As a result of a major accident in the power grids of the Republic of Kazakhstan, there was a power outage in (the southern Kazakh) cities of Almaty, Shymkent, Taras, Turkestan (regions) and

adjacent areas," the statement said. "The Uzbek power grid, which is connected to the Unified Power Grid, was damaged as a result of an accident that led to sudden changes in voltage and frequency on 530 lines from Kazakhstan," it added. A spokesman for Kyrgyzstan's energy ministry told AFP by telephone that power had failed "due to an accident in the regional energy grid." Central Asian countries have seen their grids burdened by a summer drought that affected hydropower capacity in Kyrgyzstan and by a boom in cryptocurrency mining in the region, especially in Kazakhstan. The growth of cryptocurrency mining in Kazakhstan was linked in part to a de facto ban on the practise in next-door China, and a spike in prices for volatile cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin in the second half of last year. Southern Kazakhstan, which traditionally endures energy deficits

and relies on supplies from the electricity-rich north of the country, was especially affected by the influx. Kazakhstan's national electricity provider KEGOS said that "due to a significant emergency imbalance created by the energy system of Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan), there was a surge in power for the transit of electricity" between grids in Kazakhstan. Russian news agency RIA Novosti reported that the

airport in Almaty, where the power cut did not affect the whole city, was continuing to work normally, but that Tashkent's airport had stopped receiving flights due to the power outage. Tashkent's metro, the largest in the region, had also ceased working, an AFP correspondent noted, adding that tap water was barely running. Bishkek's airport was working at reduced capacity, local website 24.kg reported, citing the airport's management.

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WHO board nominates chief Tedros for May re-election



GENEVA: World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is all but guaranteed a second term after a procedural vote Tuesday made him the sole nominee ahead of a leadership vote in May. "I'd like to congratulate Dr Tedros for your nomination as the DG (director-general) for an additional period of five years, as from 16th August 2022," Patrick Amoth, head of the WHO's 34-member executive board, said after a secret-ballot nomination vote. – APP

Poland begins work on new EU-Belarus border wall

WARSAW: Polish contractors began work on Tuesday on a new 353-million euro (\$407 million) wall along the Belarus border aimed at deterring migrant crossings following a crisis in the area last year. The 5.5-metre high wall will run along 186 kilometres of the border – almost half the total length – and is to be completed in June. The construction has raised human rights concerns over how migrants will be able to seek asylum as well as environmental worries about the effect on wildlife along the mostly forested border. "Our intention is for the damage to be as small as possible," border guard spokeswoman Anna Michalska told Poland's PAP news agency on Tuesday. "Tree felling will be limited to the minimum required. The wall itself will be built along the border road," she said, adding that contractors would only make use of existing roads. Thousands of migrants – mostly from the Middle East – crossed or attempted to cross the border from Belarus into Poland last year. The West blamed the influx on the Belarusian regime, saying it had encouraged would-be migrants to fly to Belarus with the promise of an easy journey on foot into the European Union. – APP

Saudia to launch direct flights from Paris to AIUla

DUBAI: National carrier Saudi Airlines (Saudia) is inaugurating on Jan. 27 direct flights from Paris to the historic oasis of AIUla as the Kingdom seeks more avenues to promote the UNESCO heritage site. The new air route provides a unique opportunity for French travellers and travellers from neighboring countries to be among the first explorers to visit this extraordinary region, a statement said. Regular flights will depart from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport every Sunday from Jan. 30 until Mar. 27 and the Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft that would be deployed would land at AIUla after five hours, it added. Phillip Jones, Chief Destination Management and Marketing Officer said: "The French are intrepid travellers, always keen to be the first to experience the new. We ... hope that many Europeans will take the opportunity to visit our heritage sites and perhaps take in some of our winter events as the flights will run till March 27." The winter events season at AIUla features four major festivals on offer until the end of March: Winter at Tantora, AIUla Arts, AIUla Skies and AIUla Wellness. "This is our first international direct flight to AIUla and we believe one of many as more of our guests around the world are showing an eagerness to explore our country's history and culture," Hazem Sobol, Passenger Sales Vice President of Saudia, said in the statement. Gérard Mestrallet, Executive President of AFALULA, meanwhile said: "Since the intergovernmental agreement signed by Saudi Arabia and France in April 2018 on AIUla sustainable development.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson NCHR Rabiya Javeri Agha addressing during the launch of awareness campaign on "Discrimination Against Christian Sanitary Workers". – APP

7 migrants die crossing to Italy

ROME: Seven migrants have died while attempting the perilous Mediterranean crossing from Libya in a boat carrying 280 people in cold weather, the mayor of Italy's Lampedusa island told AFP Tuesday. Hundreds of people have made the often-deadly journey this year, despite winter weather that once deterred migrants from attempting the crossing, and numbers are expected to rise further. "Three people died during the crossing, another four suffering severe hypothermia died after they were intercepted by the coast guard and were being transferred to the island," mayor Toto Martello said. The Mediterranean Hope migration project said on Twitter that the 280 migrants hailed originally from Bangladesh, Egypt, Mali and Sudan, and "almost all of them were in a severe state of hypothermia." – APP

British imam appointed to define Islamophobia

MONITORING DESK
LONDON: An imam appointed by the UK government to draw up a definition of Islamophobia has said he has received no "meaningful engagement" from ministers in years. Qari Asim, who was appointed to lead an official process to define the term in 2019, told The Independent that letters sent to ministers as recently as last month have received no reply. His intervention came as the government has become embroiled in a controversy surrounding Islamophobia after former Minister Nusrat Ghani said she was fired because her "Muslimness" made colleagues uncomfortable. Asim said those allegations "once again demonstrate the importance of having a definition of Islamophobia." He added that he had been given no office, money, staff or terms of reference to assist him in drawing up a definition of Islamophobia. "Other than an announcement and conversations (with ministers), there hasn't been any progress, and that shows a lack of political will to define Islamophobia," he said.

Russia adds Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny to 'terrorist' list

NEWS DESK
MOSCOW: Russia on Tuesday put Kremlin opponent Alexei Navalny and a number of his allies, including a main aide, Lyubov Sobol, on a database of "terrorists and extremists." The decision by the Federal Service for Financial Monitoring comes as President Vladimir Putin's government continues its campaign to repress dissent, which has seen the jailing of Navalny and the outlawing of his political organizations in the past year. Two other key Navalny aides, Leonid Volkov and Ivan Zhdanov, were added to the same list earlier this month. According to Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, nine other of his allies were included on Tuesday. The foundation was declared extremist and closed down last year, meaning all people associated with it were banned from running for public office. Being on the list puts them in the same category as right-wing nationalist organizations, Afghanistan's militant Islamist Taliban and the extremist "Islamic State" (IS) group. The move also leads to their bank accounts being frozen. Exodus of allies Almost all of Navalny's allies, including Sobol, Volkov and Zhdanov, have since left Russia.

Istanbul permits first flight

ISTANBUL: Europe's busiest airport in Istanbul welcomed its first flight in 24 hours on Tuesday and Greece declared a public holiday as the eastern Mediterranean neighbours began digging themselves out of a rare snowstorm that ground their capitals to a halt. Turkish officials ordered all private vehicles off the

snow-clogged streets of Istanbul while the Greek military joined rescuers in trying to evacuate hundreds of stranded drivers in Athens. Major highways were closed across both countries and basic services such as food delivery shut down. But much of the international attention focused on the fate of Istanbul's main

airport – a gleaming glass-and-steel structure that offers connecting flights spanning much of the world. A blizzard on Monday closed Istanbul Airport for the first time since it took over from the old Atatürk Airport as the new hub for Turkish Airlines in 2019. Its press service pushed back its planned reopening

hours a handful of times before admitting defeat and shutting it down for the night. It tweeted an image on Tuesday of the first flight since Monday afternoon landing from the Venezuelan capital Caracas after one of the runways was cleared to accept a few airborne flights. But Turkish Airlines decided to suspend operations at its main international hub until midnight. All the main scheduled international departures were either cancelled or delayed for the second day running. Istanbul Airport serviced more than 37 million passengers last year despite disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Yet President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's critics had long questioned his decision to place the airport on a remote patch along the Black Sea coast that is often covered with fog in winter. – APP



US combat jet crashes in South China Sea

BANGKOK: A US Navy F35C Lightning II combat jet conducting exercises in the South China Sea crashed while trying to land on the deck of an American aircraft carrier, injuring seven sailors, the military said Tuesday. The pilot was able to eject before the aircraft slammed into the flight deck of the USS Carl Vinson on Monday and then fell into the water. The pilot was safely recovered by a helicopter, said Lt. Mark Langford, a spokesman for the US 7th Fleet. Seven sailors, including

the pilot, were injured and three were evacuated for medical treatment in Manila, Philippines, while four were treated on board the ship. The three sent to Manila were reported in stable condition on Tuesday morning, the Navy said. Details on the crash of the multimillion-dollar aircraft were still being verified, Langford said. "The status and recovery of the aircraft is currently under investigation," he said. Two American carrier strike groups with more than 14,000 sailors and ma-

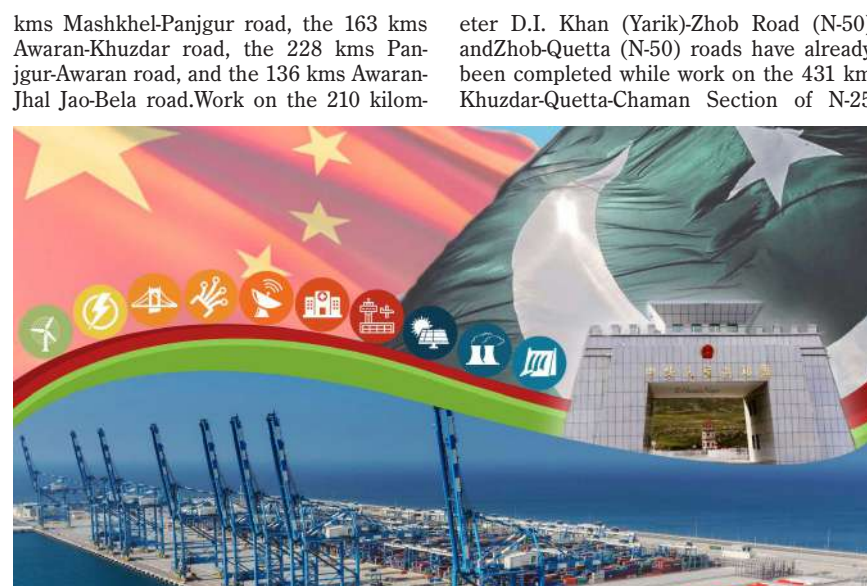
rines are conducting exercises in the South China Sea, which the military says is to demonstrate the "US Indo-Pacific Command Joint Force's ability to deliver a powerful maritime force." Impact to the deck of the USS Carl Vinson was "superficial," Langford said, and both carriers have resumed routine flight operations. As China has pressed territorial claims in the South China Sea and increased pressure on Taiwan, the US and its allies have stepped up exercises in the region. – APP

CPEC Western alignment to be completed in 3 years

The projects on the Western Route that are in the pipeline include the 360 kms Peshawar-D I Khan motorway, the 460 kms Karachi-Quetta-Chaman road, the 200 kms Mashkhel-Panjgur road, the 163 kms Awaran-Khuzdar road, the 228 kms Panjgur-Awaran road, and the 136 kms Awaran-Jhal Jao-Bela road

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Work on various road projects of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Western Route is in full swing and the projects are expected to be completed within three years, according to official sources. As per detail, on the CPEC Western Route, the completed projects on the Western alignment of CPEC include the 297 km Hakla-D I Khan Motorway, the 235 km Quta-Sohrab road, the 449 km Surab-Hoshab road, and the 193 km Hoshab-Gwadar road. Whereas, the under construction projects on the CPEC Western Route include the 305 kms Zhob-Quetta road, the 110 km Basima-Khuzdar road, the Nokundi-Mashkel road and the 146 km Hoshab-Awaran road. The projects on the Western Route that are in the pipeline include the 360 kms Peshawar-D I Khan motorway, the 460 kms Karachi-Quetta-Chaman road, the 200



kms Mashkhel-Panjgur road, the 163 kms Awaran-Khuzdar road, the 228 kms Panjgur-Awaran road, and the 136 kms Awaran-Jhal Jao-Bela road. Work on the 210 kilometer D.I. Khan (Yarik)-Zhob Road (N-50) and Zhob-Quetta (N-50) roads have already been completed while work on the 431 km Khuzdar-Quetta-Chaman Section of N-25 is also in progress. The Surab-Hoshab at N-85 and Gwadar-Turab-Hoshab (M-8) are already operational. Similarly, the sources said that work on the 106 km Basima-Khuzdar road, Quetta to Khuzdar road and Khuzdar to Awaran and Hoshab road has also been started and would complete soon. The sources added that work on the western alignment routes of CPEC would be completed within three years. All routes of the western alignment go through remote areas where poverty rate is higher, jobs are less and industrial development and infrastructure is very low, thus completion of these projects will usher in prosperity of the areas. The Authority sources said the country was entering into second phase of CPEC as it was moving beyond infrastructure to focus on agriculture, particularly economic zones to boost industrialization. More sectors such as science, technology, information technology and agriculture sectors have also been included in the mega project of CPEC.

Briefs

CM KPK disappointed with slow process of Naya Pak scheme

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan expressing his dissatisfaction over the pace of work on Housing Schemes in the province under Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme has given one-month deadline to quarters concerned to ensure visible progress on the said schemes. He said that Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme was a flagship project of the incumbent government to provide low cost houses to people adding that delay in this regard will not be tolerated at any cost. He issued these directives while chairing a meeting regarding housing project under Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme here the other day. Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, concerned administrative secretaries and other senior officials attended the meeting. The meeting reviewed in details progress so far made on the various housing schemes under the banner of Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme. The chief minister on the occasion, directed the authorities concerned to resolve land issues once for all for those housing schemes further directing them to fix the timeline for the ground breaking of Peri Urban Housing Schemes while briefing the meeting about housing schemes under Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme. It was told that progress was being made on Surazai, Jalozai and Peri Urban Housing Schemes. It was informed that PC-I for Jalozai Housing Scheme comprising 150 canal of land has been approved while the project will be completed at a total cost of Rs. 3.3 Billion. It was further told that a consultant has been hired for the detailed designing of the project.



ISLAMABAD: Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan met with Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industries & its Executive Members. – DNA

Bahraini PM expresses solidarity with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan received a telephone call from His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, on Tuesday. The Crown Prince strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Lahore on 20 January 2022, which claimed three lives and left several injured. He extended deepest condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for early recovery of the injured. The Crown Prince expressed solidarity with the people, leadership and government of Pakistan. The Prime Minister conveyed his gratitude to the Crown Prince for Bahrain's support and solidarity as well as for the sympathies and condolences. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's firm resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The two leaders discussed ways to further strengthen and diversify bilateral relations and enhance cooperation in the multilateral fora and close coordination on regional and global issues of mutual interest. – DNA

Lahore High Court declares Ravi River Project illegal

The petitioners' counsels objected that if the project was bereft of environmental impact assessment, how could it be presumed of public purpose

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Tuesday declared the Ravi Riverfort Urban Development Project (RRUDP) illegal while announcing a verdict on the petitions against the project. The petitions, filed by advocates Sheraz Zaka, Ahmad Rafay Alam and others on behalf of the farmers, challenged the mode and manner of the land acquisition proceedings undertaken by the Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA) for RRUDP. The court also declared Section 4 of the Ravi Urban Development Authority (amendment) Ordinance 2021 un-

lawful and unconstitutional. The mentioned section is contradictory to Article 144 of the Constitution of Pakistan, it said. "Agricultural land can be acquired only when there is a proper legal framework for it but the land for RRUDP was acquired through a violation of Land Acquisition Act, 1894," the court remarked. "Lahore and Sheikhpura failed to abide by the law in the land acquisition," the court said. The LHC said, while announcing the verdict, that since RRUDP's master plan is the basic document, all the schemes should be under the masterplan as per the law. "Hence, any scheme worked upon

without [being included in] the master plan is illegal," the court said. Giving the observation that RUDA's amendment ordinance has failed to fulfil the constitutional requirements, the court directed the Authority to return the money it had acquired from the government within two months. The case: The petitioners had questioned the legality of forcible acquisitions of land for commercial purposes under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, while some of them questioned the legality of the Environment Impact Assessment of the project prepared by an unregistered consultant. The petitioners' counsels objected that if the project was bereft of envi-

ronmental impact assessment, how could it be presumed of public purpose. They argued that the project would deprive the farmers of their precious land and such deprivation was an infringement of fundamental rights. On this, the LHC had stayed the process of land acquisition for the project for not meeting the legal requirements and environmental laws over the petitions. However, the government of Punjab was of the view that since Ravi Urban Authority (amendment) Ordinance 2021 was passed to cover legal infirmities, the stay orders granted by the court and the petitions against the project stood infructuous.

Sufficient forensic evidence against Zahir Jaffer

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A meeting related to Noor Mukadam's murder case was held under the chairmanship of Inspector General of police (IGP) Islamabad Mohammad Ahsan Yunus which confirmed that strong and sufficient evidence has been collected against the main accused Zahir Jaffer, media reported Tuesday. According to a statement issued by the Islamabad police, the evidence was professionally collected from the crime scene and was sent to the Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA). The IG said that the objections and ambiguities regarding the case created by the media need to be removed, per the report. The IO was asked if there was any blood recovered on the pants of the suspect at the time of the murder, to which he replied: "There were no traces of blood found on his pants."

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