



Islamabad POST

Saturday, January 29, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Belarus will go to war if Russia is attacked: President

Detailed News On Page-07

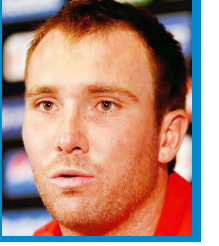
Russia will defend its interests: FM

Detailed News On Page-08



Brendan Taylor gets banned for 3.5 years

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Opposition fails in Senate

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Hussain said on Friday that it was another day of victory for the government after successful passage of the SBP bill on Friday. In a tweet, referring to the passage of SBP Amendment bill in Senate, he said that the opposition had been dreaming of no confidence motion but it failed even in the Upper House where it had a so-called majority. The government had proved all the political parties have no worth in front of Imran Khan. He said with the grace of Allah Almighty the journey of success will not stop.

Musaddiq Malik criticizes Gillani

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Musaddiq Malik on Friday has criticized Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) member and Opposition Leader in Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani over his absence in the House. In a post on social-networking website Twitter, Musaddiq Malik said that the opposition leader remained absent from the session during the voting on State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Amendment Bill. The bill got approved as the opposition parties cast 44 votes while the government members' count went upto 43. The bill, already passed by the National Assembly on January 13, 2022, was aimed at providing for the constitution of the SBP to achieve domestic price stability by regulating the monetary and credit system of Pakistan and, without prejudice to this primary objective.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

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Unclear policy, arrests affect Afghan journalists - Page 08

Ravi Urban Project

Govt set to knock SC door: PM

The case would be presented in a better manner to apprise the Court about the significance of the project



PM vows to rid Pakistan of terrorism

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan has given an assurance that he will "rid Pakistan of all forms of terrorism", a day after 10 soldiers were martyred in a terrorist attack at a security check post in Balochistan's Kech district. Taking to his Twitter, the premier said that the brave soldiers of Pakistan continue to lay down their lives to keep the country safe from terrorists. "I salute the 10 martyred soldiers who repulsed a terrorist fire raid on checkpoint in Kech Balochistan. We are resolute in our commitment to rid Pakistan of all forms of terrorism," he wrote.

STAFF REPORT / DNA

SHEIKHUPURA, Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said the government would invoke the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court after the High Court nullified the Ravi Urban Development Project. Speaking to media during his visit to Rakh Jhok forest, the prime minister said this time, the case would be presented in a better manner to apprise the Honourable Court about the significance

Continued on Page 06

Diplomats eyeing early re-opening of the Monal

Diplomats say they would like to take their delegates to the restaurant during OIC summit in March



ISLAMABAD: Walid Abu Ali former Palestine ambassador to Pakistan, Nicolae Goia Ambassador of Romania, former ambassador of Kazakhstan Mr. Akan and Mohammed Motahar Alashabi Ambassador of Yemen.

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The diplomatic community based in Islamabad has hoped to see Monal open again so that they could take their delegate to this place in March 23 this year when the Capital will host the OIC delegates.

On March 23, 2022 Pakistan will host Foreign Ministers of the OIC countries for a landmark summit, which would be a follow up of the one that took place on December 17, 2021 in which foreign ministers of over 30 countries had participated. The diplomats hailing from

Continued on Page 06



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Imran Imsael presenting a souvenir to Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov who met him in Karachi on Friday. - DNA

State Bank Bill sails through Senate

The bill sailed through a majority vote of 43 against 42

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Friday passed the SBP Act, 1956 (The State Bank of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill 2022 after clause-by-clause reading with majority vote amid opposition's noisy protest. The bill, tabled by Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Fayaz Ahmed Train, was passed through the vote-count. The bill sailed through a majority vote of 43 against 42. Earlier, the motion on the bill was passed with a tie-breaking vote of Chairman

Continued on Page 06

'Unity needed to thwart hostile designs'

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Lahore Garrison Friday. COAS was briefed on various operational and training matters of the formation at Corps HQ. Later, COAS interacted with Vice Chancellors, faculty and students of LUMS, FCU, UET, LSE, PU and GCU. COAS appreciated the critical role being played by these premier educational institutions in preparing the future leadership and useful citizens of Pakistan. COAS said that there is dire need of Human Resource development in the fields of education,

Continued on Page 06

Pak, Azerbaijan need to further enhance ties

This resolve was expressed in a meeting between Ambassador of Azerbaijan and Governor of Sindh

NAZIR SIYAL / DNA

KARACHI: Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan met with Mr. Imran Ismail, the Governor of Sindh Province of Pakistan. Expressing his gratitude for the warm welcoming, Ambassador Khazar Farhadov talked about the high-level relations between two countries and noted that Azerbaijan and Pakistan have always supported each other both bilaterally and internationally. Stressing that Azerbaijan is located at the crossroads of East-West, North-South transport and communication corridors, the Ambassador informed about

Continued on Page 06

Baku condoles over terror attack

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Baku has paid condolences to Islamabad over a deadly terrorist attack in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, the Defence Ministry reported on January 28. Azerbaijani Defence Minister Col-Gen Zakir Hasanov conveyed his

Continued on Page 06

Qatar, Turkey, Taliban to operate Kabul airport

NATO member Turkey maintained its embassy in Afghanistan after Western countries withdrew

DNA

DOHA: Qatar, Turkey and Afghanistan's Taliban-led interim government agreed on "several key issues" to operate the Kabul Hamid Karzai International Airport. "The delegations of the State of Qatar, the Republic of Turkey and the Afghan caretaker government concluded Thursday in Doha a tripartite meeting

on the management and operation of Kabul International Airport," a Qatari Foreign Ministry statement said. "They agreed on several key issues on how to manage and operate the airport," the ministry added. The ministry said that the meeting in Doha came as a continuation of previous talks, the latest round of which took place in Kabul last week.

Continued on Page 06

US ignored our security concerns, Putin says

Putin tells French President Emmanuel Macron the stand-off had not been resolved

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has told his French counterpart that the West has ignored Russia's security concerns, amid fears Russia could invade Ukraine. The US rejected a key Moscow demand that Nato rule out Ukraine joining the defence alliance - but insisted it was offering Russia a "diplomatic path". President Joe Biden has warned there is a "distinct possibility" Russia might invade Ukraine next month. Russia denies it is planning an attack. But on Friday Putin told French President Emmanuel Macron the stand-off had not been resolved. "US and Nato responses did not take account of such key Russian concerns as preventing Nato expansion, non-deployment of strike weapons systems near Russian borders, or returning the alliance's military potential and infrastructure in Europe to positions existing in 1997," a Kremlin readout of the call said. It is Putin's first comment on the crisis after the US rejected Russia's main demand. He told Mr Macron he would study the US counter-proposals closely before deciding on any further action. Earlier, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said there were "grains of rationality" in the US response and that Russia does not want war. Shortly after Mr Putin's comments to Mr Macron, Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance was ready to increase its presence in eastern Europe to demonstrate its resolve. Mr Stoltenberg said Russia was deploying thousands of com-

bat-ready troops and missile systems into Belarus, which also borders Ukraine. Russia last month made wide-ranging security demands from the West, including that:
• Ukraine should be barred from joining Nato
• Nato should end military activity in eastern Europe, pulling troops out of Poland and the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania
• The alliance should not deploy missiles in countries near or bordering Russia
The US and Nato responded by saying Ukraine had the right to choose its own allies but offered Russia talks on missile placements and other issues.



US refers Ukraine crisis to UN Security Council

UNITED NATIONS: The United States said it has called for an open meeting of the UN Security Council next Monday to address the crisis around Ukraine due to what it called "threatening behavior" by Russia. "More than 100,000 Russian troops are deployed on the Ukrainian border and Russia is engaging in other destabilizing acts aimed at Ukraine, posing a clear threat to international peace and security and the UN Charter," Washington's United Nations envoy Linda Thomas-Greenfield said Thursday in a statement. "As we continue our relentless pursuit of diplomacy to de-escalate tensions," she added, the 15-member Security Council "must squarely examine the facts and consider what is at stake for Ukraine, for Russia, for Europe, and for the core obligations and principles of the international order should Russia further invade Ukraine." With fears rising that Russia could invade its neighbor, a former Soviet state, Thomas-Greenfield said the council faced a "crucial" matter for international peace and security: "Russia's threatening behavior against Ukraine and the build-up of Russian troops on Ukraine's borders and in Belarus." She added: "This is not a moment to wait and see. The Council's full attention is needed now, and we look forward to direct and purposeful discussion on Monday." As one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, Russia has veto power over any United Nations resolution brought to the council. But Thomas-Greenfield said the meeting will be more of an opportunity to "expose Russia" for its actions and isolate the Kremlin for its aggressive posture regarding Ukraine. - APP

Briefs

CM visits
MQM activist
family, MPA

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah late last night visited MQM activist Aslam Khan's residence to offer condolence with his family members and visited MQM MPA Sadaqat Hussain to inquire about his health.

The chief minister was accompanied by Provincial Minister Nasir Shah, Administrator KMC Murtaza Wahab and Special Assistant to CM Waqar Mahdi. The chief minister drove to the residence of MQM activist, Aslam Khan at New Karachi and met with his family members and children and offered condolences.

Mr Shah offered the family to initiate a high-level inquiry to probe into the death of Aslam Khan, allegedly killed after sustaining injuries in baton charge resorted by the police at the gate of CM House. The brother of Aslam Khan thanked the chief minister for visiting him and offering the condolence.

Over the death of Aslam Khan. He said that he would discuss the matter with the family and then convey their decision. MPA Sadaqat: The chief minister also drove to the residence of MQM MPA Sadaqat Hussain at Orangi and met with his father and inquired about his health and prayed for his early recovery. On the occasion MQM MPA Ali Khurshedi was also present.

The chief minister discussed the incident in which he had sustained head injuries and assured him of justice. "You are my brother, I have a lot of respect for you and grieved over the incident that happened at CM House," the CM said.

Mr Shah said that the PSL teams were to set off for the stadium from the hotel when they had staged sit-in at the CM House. "The timing was very critical because the MQM friends decided on their own, to change the route of their protest which triggered the situation," he said and added that such incidents should not happen. The CM told the MQM MPA that he had constituted an inquiry committee to probe into the matter so that action could be taken accordingly.

Senior
journalist
Hafiz
Sanaullah
passes away

PESHAWAR: Senior journalist and former Chairman of Journalism Department Peshawar University, Hafiz Sanaullah passes away after protracted illness here on Friday. Hafiz Sanaullah was the founder of Journalism Department and also worked in newspapers including Pakistan Times as Bureau Chief Peshawar, Khyber Mail and Morning Star. His students are serving in various newspapers of the country and different and private and public sector institutions. His funeral prayers would be offered in Askar II Bara Road Peshawar Saddar. — APP

Another
dies of
coronavirus
in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD: Another patient died of COVID-19 while 89 persons were tested positive in the district during the last 24 hours. A spokesperson for the Health department said on Friday that 1,170 coronavirus tests were conducted in public and private sector labs during the same period. He said that total active cases in Faisalabad were 713 while 26,106 patients had so far recovered from the disease. He said that 200 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital, 52 at the DHQ Hospital and 150 at Govt General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad for COVID-19 patients. At present, 34 patients were under treatment at the Allied Hospital, 8 at DHQ Hospital and 5 at General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad. He further said that 666 confirmed patients were isolated at their homes in the district. — APP

GCWUF hosts int'l moot on
advances in Natural Sciences

134 scientists from different parts of Pakistan and the world joined it, i.e.: United Kingdom, China. During the conference, 20 scientific reports were presented and discussed

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: On January 28-01, 2022, 2nd day of the International Conference on "Recent Advances in Interdisciplinary Natural Sciences" was held Government College Women University Faisalabad. The event was organized by the Department of Chemistry of GCWUF. 134 scientists from different parts of Pakistan and the world joined it, i.e.: United Kingdom, China. During the conference, 20 scientific reports were presented and discussed. Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum from Islamia University, Bahawalpur opened the plenary lecture and talked about Futuristic Approach in Herbal Medicines Marketing for a Prosper Pakistan. Session-I on Natural & Synthetic Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Sciences was chaired by Prof. Dr. Shazia Anjum from Islamia University, Bahawalpur and Co-chaired by Prof. Dr. Matloob Ahmad from GC University, Faisalabad. Dr. Muhammad Naeem Qaisar from College of pharmacy, university of Sargodha, Sargodha, opened the session-I, welcomed the conference guests and expressed gratitude for their interest in interdisciplinary natural sciences. Mis Manam Walait from University of Central Punjab Lahore. Reported a comprehensive review on Single Cell Protein (SCP). The report by Dr. Muhammad Adnan Iqbal from Organometallic & Coordination Chemistry Laboratory, Department of Chemistry, University of Agriculture Faisalabad on "Potential of silver against human colon cancer: (synthesis,



characterization and crystal structures of xylyl (Ortho, meta, & Para) linked bis-benzimidazolium salts and Ag(I)-NHC complexes: In vitro anticancer studies" was very interesting for the audience. Mis Mahvish Abbasi from University of agriculture, Faisalabad presented her work on "Green synthesis of Organoselenium Compounds, their DFT Studies, Biological Potential, and study of their 3D interaction with protein molecules by Molecular Modeling". Dr. Sarosh Iqbal from GC University, Faisalabad, presented a report on Synthesis of ethyl esters of 2-hydroxypropylidene as pharmaceutical agents.

The report by Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Khan on "Design and synthesis 1,2,4-triazole-3-thiol analogues to evaluate their angiogenesis response" was really exciting for the participants of the conference. Muhammad Shoab from Department of Chemistry, Government Graduate College Samanabad Faisalabad, reported on "Osteogenic and antibacterial copper doped mesoporous bioactive glass nanoparticles: in vitro cyclophosphamide delivery to the U2OS cancer cell line". Session-II on Smart & Sustainable Development in Materials Manufacturing and Energy was chaired by Dr. Tahir Hussain. Professor & Dean at School of Science at

National Textile University Faisalabad Pakistan and co-chaired by Dr. Asim Mansha. Director ORIC. Govt College University, Faisalabad. Dr. Javed Iqbal from Department of Chemistry, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, gave a keynote talk on "Designing of Organic Functional materials for optoelectronic applications". Invited Speaker, Dr. Khuram Joya gave a report on "Recent Innovations in Nanoscale Catalysis for Water Splitting and Synthetic Fuels". Dr. Hamad Majeed, University of Management and Technology, Sialkot Campus, gave a report on "Interdisciplinary Research in the Textile Circular Economy". The report by Dr. Asim Mansha

from GC University, Faisalabad, on "Experimentally determined Photophysical and computational studies of 7-Hydroxycoumarin" was very interesting for the audience. Sumreen Poshmal from Department of Chemistry, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, reported on "Chromium Doped Lanthanum Cerates: Synthesis, Characterization and Hydrazine Electrocatalysis". International speaker, Irfan Jamil from School of Electrical Engineering, Southeast University, China, shared his experience and gave an interesting, informative master class on "Excess energy evaluation based on performance ratio for large-scale solar project (Issp)".

FPCCI to
support
economic
reforms in
Balochistan

DNA

KARACHI: Rafiullah Kakar, Director of high-powered Strategic Planning & Reforms Cell (SPRC) of the Government of Balochistan, has visited FPCCI Headquarters at the Federation House Karachi along with top officials of the cell.

He gave a detailed presentation to the FPCCI officials, office bearers and prominent business leaders. Kakar said that the Government of Balochistan has an across the board consensus that the way forward for an inclusive, egalitarian, fast-track and sustainable economic & commercial development of the province is only possible through the proven, progressive and world-class mechanism of Public-Private Partnership (PPP); adapted by many countries and have yielded socioeconomic gains the world over.

Engr. M.A. Jabbar, former VP FPCCI, acknowledged that Public-Private Partnership programs can play vital role in not only developing the economic, social and commercial infrastructure; but also by the means of educating and empowering the masses through creating enormous employment opportunities on a continuing basis.

Over 6.44m
people
vaccinated
against Covid

FAISALABAD: Over 6.44 million people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr. Ataul Mun'im said on Friday 3,930,423 people were injected first dose while 2,440,135 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He further said that 38,515 health workers were also given first dose while 33,630 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. As of now 279,128 first doses and 186,086 second doses were in the stock in Faisalabad. He said that 37 vaccination centers and 20 mobile vaccination camps were operational in Faisalabad where registered people were being vaccinated. In order to facilitate the people these centers had been established in various areas of the city including Allied Hospital, District Head Quarters Hospital, Government General Hospital G.M Abad, Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology, Government General Hospital Samanabad, Children Hospital, sports Complex Samanabad, Tehsil Head Quarters Hospital Jaranwala, Samundri, Tandianwala, Chak Jhumra, Sports Complex Chak Jhumra, Sports Complex Jaranwala, Government General Hospital Chak 224-RB, New Building RHC Khurianwala, he added.

Open door policy
continues on daily basis

He directed the heads of district departments to satisfy the grievances of the complainants in a satisfactory manner and to abandon the practice of ignoring public issues



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad listening the public complaints in open door policy. — DNA

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad has said that open door policy is underway on daily basis and public complaints are being resolved on the spot. He directed the heads of district departments to satisfy the grievances of the complainants in a satisfactory manner and to abandon the practice of ignoring public issues, undue and unwarranted delays would not be tolerated in this regard. Listen-

ing to the problems of the citizens in the office, the Deputy Commissioner said that departmental action against the officers who do not listen to the public issues will not be avoided so they should increase the standard of departmental performance in relation to public relief. He asked the Assistant Commissioners to address the grievances and problems of the people at their level responsibly and keep a close watch on the performance of the tehsil offices so that the people do not face any

problem in their affairs. He said that there should be no delay in resolving issues that need to be solved immediately. He listened to the concerns of citizens about WASA, Waste Management Company, Revenue and other departments and issued instructions to the concerned officers on the spot by calling them. He listened to the problems of senior citizen, men and women and assured them that there would be no delay in departmental action for immediate resolution of their grievances and problems.

NTU launches
"Pakistan
Textile Portal"

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: National Textile University (NTU) has launched the first ever "Pakistan Textile Portal" to facilitate the textilers. Inaugurating this portal in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) in a simple ceremony, President FCCI Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh underlined the importance of the textile sector in the national economy and said that Faisalabad is the iconic representation of the textile sector. "We have the privilege to contribute 46% share in total textile export of Pakistan", he said and added that this portal would have all types of textile related information and play a major role in achieving the ambitious export targets. He further said that industrialists and businessmen related to the textile sector must switch over from traditional textile to technical textile and in this connection NTU could also extend its services.

Briefing about the "Pakistan Textile Portal" Dr. Hafsa Jameed said that its registration is totally free and particularly the SME sector could showcase their products by uploading detailed information about their quality brands with their capacity of manufacturing. She said that repeated awareness sessions could be arranged to popularize this portal and convince exporters to avail this free facility. She said that other related organizations could also be encouraged to arrange awareness sessions while its scope would be expanded gradually up to Pakistan and then throughout the world.

'KP not to impose
complete lockdown'

PESHAWAR: A spokesman for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif on Friday said that the coronavirus was spreading rapidly and that it was at the discretion of the deputy commissioners to impose a lockdown in areas where more than 10 percent cases were reported.

In a statement to the media, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said the provincial government was making cogent efforts to contain the spread of omicron, however, adding that the KP gov-

ernment has no intentions to impose a complete lockdown in the province. The spokesman further said the situation had not reached the point where large-scale sanctions were imposed in the province. — APP

AJK PM urges int'l community to protect
Kashmiris from Indian state terrorism

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi Friday said India had intensified its reign of terror in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), besides imposing strict restrictions on media to conceal the massive killings of innocent Kashmiris by its forces. He expressed these views in a meeting with Ambassador of the European Union Androulla Kaminara here at the Jammu and Kashmir House. The AJK prime minister said India was involved in the massacre of Kashmiri people, urging the international community to break its silence and protect the children, the elderly and women from Indian state terrorism. He said seven decades had lapsed but the Kashmiris were looking to the United Nations and the European Union for the implementations



of UN for granting them their internationally recognized right to self-determination. Prime Minister Niazi urged the in-

ternational community to pressurize India to implement the UN resolutions and allow the international human rights organization to review

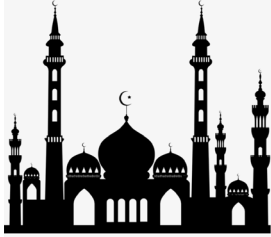
the grave human rights situation in the IIOJK.

He said the European Union had raised their voices regarding the Kashmir issue and rejected the Indian illegal action of August 5, 2019 and expressed solidarity with the Kashmiri people.

The meeting also discussed issues relating to the EU cooperation for education, health, tourism development and human resource development in Azad Kashmir.

Ambassador Kaminara assured the AJK PM that the EU would fully support the efforts for the development of Azad Kashmir and the empowerment of women and youth. The EU envoy took keen interest in the development of Azad Kashmir, improvement of infrastructure and expressed the hope that the coming local body elections would play an important role in strengthening democracy. — APP

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:45 am
Zohr.....	12:12 pm
Asr.....	03:35 pm
Maghrib.....	05:10 pm
Isha.....	06:40 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

Rescue (Police).....	15
Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....	1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
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Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20



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PIA Flight Info.....	114
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CAA.....	9281092



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MH.....	561116
Cantt Hospital.....	9270907-11
DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
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PIMS.....	9261170-79
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Shifa International.....	4603666



Departments

CDA.....	9221334-43
CDA.....	9208301-04
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TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board.....	9270151-3



Complaints

Water Tanker Service E-7, F-10 & F-11.....	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8.....	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8.....	9266316
Wapda Islamabad.....	9217579
Wapda Rawalpindi.....	111-309-309

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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ISLAMABAD: An art lover takes keen interest in photographs during an exhibition titled Color of Spain and Pakistan, jointly organized by the Spanish embassy and Lok Virsa. The exhibition will continue till Sunday. – DNA

All airports to be made operational, Senate told

The House also passed “The National Metrology Institute of Pakistan Bill, 2022” which was laid by Minister for Science and Technology Syed Shibli Faraz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate was informed on Friday that the government is taking steps to make small airports of the country operational. Speaking during Question Hour, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan said commercial traffic stands suspended at different airports due to non-availability of commercial airlines.

Ali Muhammad Khan assured

that there will be no discrimination with any province regarding commencement of domestic flight operation. He said a decision will be made on the commercial viability of routes. The House passed “The State Bank of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2022” today. The bill was laid by Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin. The bill is aimed at facilitating domestic economic stability, supporting sustainable growth and avoid repeated booms and busts that have characterized Pa-



kistan's past and led to painful consequences in terms of higher inflation, higher poverty and lower growth. It also balances the provision of necessary operational and financial autonomy to the State Bank with a new mechanism for enhancing transparency and strengthening accountability. The House also passed “The National Metrology Institute of Pakistan Bill, 2022” which was laid by Minister for Science and Technology Syed Shibli Faraz. Meanwhile in a tweet, Minister

of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib termed the passage of State Bank of Pakistan Amendment Bill 2022 as another major victory of government in the Senate. At the outset of the session, the House offered Fateha for the soldiers, who were martyred in a terrorist attack on a security forces' check post in Balochistan's Kech district. Senator Mushtaq Ahmad led the prayer. The House will now meet again on Monday at 3:30pm.

President Alvi for swift digital transformation of parliament

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Friday emphasized the need for accelerating the process of the digital transformation of parliament by equipping it with the latest IT tools to make it more efficient.

The president, chairing a meeting on President's Initiative on Cyber Efficient Parliament, asked the authorities concerned to prioritize the deliverables of the project and take timely decisions to avoid any further delay. The meeting was attended by Deputy

Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi and other senior officials of the government. The Steering Committee of the Project updated the meeting on the current status of the project and various processes involved in it. It was informed that the Committee had seri-

ously been working to implement the project within a given time frame. Underscoring the importance of the project, the president said that e-solutions would significantly enhance the efficiency of parliament as well as help in the quick disposal of the legislative business. – APP



ISLAMABAD: The Korean Ambassador attended the KOPIA-PARC Projects Media Briefing at the NARC, Islamabad. “Agriculture is an area where Pakistan has competitiveness. It's one of the main industries and accounts for significant amount of its exports.” – DNA

Dr. Sania speaks at SCO poverty alleviation event

“Prime Minister Imran Khan during his speech at the meeting of Head of States of SCO which was held in June 2019 in Bishkek articulated his eight-point agenda

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Dr. Sania Nishtar Friday emphasized on the need to establish a permanent mechanism for regular exchange of experiences and information on the applied innovative measures aimed at poverty alleviation. Dr. Sania was speaking at the apex level event with heads of ministries and agencies of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on Poverty Alleviation. Jamshid Kuchkarov, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Development

and Poverty Reduction, Republic of Uzbekistan hosted the event in Tashkent. The event was attended by heads and representatives of the ministries and agencies of the SCO member states on poverty alleviation, as well as representatives of SCO Secretariat. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Sania thanked the SCO secretariat for encouraging all the members for cooperation in the field of poverty alleviation as it was outlined in the Action Plan for 2021-2025 for the implementation of the SCO member states on poverty alleviation strategy until 2025. “Prime Minister Imran Khan during his speech

at the meeting of Head of States of SCO which was held in June 2019 in Bishkek articulated his eight-point agenda. This included a proposal to narrow the research-policy gap through the establish-



ment of leading knowledge center for poverty reduction within the SCO framework”, Dr. Sania highlighted. Later, Dr. Sania reflected on Pakistan's experience in poverty alleviation. She said, “In Pakistan, poverty

alleviation is a top priority of our government. There are multiple programmes in Ehsaas for 16 target groups, and each programme is aligned with a certain quantifiable goal and 292 initiatives and policies which support these programmes.”

Alongside Dr. Sania, Saikhkhor Kholkhujayev, First Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Akmadi Adilovich Sarbasov, First Vice-Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Hong Tianyun, Deputy Director of the National Rural Revitalization Administration; Kudaiber-

gen Bazarbaev Bazarbaevich, Minister of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic; O. Y. Batalina, First Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation; and Ashurbayev Sulekhzoda, First Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan also spoke at the event. The apex event discussed regional approaches to poverty alleviation in the SCO member states. Speakers reviewed a wide range of issues on the state and prospects of development of the SCO member state's cooperation in poverty alleviation. – APP

Japanese ambassador calls on Dr. Fehmida

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Japanese ambassador Mitsuhiro Wada called on the Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Dr. Fehmida Mirza on Friday and discussed matters related to bilateral political, social and sports relations between the two countries.

In the meeting, the minister briefed the ambassador on the importance and role of IPC Ministry after the 18th amendment, said a press release issued here. During the meeting, it was decided that on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Pakistan-Japan diplomatic relations, steps would be taken to promote sports to further strengthen the friendship between the two countries.

It was discussed that Japanese companies and businesses would invest in Pakistan in the sports sector in the near future.

The minister informed Wada that Pakistan was one of the few countries in Asia where best profit can be obtained by investing in the sports sector.

“Pakistan is also one of the leading countries in the world in terms of ease of doing businesses,” she said.

The ambassador expressed the hope that excellent trade, political and cultural relations between the two countries would further be enhanced.

The meeting was also attended by Mohsin Mushtaq Chandna, IPC Secretary and Fayaz-ul-Haq, IPC Joint Secretary.

Plastic export increases 13.47% in 6 months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The export of plastic materials from the country has witnessed an increase of 13.47 percent during the first six months of the current financial year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan exported plastic material worth \$186.573 million during July-December (2021-22) as compared to the export of \$164.432 million during July-December (2020-21), showing growth of 13.47 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In terms of quantity, the plastic export however witnessed a decrease of 30.97 percent from 171,280 metric tons to 118,241 metric tons, the data revealed.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis the plastic export increased by 77.39 percent during the month of December 2021 as compared to the same month of last year.

The plastic material exports in December 2021 were recorded at the US \$32.043 million against the export of \$18.064 million in December 2020, the PBS data revealed.

Rupee recovers 20 paises against dollar

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of Pakistan rupee strengthens by 20 paises against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Friday and closed at Rs 176.77 against the previous day's closing of Rs 176.97.

According to Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market recorded at Rs 177.3 and Rs 178.7 respectively. Similarly, the price of euro depreciated by Rs 1.34 and closed at Rs 196.86 against the previous day's closing at Rs 198.20.

The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs 1.53, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.96 was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound, which was traded at Rs 236.36 as compared to its last closing at Rs 237.32. The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 05 paises to close at Rs 48.12 and Rs 47.12 respectively. – APP

ITP celebrates its 16th anniversary

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Friday celebrated its 16th anniversary with a commitment to remain adamant to their objectives of equal application of law and elimination of VIP culture. A ceremony was held at ITP Headquarters in connection with the ITP's anniversary which started with “Quran Khawni” and special prayers for the success of the force. Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Rai Mazhar Iqbal congratulated all ITP staff over their efforts in making the force role model for others. He also cut the cake along with staff and wished more successes for the force in future. The SP (Traffic) Arif Hussain Shah, all Zonal DSPs and senior police officials were also present on the occasion. The SSP (Traffic) said that ITP succeeded to introduce an exemplary traffic system in the Capital. He said that ITP has become the model of excellence for all law enforcement agencies in the country. Help, Service and Equal application of law are the operational codes of the force and it believes in police-community participation and community based policing. He said that operations of ITP are being upgraded on modern lines while steps are being taken to make the process of attaining driving license easier. – APP

NPO to organize webinar on Monday

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a webinar on “Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)” on January 31. Business process re-engineering is the strategy organizations

adopt to improve process, increase productivity, reduce cost, improve customer services and provide a competitive advantage, according to NPO document. The objectives of the training was to empower professionals with in-depth knowledge and understanding of business process re-engineering, to develop the required skill, confidence and experience among employees to independently drive BPR efforts in the organization. – APP

Briefs

NBF online books shop gaining popularity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF) online books shop is gaining popularity among the students and readers. The initiative has been taken to promote books reading culture, an official of National Book Foundation Raza Mehmood told APP. He said NBF uploaded its fresh publications on website and introduce new schemes to ensure availability of books. The official said e-book trend was gaining popularity among readers as advance technology ensures ease and comfort. He said this initiative was fruitful as the readers were able to have access to all important publications with one click on website. Books ordering process is simple and easy. "Browse books in NBF online Book Shop and search books", he said. "Add any book to cart, after adding any book to cart you'll be redirected to your cart. You can also view your cart anytime by clicking the cart icon in the top menu. You'll have to enter your Customer Information (email, etc), Delivery Information, Payment Method and Order Comments. After the ordering process, NBF representative will call you for order confirmation", the official said. - APP

Negotiation underway with int'l social media firms

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Babar Awan on Friday said that negotiation is underway with international social media firms for registration. Responding to various questions during Question Hour at Senate, he said that on 13 October 2021, the federal government approved Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight, and Safeguards) Rules, 2021 (Rules), promulgated under section 37(2) of Prevention of Electronic Crime Act 2016 (PECA). In a written reply Cabinet Division said that under Rule 7(6) (a) of the said Rules, a Significant Social Media Company has more than 0.5 Million users in Pakistan or is in the list specially notified by the Authority, separately for each Application/Service. PTA has placed the registration form on its website www.pta.gov.pk which can be submitted by applicants through e-mail "SM-Reg@pta.gov.pk" or postal address "Director (WAD), PTA HQs F-5/1, Islamabad, or by physically visiting the office of Director (WAD). So far PTA has registered two companies i.e. Joyo Technology Pakistan (Private) Ltd. (Snake Video) and BIGO Service Pakistan (Private) Ltd. BIGO Live, Like) so far other Significant Social Media Companies are being pursued Registration. - APP

IBPC to organize Pak single country exhibition in UK

Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, ICCI thanked the IBPC delegation for visiting ICCI to interact with local business community

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of International Business & Professional Corporation (IBPC) of UK led by Choudhry Rizwan Sulehria Founding Chairman visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and discussed options with Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President ICCI to organize a single country exhibition of Pakistan in UK to promote Pakistan's trade and exports in UK market. Amir Mushtaq Khan Senior Vice Chairman, Asim Yousaf Secretary General, Manzoor Hussain, Yawar Faheem, Muhammad Iqbal,

Sheikh Sohail, Naseem Mir and others were in the delegation. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Hamayun Kabir and others were also present at the occasion. Rizwan Sulehria said that IBPC intended to display Pakistani products of various sectors from Sialkot, Faisalabad, Lahore and other cities in the Pakistani expo and said that ICCI members should also participate in that event to explore opportunities of business promotion. He said that IBPC was striving to uplift the Pakistani business community around the globe including UK, USA, Gulf and European



through training, networking and assisting them legally all around. He said that IBPC would also help the Pakistani business community to participate in different seminars, expos,

events and meetings with multi-national businesses besides working for their excellence in the global market. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry thanked the IBPC delegation for visiting ICCI to interact with local business community. He said that the UK was an important market for Pakistan and ICCI was ready to work with IBPC to promote Pakistan's trade and exports in that market. He said that Pakistan needed more foreign investment to promote its economy and stressed that IBPC should also play a role to bring potential investors from

the UK to Pakistan to explore JVs and investment in various sectors of its economy including CPEC. He appreciated the idea of IBPC for organizing a single country exhibition of Pakistan and assured that ICCI would fully cooperate to make it successful. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan-UK bilateral trade was not reflective of the actual potential of both countries. They said that ICCI & IBPC should work together to promote business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to take bilateral trade volume to higher levels.

PAL to organize "Muzakra" on Jan 31

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) will hold a "Muzakra" on January 31 to mark the 75th anniversary of Pashto literature. According to a statement, eminent scholar Dr. Abasin Yousafzai will preside over the poetry recital and Prof. Asir Mengal will be the special guest while Prof. Hanif Khalil will be the special guest. PAL Chairman Dr. Yousaf Khushk will also participate in the Muzakra. Eminent scholars including Kalsoom Zeb, Prof. Dr. Zubair Hasrat, Ustad Faiz Abdul Wahab Faiz, Iqbal Husain Afkar, Feroz Afridi, Prof. Atta ur Rehman Atta, Prof. Dr. Shahab Aziz Arman, and Prof. Nawaz Yousafzai will shed light on the topic. - APP

Shibli Faraz condemns manhandling of protesters in Sindh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Science and Technology Syed Shibli Faraz on Friday strongly condemned for Sindh police for use of force and brutal handling of the peaceful protesters of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) workers in Karachi. Speaking in the Senate on a point of order, he said, "We strongly condemn police action against the peaceful protesters of MQM-P." He said the Sindh police's action reminded the Model Town Lahore incident in which innocent people were killed. He said it seemed that the PPP was no more the party of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, as now it was known as the party of Asif Ali Zardari. The minister asked the Pakistan Peoples Party to tender apology to the MQM-P for the brutal action against the MQM-P workers. He held the PML-N and PPP responsible for weakening the national economy, adding that it was unfortunate that both the parties used the country's resources for their personal interests and making assets. - APP

Security forces committed to eradicate terrorism

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Friday condemned the terrorist attack on the security forces in Kech Balochistan. In a news statement, he said the security forces were committed to eradicating different forms of terrorism from all parts of the country. He prayed to the Almighty to rest the martyred in the highest ranks of Jannah. The minister said the blood of our martyrs will not go in vain. Those who were involved in cowardly acts of terrorism would not be allowed to hide anywhere in the country, he added. - APP

Fatima Jinnah Varsity, THSI sign MoU



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Human Security Institute (THSI) and Fatima Jinnah Women

University (FJWU) signed MoU on Friday. The purpose of cooperation between THSI and FJWU is to improve the scientific and academic level of the two



institutes and to promote the mutual cooperation between two institutes, which concerns the interaction and research in the different fields of Human Security and related issues. The ceremony was attended by Worthy Vice Chancellor, and faculty/staff members of FJWU and team members of THSI.

E-Justice a revolutionary step: Maleeka Bukhari

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice Maleeka Bukhari Friday said that "Criminal Law & Justice Reforms" was a revolutionary step toward rule of law in the country and "E-justice system" would encourage legal fraternity to plead their cases without delays. Talking to a private news



channel, she said e-archives would allow quick and safe retrieve of files of cases by judges and lawyers, adding that lawyers should need to support the reform of electronic audio and video recording of witnesses to ensure accuracy of cases. She said E-justice system would take legal system towards modern standards, adding that the reforms would provide support to the poor seeking justice. She also congratulated nation that for the first time PTL-led government had announced changes in the laws of the country that inherited its common law system from the period of British rule. Maleeka Bukhari hoped these reforms would change the entire justice system and address the women related matters of delays in trials and registration of FIRs.

CPO makes surprise visits to police stations

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Umar Saeed Malik on Thursday night paid surprise visits to Westridge and Taxila police stations, where he instructed the police officers and field staff to perform their duties diligently. During the visit, he also inspected the front desks, hawalats, the condition of the buildings and the officers on night duty. The CPO checked the records and instructed the officials to take effective measures to facilitate the public. On this occasion, Superintendent Police, Potohar Rana Abdul Wahab, SDPO Taxila Waqas Khan and SDPO Cantt Azhar Hassan were also present. The CPO directed the officers to protect the life and property of citizens while conducting checks and also ensuring their own safety. He said that all possible steps were being taken to improve the delivery of service. Earlier the police under a crackdown against professional beggars on Friday conducted raids in different areas and arrested 45 beggars. According to a police spokesman, the district police on the orders of Senior Superintendent Police, Operations Wasim Riaz, had constituted special anti-Beggar Squads which took action against professional beggars and arrested 45 beggars in different areas. SSP Operations Wasim Riaz said that the special beggar squad was working hard to end this menace. In a crackdown on the anti-social elements, the police arrested seven gamblers besides recovering stake money Rs 25,500 and other items from their possession, a police spokesman said here on Friday. Pirwadhai Police got information that some people were gambling while playing cards. During the course of action, the police arrested the gamblers identified as Aqib, Abu Habib, Tariq, Habib Khan, Ali Azeem, Naveed Shah and Javed Iqbal. Police recovered Rs 25,500 and other items from their possession. - APP

Kitchen gardening on rise in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The trend of Kitchen gardening is increasing in Islamabad as the dwellers of Capital are taking a keen interest to grow fresh and nutritious vegetables, fruits, and spices (Condiments) on their terraces and rooftops. Faiza Warraich, a housewife in Islamabad was of the view that she was no more worried about spending hundreds of rupees on daily meals as she told APP that she grew 12 to 15 vegetables and condiments at home which would help her run the kitchen easily throughout the year. "Three years ago, I did not know anything about kitchen gardening. Then, I started watching videos on YouTube and now I am a master in kitchen gardening. We live in a 5 Marla house and have enough space on the roof to place 20 pots for gardening" she told. Umer Naseer, 20 years old student told that he had a great interest in kitchen gardening since childhood and he used the home's terrace for growing mint, onion, tomatoes, gourd, lemons, and cucumber. - APP

Air pollution soars in capital after dry weather onset

ISLAMABAD: After week-long rainfalls lashed out the metropolis, the federal capital's air quality was recorded polluted and unhealthy once again amid dry weather onset, reveals the 24 hours ambient air quality report of Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) on Friday. According to the report, since the October 2021 increased ratio of environmental pollutants causing bad air and degraded atmosphere were leading to smog as the daily air quality data recorded increased ratio of hazardous environmental pollutants in the atmosphere. The National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) by EPA set a threshold of 35 microgrammes per cubic meter for particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), 120 microgrammes per cubic meter for sulphur dioxide (SO2) and 80 microgrammes per cubic meter to ensure clean ambiance.

The report highlighted that during the past 24 hours average of PM2.5 was recorded 53.44 microgrammes per cubic meter, which was reported higher than the NEQS levels during 8 hours average at 58.64 microgrammes per cubic meter from 1600 to 2400 hours. The other parameters of daily quality report included SO2 and NO2 which are generally released from industrial emissions. The 24 hours average of SO2 was 18.31 microgrammes per cubic meter and 8.18 microgrammes per cubic meter of NO2 and both effluents were recorded within the permissible limits. When contacted the EPA official said that the air quality remained hazardous due to increased vehicular emissions and prolonged dry weather that resulted in huge accumulation of suspended particles of air pollutants in the atmosphere. The official further said that the air quality was healthy for all age groups whereas during bad

air or increased pollution the general public was advised to wear face covering outdoors and avoid unnecessary travel in the federal capital. The recent rainfall was overwhelming in magnitude and recurrence that helped in containing the suspended particles and other ambient air pollutants. To a question, she said that the areas along hilly terrain mostly possessed increased propensity of generating air pollution due to the natural topography creating a blockade for winds causing air pollution. She further said that one of the major reasons for capital's air pollution was large number of vehicles entering in the capital on daily basis. The industrial sector particularly steel manufacturing units spewing dark smoke were the troublemakers and had adopted carbon absorbing scrubbers that helped control dark carbon release into the atmosphere, she added. - APP

AIOU to set a roadmap for the benefit of students

Regional Directors were to be consulted and instructed to provide assistance and facilities for admissions in most important places

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: One-day Regional Director's Conference was held at Allama Iqbal Open University under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia-ul-Qayyum in which 54 Regional Directors of the University participated through video conferencing link. The main objective of the conference was to bring more people in the educational network across the country, especially strategies, challenges, future plans for further enhancement of student facilities, especially those from remote areas. The Regional Directors were to be consulted and instructed to provide assistance and facilities for admissions in the most important places. Another major objective of the conference was to bid a respectful farewell to the Di-

rector General of Regional Services, Inamullah Sheikh, who will retire next week, and to pay tribute to him for his outstanding services. The conference was also attended by the University Registrar, Raja Umar Younis and Principal Officers. Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum said that the future of 1.2 million students is associated with this institution. We have to take care of their needs. We have to formulate a strategy for the next three years. He said that strengthening the regional network has been his priority from day one, all the facilities required for the regional campuses have been provided so that there is no gap left in providing the best services to the students. Speaking on Human Resources, he said that following the rules and regulations, he has done a lot for staff development in

these three years and has filled the staff shortage in the regional offices. The Vice Chancellor directed Director ICT to conduct a briefing session with the Regional Offices on Campus Management System (CMS) and Aaghi LMS, to train the staff of the Regional Offices through the Master Trainers on the Digital System of the University, so that they can guide the students. At the end, the Vice Chancellor appreciated the services of the retiring DGRS, Inamullah Sheikh in wonderful words, the Regional Moderators paid tribute to him in recognition of his excellent services. Director General Regional Services, Inamullah Sheikh thanked the Vice Chancellor and moderators for their services. Speaking on the occasion, he gave the major credit of his success and extension of the regional networks to Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum.

JANUARY 2022

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 225

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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

Avoidable violence

THE unfortunate scenes of the MQM-P protest in Karachi on Wednesday are a reminder of how often authorities in Pakistan take a more-than-necessary heavy-handed approach when dealing with demonstrations. With one dead and many others injured, this should serve as an opportunity for introspection and to work towards avoiding such ugly interactions between law enforcement agencies and citizens.

The government is well within its rights to decide that certain areas are off limits for protestors especially if security risks are a concern. However, a peaceful demonstration is in itself no real threat—unless the police let it spiral out of control through the excessive use of batons and tear gas.

There are reports that the police attempted to defuse the situation before the protestors began their march towards the restricted area. But if security concerns were a priority, the government could have had discussions with MQM-P in advance, or at the very least cordoned off the area when they were aware a protest would happen. A little foresight can go a long way.

Security officials in Pakistan have often taken a needlessly violent approach to protests on a number of occasions. This reaction transcends governments, political parties or provinces—it is a problem we have seen all over Pakistan. This is something we must look to change. In this immediate incident however, the provincial government should not look to deflect blame and seriously investigate the claims of police brutality levied by MQM-P workers.

Controlling authorities from getting too violent with protests is a problem other states struggle with as well. Lessons can be drawn from better examples. Riot and demonstration training and sensitisation need to be implemented more vigorously within law enforcement agencies. Tear gas should not be deployed on every protest, and the police should employ the use of shields as a means to restrict and control, instead of relying on batons to beat protestors up at the slightest provocation. It is clear we can do better, but only if there are serious attempts to bring about these reforms.



Safe drinking water

RECENTLY, Punjab Governor Chaudhary Sarwar highlighted the issue of safe clean drinking water as about 70 percent of the population in the country lacks access to it. Speaking during a press conference, he pointed out that those who are deprived of this basic right are suffering from water-borne diseases and that the issue requires urgent attention. It is commendable on part of the governor to bring attention to this issue considering how Pakistan is the third-most water-stressed country and houses the world's fifth largest population. Focusing on Punjab, the Aab-e-Pak Authority has been introduced to ensure the provision of clean water to the neglected areas of the province as the authority is working on establishing 131 water filtration plans in the Multan division by March this year. Pursuing its goal of providing clean drinking water to about 8 million people without any discrimination, the government is also working with the private sector and philanthropists for the installing of solar-power hand pumps and filtration plants.

These are all encouraging steps and will benefit the people of Punjab greatly if the implementation is done right. Given our resource constraints, it is important to work alongside the private sector and NGO's and it is heartening to see organisations like the Sarwar Foundation, Pak Aid and Al-Khair Foundation step up for this cause.

However, this issue extends beyond just one province and the government will have to come up with a more comprehensive and long-term strategy given our water scarcity woes. A lot of our water issues arise from ineffective management.

Unequal access and distribution, growing population, urbanisation, progressive industrialisation, lack of storage capacity and climate risk makes water management a difficult task. Pakistan's first National Water Policy in 2018 does not pay sufficient attention to water sensitive urban designs, risk management against natural hazards and trade in water-intensive crops. Going forward, these gaps need to be addressed through solutions that are area specific and not generic. We do not have the luxury to wait and plan anymore.

Replicating China's development model for socio-economic uplift

Abdul Rashid Shakir



Pakistan has many approaches to adopt and lessons to learn from the Chinese development miracle. Major takeaways include changing the core character of economy from consumption to manufacturing

A paradigm shift in the economic outlook from consumption to manufacturing is a key to poverty alleviation, economic prosperity and improvement in human development indicators like quality education, good healthcare and a higher level of per capita GDP.

China, with a population of 1.4 Billion, is the only country in the world that alleviated its 800 Million people from poverty just within four decades. This

remarkable journey started in 1979 with the reforms like trade liberalisation, free-market economy and opening up of Chinese economy to the rest of the world by Deng Xiaoping, one of the great Chinese leaders like Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping.

Incentivised by the investor-friendly ecosystem developed by the Chinese authorities under Deng Xiaoping, China experienced massive industrialisation due to huge foreign investments. This resulted in making China the "factory of the world". It perfected the idea of "economies of scale" and inundated the world markets from east to west with affordable Chinese goods. Its focus on "disposable economy" gave it the necessary leverage to produce goods in bulk.

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area is a highly industrialized economic region in Southern China that feeds the global supply chains. Zhongancun in Haidian District, Beijing/China is a bustling megalopolis and a center of Beijing-Tianjin-Shijiazhuang high-tech industrial belt like Silicon Valley in San Francisco, USA.

Since its reforms in 1979, China has been among the world's fastest growing economies for almost four consecutive decades with average GDP growth of 10% per annum. The World Bank described this growth pace as "the fastest sustained expansion by a major economy in history." Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Dongguan are the leading financial and industrial centers which are undoubtedly engines of growth not only for the Chinese economy but also for the rest of the world. In 2010, China surpassed Japan to become World's second largest economy after the United States. It is currently valued at \$18.46Trillion, in recent

years, as the Chinese economy has matured, its annual GDP growth has slowed down quite significantly. However, China is capitalizing on its exemplary economic success by adopting the "new normal" of slower economic growth which relies more on domestic consumption, services sector and technology innovation. According to a forecast, China is expected to become the world's largest economy by 2028, taking over the US economy which is currently valued at \$24.79Trillion.

Pakistan has many approaches to adopt and lessons to learn from the Chinese development miracle. Major takeaways include changing the core character of economy from consumption to manufacturing. It implies religious pursuit of massive industrialization by making use of cutting edge technological innovations in the fields of mechatronics, robotics, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality and other allied disciplines of digital revolution like perception management through digital marketing and active consumer engagement via various social media platforms.

The logical corollary of massive industrialization is to develop an export-led economy, which means increasing focus on exports and decreasing reliance on imports. Pakistan is very keen to multiply its manufacturing base not only to create employment opportunities for its growing young population but also to earn valuable foreign exchange by selling its exportable surplus in the foreign markets.

Government is, therefore, aggressively pursuing rapid industrialization by incentivizing investors to install industrial units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework of cooperation. The development work in these SEZs, especially Rashakai in KP, Dhabeji in Sindh, Allama Iqbal

Industrial City in Punjab and Bostan in Balochistan is in top gear. All codal formalities needed for the startups to kick off have been completed, and legal hiccups hindering their growth have been cleared.

Moreover, a business-friendly ecosystem is being developed in the country by ensuring ease of doing business through regulatory reforms in State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Security & Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). Potential Investors are being incentivized through exemptions in duty on the import of plant and machinery for industrialization. NOC Regime has been replaced with the Compliance Regime, and One Window Facilitation Centers have been established in all SEZs for providing quick fix to investors' complaints related to land acquisition and installation of utilities. These measures would not only facilitate new companies to start business ventures and generate employment opportunities in the country but would also attract a lot of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to stabilize key macroeconomic indicators

Exports diversification and imports substitution are also being explored by the Government to back up this quest for making Pakistan a manufacturing hub. A proactive foreign policy has been adopted for the purpose, especially for Africa and Central Asia.

Above all, the commitment to cooperate with China in the fields of energy, infrastructure, industry and agriculture under the CPEC framework is no less than Pakistan's manifest desire to learn and replicate China's successful development model in these fields. The upcoming visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to China in February would be a step forward in the right direction.

The Middle East rush to bury hatchets: Is it sustainable? (2)

James Dorsey

Qatar, which already helps Israel fund public salaries and relief operations in the blockaded Gaza Strip, concluded a diamond trade agreement with the Jewish state

THE years from 2011 to 2021 and the civil strife they witnessed were shaped by revolution and counterrevolution. Leaders of eight of the Arab League's 22 member states – Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Sudan – were toppled by popular uprisings. Possible political change was reversed or stymied in most if not all of the initially successful revolts by counter-revolutions. The counter-revolutions were often supported by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt after general-turned-president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi came to power in a military coup in 2013 backed by the two Gulf states. While the bloody civil wars in Syria, Libya, and Yemen were the most extreme consequence, there is no suggestion that détente in the coming decade would give the counter-revolution pause. Add to that Palestine's grey swan. Israel may believe that it has successfully pushed the resolution of the Palestinian problem to the margins with the help of the UAE and Bahrain. But the question is not whether but when Palestinian aspirations will come to haunt Israel and push themselves higher up the Arab and Muslim agenda.

The question is how Israel will deal with the facts that occupation is unsustainable, demographics are certain to threaten the Jewish character of the state, and civil unrest stretching beyond the West Bank into pre-1967 borders remain a constant possibility. How Israel responds to these issues is likely to influence Arab and Muslim public opinion. So far, public opinion has been one reason for Saudi Arabia and others not to follow the UAE in recognising Israel, even if the public expression of critical sentiments is severely curtailed, if not harshly repressed.

Nevertheless, the quest for détente has not prevented countries that do not have diplomatic relations from being more overt in their contacts with Israel. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held talks in Neom, his US\$500 billion pet project for a futuristic city, with Mr Netanyahu when he was still

prime minister despite the Kingdom's refusal to recognise Israel. Qatar, which already helps Israel fund public salaries and relief operations in the blockaded Gaza Strip, concluded a diamond trade agreement with the Jewish state. The deal enables Qatar to join a select group of countries authorised to trade in diamonds. In return, it will allow Israeli diamond merchants to travel to the Gulf state even though the two countries have no formal relations.

The deal took on added significance because of UAE acquiescence. The Emirates have cooperated with Israel on diamonds for several years, and long opposed Qatari attempts to join the exclusive gemstone club. Meanwhile, differences in attitude towards popular revolts, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who is widely held responsible for war crimes that cost half a million lives, lie just under the surface despite the lifting in January 2021 of a 3.5-year-long economic and diplomatic boycott of Qatar. Doha has quietly asked members of the Brotherhood who live there to relocate, but has not further tweaked its support for Islamists. A potential watershed could occur when the ageing Egyptian Islamic scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who is based in Qatar, passes on. Mr. Al-Qaradawi, 95, has been a major influence in shaping Qatari policies since the country's independence in 1971, including the advocacy of greater rights for others that are not necessarily recognised at home. An autocracy, Qatar has supported the aspirations of protesters across the Middle East and North Africa and opposed the return of President Al-Assad to the Arab fold in the hope that it would encourage Russia to help roll back Iranian influence in the country. Syria was suspended from the Arab League in 2011 at a time that Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia all funded groups opposed to the Syrian regime.

Shaky ground

The long and short of it is that the rush to dial down tensions in the Middle East and North Africa rests on shaky ground. Except for Iran, which sees the frenzy of diplomatic and economic outreach as reaffirming its position as a major regional power, Middle Eastern states like Saudi Arabia and the UAE are driven by uncertainty and fear. Their moves are efforts to buy time to put their house in order and be prepared for a potential next round of differences not an attempt to craft a baseline standard for a shared vision of the region's future.

The moves are also aimed at keeping the United States engaged, and an attempt at navigating the risky waters of big-power competition that is necessarily ad hoc and short-term and risks turbocharging a regional

arms race with no underlying realistic long-term strategy. Saudi Arabia and the UAE see détente as a hedge to limit the fallout of a potential failure of the Vienna talks and a possible military confrontation between Iran and/or Israel and the United States.

Gulf hedging reflects a failure to recognise that perceptions of the US commitment rested on a misreading of the 1980 Carter Doctrine that successive US administrations opportunistically allowed to fester.

Is the US getting it right?

Summing up the US policy dilemma in the Middle East in the words of the English punk band, The Clash – "if I stay there will be trouble, if I go there will be double" – Middle East scholar Jon Alterman suggested that the United States' failure to ensure that the Gulf States had realistic expectations and did not misread the Carter Doctrine encouraged them to act more aggressively and take bigger risks in the false belief that Washington would have their backs.

The misperceptions persuaded the Gulf states to misread the Carter Doctrine as a guarantee that the United States would ensure the survival of their regimes and protect them against Iran unconditionally. Multiple US actions, or lack thereof, put paid to this interpretation, rattled the Gulf states, and persuaded them to become reckless at times. The US' refusal in 2011 to prevent the toppling of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak; secret negotiations that led to the 2015 international Iranian nuclear agreement; President Barack Obama's notion of a Middle East that Saudi Arabia and Iran would share as hegemony; and the failure of the US to respond in 2019 to Iranian attacks on shipping in the UAE and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, were among the markers that were laid down. President Donald Trump's description of the 2019 strike against Abqaiq's oil facilities as "an attack on Saudi Arabia and (not) an attack on us" constituted a wake-up call.

Many analysts suggest that the Biden administration's refusal to spell out an unambiguous Middle East policy has had a positive effect. It produced the rush to dial down regional tensions. "From an administration standpoint, this is a sign that US strategy is actually working," Mr. Alterman said. That may be true in the short term. However, the United States will have to spell out an unambiguous, clearly articulated policy that outlines what commitments it envisions sooner rather than later. A clear policy could help Middle Eastern rivals manage their differences and focus on economic cooperation and trade. While the debate over US policy continues to rage in Washington, common ground is starting to emerge between proponents of the current US military posture and

advocates of a withdrawal from the region.

Placing a bet

Mitigating in favour of détente in the Middle East is the fact that it was not just uncertainty about the US commitment that prompted Saudi Arabia and the UAE to adopt a more conciliatory approach. The fact of the matter is that assertiveness, with few exceptions, such as the 2013 coup in Egypt, backfired. The UAE was forced to recognise that its ability to project military power beyond its borders was limited.

A cost-benefit analysis produced a clear verdict. Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent the UAE, are trapped in a disastrous war in Yemen that has dragged on for almost seven years. Syria's Mr. Al-Assad has the upper hand in a decade-long brutal civil war. Iran is encountering headwinds in Iraq, but remains a force there. The same is true for its ally in Lebanon, Hezbollah. Moreover, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon have demonstrated Iran's ability to achieve its objectives militarily rather than diplomatically with the help of non-state actors, despite international isolation and harsh US sanctions.

There is also a question mark over the sustainability of efforts to reduce tensions, since Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the weaker parties in negotiations with Iran. Perceptions of US unreliability and suspicions that Washington may turn its back on the Middle East further weaken their position. This is compounded by the fact that Saudi and Emirati officials fundamentally do not believe that real accommodation with Iran is possible. "There's a keen sense in the Gulf that the Iran problem never goes away. It's not about the Islamic Republic; it's about Iran," Mr. Alterman said.

Conclusion

Efforts by Middle Eastern rivals to dial down tensions and manage rather than resolve conflicts are fragile at best. Moreover, they raise the question of what the end goal is. For now, that appears to be primarily an endeavour to buy time, put their own houses in order, diversify their economies, and ensure that they remain competitive in the 21st century.

The sustainability of détente in the Middle East will ultimately depend on support from the United States and other major powers, including China, Russia, Europe, India, Japan, and South Korea. It will also be contingent on economic cooperation and trade, raising the cost of a return to conflict to the point that it outstrips the benefits of confrontation.

—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

Briefs

Zimbabwe's Taylor banned for 3.5 years

DUBAI: Former Zimbabwe batsman Brendan Taylor has been banned from all cricket for 3-1/2 years after admitting he received a \$15,000 "deposit" for spot-fixing, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Friday. Taylor said he was blackmailed and never went through with the arrangement and that he was coerced into accepting the money from an Indian businessman in October 2019. Spot-fixing refers to manipulation of part of a game to deliver a given outcome for betting purposes. The 35-year-old added that it took him four months to report the incident to the ICC anti-corruption unit because he feared for his safety. In addition to four breaches of the ICC anti-corruption code, Taylor was also charged with breaching the anti-doping code after testing positive for the stimulant benzoylcognine, a cocaine metabolite, in an in-competition test conducted on Sep. 8 2021. — APP

Pakistan, Azerbaijan...

FROM PAGE 01
a number of international projects implemented by the Republic of Azerbaijan. Speaking about Azerbaijan's economic potential, Mr. Farhadov stressed the importance of expanding trade relations between the two countries. In this regard, touching upon the activities of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Intergovernmental Joint Commission, Mr. Farhadov also drew attention to the working groups on energy, transport, information technology, health, banking, youth and tourism under the IJC. Mr. Imran Ismail, the Governor of Sindh province of Pakistan noted that Azerbaijan and Pakistan are brotherly countries. The Governor also spoke about the importance of further deepening our relations in all areas. Emphasizing the importance of expanding economic and trade relations between the two countries, the Governor also touched upon the importance of intensive and regular mutual visits of delegations of Azerbaijani and Pakistani businessmen.

At the meeting, other issues of mutual interest were also discussed.

Qatar, Turkey, Taliban to...

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The final round of negotiations will take place next week, it added. After the Taliban seized control of the country, Turkey offered technical and security assistance to operationalize Kabul airport. Keeping the airport open after foreign forces handed over control is vital to keeping Afghanistan connected with the world and maintaining an uninterrupted supply of aid for distribution. The Turkish government has taken a pragmatic approach to the recent events in Afghanistan. Underlining that new realities have emerged in the country, Ankara said it would move forward accordingly while keeping communication with all relevant leaders open.

Baku condoles...

FROM PAGE 01
condolences to Pakistani Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman Gen Naqem Raza. In the letter of condolences, Hasanov said: "I am deeply saddened by the news of the death and injury of servicemen of the fraternal Pakistani Armed Forces during a treacherous terrorist attack in Balochistan region. May the Almighty Allah rest the souls of the deceased. I express my deep condolences to their families and wish them patience. I wish a speedy recovery to all the injured." Ten Pakistani soldiers were killed in a terrorist attack on a security forces checkpoint in the Kech district of the southwestern Balochistan province, the Pakistani army said on January 27.



KARACHI: Players of Peshawar Zalmi celebrating after taking a wicket against Quetta Gladiators in a PSL-7 match. Peshawar Zalmi defeated Quetta Gladiators by 5 wickets. Peshawar Zalmi scaled target of 190 in last over with 5 wickets in hand. — DNA

Afghanistan storm into U-19 WC semi-finals

WEB DESK

KABUL: In a low-scoring thriller between two Asian sides, it was Afghanistan who pipped Sri Lanka to set up an Under-19 World Cup semi-final date with England. Defending 134, Afghanistan were on top in the second innings when Sri Lanka were reduced to 43 for 7, but a 69-run eighth-wicket stand between Dunith Wellalage and Raveen de Silva gave Sri Lanka a sniff off a back-door win. However, Afghanistan's legspinner Izharulhaq Naveed and left-arm spinner Nangeyala Kharote took two late wickets, and Sri Lanka's No. 11 Treveen Mathew was run out when they were five runs away from their target. Wellalage and de Silva got together after Sri Lanka had lost their first seven wickets, which included three run-outs, inside the 18th over of the chase. Right-arm seamer Bilal Sami got the length ball to nip away early to induce an edge from opener Sadisha Rajapaksa and then bowled the No. 3 Shevon Daniel with a full ball. Sakuna Liyanage was then run-out from a throw from cover after a mix-up and a Naveed Zadrán delivery angling across Anjala Banada took an edge to the keeper to leave Sri Lanka reeling at 24 for 4. Left-arm wristspinner Noor Ahmad then trapped Ranuda Somarathne lbw before Sri Lanka lost their next two wickets to run-outs. Opener Chamindu Wickramasinghe was the victim of a direct hit and a mix-up saw Yasiru Rodrigo walk back for 2. At that stage, Sri Lanka, with three wickets in hand, still needed 92 to win. The Wellalage-de Silva stand, though, brought the runs required down to 23, with the duo grinding it out for 142 balls while putting on 69. Wellalage struck three fours in his 34 and de Silva made 21 from 84 balls.

Nadal, Medvedev to meet in history-making final

AGENCIES

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal is with in one victory of a men's record 21st Grand Slam singles title. The 35-year-old Spaniard advanced to the Australian Open final for the sixth time with a 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 win over seventh-seeded Matteo Berrettini on Friday. He'll have to beat U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev on Sunday to make history. And Medvedev is chasing a piece of history of his own after reeling off the last five games to defeat Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (5), 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in a heated semifinal. He's aiming to be the first man in the Open era to win his second Grand Slam title at the next major tournament. The second-seeded Medvedev has had an emotional and challenging run to back-to-back Australian Open finals. He had to deal with a hostile crowd in his second-round win over Nick Kyrgios, had to save a match point and rally from two sets down to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime in a nearly five-hour quarterfinal win, and had to regain his composure after an angry outburst at the umpire on Friday. He yelled at chair umpire Jaime Campistrol after dropping serve in the second set, demanding that Tsitsipas



be cautioned for receiving coaching from his father in the crowd. He took a five-minute break after dropping the set, took control late in the third set and then dominated the last five games after Tsitsipas was eventually cautioned for getting coaching from the stands. Nadal's run to a 29th Grand Slam final has been comparatively serene. After the last point, he stopped, beamed a wide grin and then punched the air three times. Nadal arrived in Australia not knowing how long he would last after months off the tour dealing with a serious foot injury and then a bout of COVID-19. He skipped Wimbledon

after losing in the French Open semifinals to Novak Djokovic, and didn't play at all after August. "Every day has been an issue in terms of problems on the foot. Doubts still here ... probably for the rest of my career because I have what I have and that's something that we cannot fix," Nadal said. "But for me it's amazing ... (to) just compete and play tennis at the high level again, facing the most important players of the world." Last month, he wasn't even sure he'd be able to return to the tour. But he won a tune-up tournament in Melbourne to start 2022 and has taken six straight matches at the first Grand Slam event of the year.



MINSK: Ambassador of Pakistan to Belarus Sajjad haider held a meeting with Director Commercial of Minsk Golf Club and discussed cooperation between the two countries golfers community and assured to consider holding a weeklong golf coaching session during July 2022, in which a qualified coach from Pakistan would be invited to Belarus. — DNA

Mane and Salah on track for Africa final showdown

YAOUNDE: Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah have helped Liverpool conquer England and Europe, now both crave Africa Cup of Nations winners' medals. Both sharpshooters will be in quarter-finals action on Sunday in Cameroon with Mane-inspired Senegal tackling surprise packets Equatorial Guinea while Salah and his Egypt teammates confront Morocco. Mane says he would "swap all the medals he has won for a Cup of Nations gold gong" while Salah talks of the "desperation of the Egyptian people for another title" after last being champions in 2010. If they continue winning, twice runners-up Senegal and record seven-time champions Egypt will meet in the February 6 final of the marquee African sporting event. Here, AFP Sport looks ahead to the quarter-finals with Tunisia, Cameroon, Egypt, and Senegal favoured, but shocks are almost inevitable in a tournament where the form book has constantly been mocked. One of the biggest shocks came last weekend when struggling Tunisia took the lead over previously impressive Nigeria through veteran Youssef Msakni and held on for a 1-0 last-16 triumph. The Carthage Eagles should be stronger on Saturday as they welcome back head coach Mondher Kebaier and several stars, including captain and forward Wahbi Khazri, who have recovered from coronavirus. — APP

Diplomats eying early...

FROM PAGE 01
various countries in their video message expressed the hope that Monal shall soon resume its operations and thus they will have a chance to take their delegates to this iconic place to serve them with the best Pakistani delicacies. Ambassador of Romania Nicolae Goia in his video message said that he had been to Monal several times and like the ambience and food. "I was charmed with the hospitality and beauty of the place" he added. Ambassador of Yemen Mohammed Motahar Alashabi said Monal provides the visitors with a picturesque panorama and a variety of local as well as continental cuisines. Mthuzuzeli Madikiza High Commissioner of South Africa said, Monal happens to be one of the best restaurants I have ever seen. Likewise Ambassador of Tajikistan Ismatullo Nasredin said food, view and everything is excellent there. Monal indeed is pride of Pakistan. Walid Abu Ali the Palestine ambassador in Malaysia these days and who also served in Pakistan for almost five years was all praise for the restaurant. He said whenever he had a delegation from Palestine he used to take it to Monal. Similarly Armin Limo former Bosnian ambassador to Pakistan, former ambassador of Kazakhstan and former High Commissioner of Maldives to Pakistan Shehnaz Adam also praised the hospitality and food of Monal.

Unity needed to thwart...

FROM PAGE 01
health, infrastructure/ industry and environment. COAS also emphasised that spread of misinformation by vested interests is not only creating misperceptions but also threatening cohesion in the society. COAS stressed on the need to stay united in order to thwart designs of hostile forces. Pakistani youth is extremely talented and enterprising, given the right opportunities and enabling environment they will lead the country to progress and prosperity, COAS remarked. Faculty members and students asked very candid questions during the exhaustive session and hailed the interaction as very positive and illuminating. Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Muhammad Abdul Aziz, was also present during the session.

Govt to knock SC...

FROM PAGE 01
of the project in view of urban development and civic facilities. The prime minister said there was a misconception about the Ravi Urban project that it was a housing society. Instead, he said, the grand project aimed at correcting the faults in the wake of unplanned construction of the city. He highlighted the salient features of the project including plantation of two billion trees as part of forestation, construction of barrages to up water table and filtration of sewerage. He said the Rs 20 billion dollar project would provide employment and encourage foreign investment, adding that already Rs 1.5 billion had been received in this regard. Imran Khan said wealth creation would help run 40 affiliated industries.

China unveils Olympics world leader guest list

The list released by CCTV also includes leaders from China's mostly authoritarian Central Asian neighbours as well as the Emir of Qatar and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed

SPORTS DESK

BEIJING: China on Friday revealed a list of visiting dignitaries for next week's Winter Olympics that includes the leaders of Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt for an event that is being diplomatically shunned by some Western nations. Beijing is keen to shore up international support for the Games, which are the most politicised in recent memory. Multiple Western nations have announced a diplomatic boycott citing China's human rights record, in particular its crackdown on Muslim Uyghurs in the western region of Xinjiang that the United States has labelled "genocide". State broadcaster CCTV released an updated guest list for next Friday's opening ceremony which includes many of China's neighbours, a host of royals and leaders from key autocratic nations. Among the more than 20 foreign visitors on the list are Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Russia's Vladimir Putin was last year the first foreign leader to confirm his presence at the Beijing Olympics and is included on the list released Friday. The dignitaries will attend the February 4 opening ceremony, a welcome banquet and "relevant bilateral activities" with Xi, CCTV

reported. Their presence comes despite the US-led diplomatic boycott by countries including Britain, Canada, Australia and Denmark over China's rights record.

Other nations such as Japan are not sending officials and have voiced concerns about human rights in China while steering clear of formally announcing they are part of the boycott. Some Western countries such as the Netherlands have refused to send officials over China's strict pandemic travel restrictions. Human rights groups have long

accused Sisi, Prince Mohammed and Putin of rights abuses in their countries.

The list released by CCTV also includes leaders from China's mostly authoritarian Central Asian neighbours as well as the Emir of Qatar and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed.

Other royals include Thailand's Princess Srinidhorn and Prince Albert II of Monaco. Confirmed European invitees include Poland's President Andrzej Duda and Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic.



Global sponsors quiet ahead of Beijing Games

DNA

LONDON: Next month's Winter Olympics is a huge marketing opportunity for sponsors - a showcase for brands. However, Beijing 2022 is also causing a huge headache for the 13 official corporate partners of the Games. Stuck in the middle of a diplomatic spat between the US and China - many are choosing to stay silent. The US, UK, Australia and Canada are among the countries making a diplomatic boycott of the Games, although their athletes will still participate. Those country's governments have criticised China for alleged human rights violations against its minority Uyghur population, and its actions in Tibet and Hong Kong. BBC analysis shows a dramatic reduction in tweets referring to the Games from the Olympics' global sponsors - as compared to last year's Summer Games in Tokyo.

State Bank Bill sails...

FROM PAGE 01
Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani as the both treasury and opposition benches' votes were 43 each. The bill, already passed by the National Assembly on January 13, 2022, was aimed at providing for the constitution of the SBP to achieve domestic price stability by regulating the monetary and credit system of Pakistan and, without prejudice to this primary objective. The bill proposes to contribute to the stability of the financial system of Pakistan and supporting the general economic policies of the Federal Government to foster development and fuller utilization of the country's productive resources. It authorizes the bank to have the power to acquire, hold and dispose of movable and immovable property of any kind, to enter into contracts and to undertake all activities necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

Briefs

Latvia slams Germany over Russia, China

ISTANBUL: Latvia's defense minister on Friday criticized Germany for its "immoral and hypocritical" relations with Russia and China. In an interview with daily Financial Times, Artis Pabriks said Germany had an "immoral inability to allow howitzer guns once stationed in Germany to be shipped from Estonia to Ukraine to help its defense against a possible invasion". "It's immoral and hypocritical. It's driving a division line between west and east in Europe," he said. Russia recently amassed tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's eastern border, prompting fears that Kremlin could be planning another military offensive against its ex-Soviet neighbor. The Ukrainian government has repeatedly asked for stronger support from Germany to strengthen the country's defense capabilities, but Berlin has turned down these requests, arguing that it could escalate military tensions and undermine ongoing diplomatic efforts. Germany also remained reluctant to block the controversial Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, although the US administration and NATO's eastern members called on Berlin to take a harsher stance. Under pressure, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said last week that everything will be up for discussion, including the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, if Russia takes further aggressive action against Ukraine. The EU's biggest economy is heavily dependent on Russian gas and oil, and the country's plan to phase out nuclear power has further increased its dependence. Germany imports nearly 55% of its gas and about 42% of its oil from Russia. - APP

Pentagon chief orders reforms to reduce civilian deaths

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered Pentagon officials Thursday to undertake reforms to reduce the number of civilian deaths from military strikes after multiple unjustified fatal incidents. "The protection of civilians is fundamentally consistent with the effective, efficient and decisive use of force in pursuit of US national interests," Austin said in a directive issued to Department of Defense leadership. "It is a strategic and moral imperative," he said. Austin gave Pentagon officials 90 days to produce a plan for how civilian casualties can be reduced and avoided in combat operations, saying the experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq provide an opportunity to learn lessons and mitigate civilian harm in an institutional way. - APP

Germany expelled Russian diplomat

BERLIN: Germany last year expelled a spy who was working under diplomatic cover at Russia's consulate in Munich. Der Spiegel newsmagazine reported on Friday. It said the accredited diplomat was an officer of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) who was acting as handling agent for the Russian academic whose arrest on spying charges was announced on Thursday. Der Spiegel said the expulsion took place shortly after the summer 2021 detention of Ilmur N., an Augsburg University researcher whom prosecutors suspect of having passed information about Europe's Ariane space launch vehicle to the SVR. N., whose full name has not been made public as is usual in German court cases, has been in custody since. Espionage charges were brought against him in December. The handling officer who was expelled could not be investigated because he had diplomatic immunity, according to Der Spiegel. The FM did not immediately respond to a Reuters' request for comment. Germany kicked out two Russian diplomats in December after a court found that the Russian state had ordered the 2019 murder in a Berlin park of a Chechen dissident, an act the judge described as "state terror." - APP

Tajikistan says two dead after clashes with Kyrgyzstan

Tajikistan, a closed authoritarian country, confirmed agreement several hours later

DNA

BISHKEK: Tajikistan said Friday that two of its citizens were killed and 10 injured during overnight clashes at its contested border with Kyrgyzstan, where a ceasefire is now in place. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan said they had reached a ceasefire early Friday following the latest lethal flare up at the pair's contested border. The violence that broke out Thursday evening was the bloodiest escalation between the countries since clashes that killed dozens last year. The Kyrgyz and Tajik frontier communities regularly clash over land and water supplies,

with border guards often involved. As a result of the latest conflict, "10 people were injured on the Tajik side, of which six were servicemen and four were civilians," Tajikistan's national security committee said in a statement. Tajikistan added that the two dead were a man born in 1986 "killed by a mortar shell fired by Kyrgyz soldiers into his yard" and an ambulance driver born in 1964. Following the overnight clashes, Kyrgyzstan's national security committee said Friday that it had reached an agreement for "a complete ceasefire" with Tajikistan during a meeting at the border between provincial governors and border service

Kyrgyzstan says ceasefire reached with Tajikistan

NEWS DESK

BISHKEK: Kyrgyzstan said it had reached a ceasefire with Central Asian neighbour Tajikistan on Friday following the latest lethal flare up at the pair's contested border. The violence that broke out Thursday evening was the bloodiest escalation between the countries since clashes that killed dozens last year. Kyrgyz and Tajik communities along the contested border regularly clash over land and water supplies, with border guards often involved. Tajikistan claimed late on Thursday that it had suffered "civilian and military" fatalities from the most recent exchanges of fire, but offered no further details. Kyrgyzstan's national security committee said Friday that it had reached an agreement for "a complete ceasefire" with Tajikistan during a meeting at the border between provincial governors and border service representatives. The neighbours also agreed to withdraw forces, coordinate patrols of the frontier and ensure the flow of traffic along a strategic road.

representatives. The neighbours also agreed to withdraw forces, coordinate patrols of the frontier and ensure the flow of traffic along a strategic road that passes between both countries. Tajikistan, a closed authoritarian country, confirmed the agreement several hours later. "At present, the situation on the state border of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is stable, the causes and factors of the border conflict are being studied by a joint commission of the relevant structures of both parties," a statement from the Tajik national security committee said. Asia Plus, a private Tajik news agency, reported that as many as 17

Tajiks had been injured. Kyrgyzstan's health ministry said Friday that at least eleven of its citizens were being treated for moderately serious injuries. Close to 1,500 Kyrgyz citizens were evacuated from villages near where the conflict took place at the intersection of Sughd province and Kyrgyzstan's southwestern Batken province, the emergencies ministry said. Last year's violence between the two militaries was unprecedented, leaving more than 50 people dead and raising fears of a wider conflict. Almost half of the pair's 970-kilometre-long border (600 miles) is disputed and progress on delimitation in recent years has been glacial.

Pakistani handicraft pavilion launched in Shanghai

BEIJING: A Pakistani Handicraft Pavilion was launched on Nanjing Road, one of Shanghai's famous shopping streets, ahead of the Chinese New Year. Many Pakistani crafts are displayed for visitors with brass-made flower vases as a cornerstone. "It's amazing to promote these tremendous and beautiful Pakistani products to a foreign country like China," said Aqeel Ahmed Chaudhry, founder of WINZA Jewelry and CEO of Atlantis Co., Ltd. while taking an interview with China Economic Net. "Our purpose is to promote Pakistan and Pakistani art in China. We welcome all our Pakistani brothers and sisters to visit with Chinese friends and share your ideas and give us your precious feedback," noted Muhammad Javed, personal assistant of CEO of the project Aqeel Ahmed Chaudhry. As per Muhammad Javed, Pakistan has a long history and a wide range of specialties in making handicrafts. "Producing unique handicrafts has always been a Pakistani tradition; indeed the art has been practiced for thousands of years," he told the reporter, adding that the various textures, beautiful embroidery, and lovely shaded crafts distinguish Pakistani handicrafts from others.

Google to invest \$1 bn in India's number two mobile operator

MUMBAI: Google will invest up to \$1 billion in India's second-largest mobile operator, Airtel, the companies said Friday, as the Android-maker looks to bolster its presence in the vast nation's booming telecoms market. The global tech giant will buy a \$700 million stake in billionaire Sunil Mittal's Bharti Airtel, giving it 1.28 percent ownership, the firms said in a joint statement. Up to \$300 million more will be invested in "mutually agreeable" commercial projects over the next five years, including exploring opportunities to "bring down the barriers of owning a smartphone" in the price-conscious market. "We are proud to partner on a shared vision for expanding connectivity and ensuring equitable access to the internet for more Indians," Sundar Pichai, the Indian-born chief executive of Google parent Alphabet said in a statement. - APP

Spain economy grows by 5% in 2021

MADRID: Spain's economy grew by 5.0 percent in 2021, showing a remarkable bounceback from a year earlier but below the government's target, an initial estimate by the National Statistics Institute (INE) showed Friday. The government had expected gross domestic product (GDP) to rise by 6.5 percent in 2021 after a year in which it contracted by nearly 11 percent in one of the worst results of the eurozone. Such a forecast was considered unrealistic by economists. However the INE estimate outdid the expectations of the Bank of Spain and the OECD, which were both estimating growth of 4.5 percent. And it also exceeded the expectations of the IMF which had expected the economy to grow by 4.6 percent. The INE figures showed the economy grew by 2.0 percent in the last quarter, largely resisting the emergence of the Omicron variant and supply problems that affected production. It had reached 2.6 percent in the previous quarter. Fourth-quarter growth was also achieved despite sluggish consumption, which fell by 1.2 percent. In recent months, Spanish household spending has suffered from soaring inflation, which reached a 30-year high of 6.5 percent in December due to surging energy prices. According to Funcas think tank, inflation is expected to slow slightly in 2022 but remain at a high of around 3.5 percent, while growth should accelerate to 5.6 percent, allowing for the losses of 2020 to be finally reversed. - APP

Tokayev takes over as ruling party leader

ALMATY: Kazakhstan's ruling NurOtan party elected President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as its chairman on Friday, his office said in a tweet, finalising the transfer of political power from his predecessor Nursultan Nazarbayev. Nazarbayev, who resigned in 2019, had retained sweeping powers until this month as the chairman of the security council and the head of NurOtan, which dominates parliament. Tokayev took over the security council position at the peak of violent unrest in early January. Amid widespread talk of a rift between the two politicians - a number of Nazarbayev's relatives resigned or were sacked from senior positions after the unrest - Tokayev struck a conciliatory tone in his Friday speech to the party congress. "Let us give due credit to the historic achievements of the first president, focus on his undeniable successes and virtues, and regard the possible mistakes as lessons for the future rulers of our country," he said. Nazarbayev, who had run the oil-rich nation for three decades, briefly spoke to the congress which was held through a video conference, reiterating his proposal to elect Tokayev as chairman. At the same congress, the party removed Nazarbayev's eldest daughter, Dariga, who is a member of parliament, from its political council, along with a number of other members. Tokayev said he planned to reform the party but could step down as its chairman as soon as at the end of this year, after rolling out a political reform package that would require the president to maintain an "equidistant status" from all parties. - Agencies



Uzbekistan, Bangladesh vow to enhance trade co-op

TASHKENT: A meeting was held at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan between the Chairman of the CCI AdhamIkramov and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Republic of Uzbekistan ZhabangirAlam. During the meeting, the parties focused on the need for cooperation in the exchange of experience in the implementation of the textile, pharmaceutical, textile industries, information technology, as well as in agriculture. At the same time, AdhamIkramov noted the export potential of Uzbekistan in the agricultural, textile, leather and electrical industries. ZhabangirAlam noted that in order to strengthen business cooperation and develop economic relations in general, interaction between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the two countries is necessary, which are the main platform for business interaction. In this regard, the parties discussed issues of cooperation between the business circles of the two countries. At the end of the meeting, the parties exchanged views on the planned joint events and the need to intensify mutual visits of business circles of the two countries. Earlier Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan IsmatullaRagshiev held talks in Paris with Luc de Rancourt, Deputy Director of the Department of International Relations and Strategy of the



Ministry of the Armed Forces of the French Republic. During the conversation, the current situation in Afghanistan and the prospects for its development, as well as the efforts of the two countries to resolve the Afghan crisis were discussed. The French side highly appreciated the assistance of Uzbekistan in the evacuation of citizens of France and other EU member states from Afghanistan. Particular attention was paid to the provision of humanitarian and other assistance to the Afghan people. In this context, the French side welcomed the initiative of Uzbekistan to create a humanitarian hub in the city of Termez to provide assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Luc de Rancourt announced the readiness of the French partners to continue to actively cooperate with Uzbekistan in the matter of the soonest establishment of a long-term and sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

Turkish Aerospace, Pakistan to jointly develop satellite projects

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) signed a cooperation agreement with Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) on Wednesday to develop space and satellite projects. Turkish defense giant TAI and SUPARCO will carry out joint studies on electric communication satellites and other space projects within the scope of the agreement. "We have signed a cooperation deal with the SUPARCO to develop satellite projects. We wish good luck

for the two countries," said TAI in a statement on Twitter. In Dec. 2019, TAI opened its first office in Pakistan at the country's National Science and Technology Park. Speaking at the Satellite Technologies Week held in December, TAI CEO Temel Kotil said that they are looking for new customers for the SmallGEO satellite, a telecommunications satellite platform that works with an electric propulsion system. "It looks like we found a customer, but we don't share it because it has not been finalized. If it does, we will

build three more satellites. A fourth customer also showed up. When these are finalized, we will reach five satellites in total," said Kotil, adding that if TAI made these satellites in three or four years, Turkey would be able to achieve a good figure in satellite exports. Turkey inked its first satellite export deal with an Argentinian company in August at the International Defense Industries Fair (IDEF) held in Istanbul. Recently, TAI also signed a memorandum of understanding on space and satellite systems with El Salvador during President Nayib Bukele's Turkey visit last week.

Kenya boosts security after terror warnings

NAIROBI: Kenya said Friday it has boosted security after France and Germany warned of the risk of possible terror attacks targeting Westerners, particularly in the capital Nairobi. Heavily armed police officers were patrolling the streets of Nairobi and security was boosted outside key government offices, five-star hotels, private buildings and shopping malls. "Regarding the terror alert from France, we assure the public that security of Kenyans including critical infrastructure is beefed up around the country especially cities," national police spokesman Bruno Shioso said. "We urge Kenyans to remain calm and also share any information on suspicious activities with the police." The French embassy issued a message to its nationals warning of the risk of an attack in Nairobi in the coming days. It said in its website there was a "real risk" of places frequented by foreigners such as restaurants, hotels and shopping centres being targeted. "Therefore, people in Kenya are advised to be extremely vigilant and avoid these public places in the coming days, including this weekend," it said. The German embassy in Nairobi issued a similar warning, while the Dutch mission said it had been informed by the French of the possible threat and that it considered the information "credible". Kenya has been hit by several deadly attacks waged by Al-Shabaab fighters in retaliation for Nairobi sending troops into Somalia in 2011 as part of an African Union force to oust the jihadists. In 2019, Al-Shabaab gunmen killed 21 people at an upscale hotel complex in Nairobi and in 2013, a bloody four-day siege at the Westgate shopping mall claimed the lives of 67 people. In 2015, an attack on Garissa University in eastern Kenya killed 148 people, almost all of them students. Many were shot point blank after being identified as Christians. It was the second bloodiest attack in Kenya's history, surpassed only by Al-Qaeda's bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi in 1998 that killed 213 people. - APP

Chinese machinery giant boosts Pakistan's national green projects

ISLAMABAD: Chinese machinery giant boosts Pakistan's national green energy projects, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. As per the report, Zoomlion's ZCC5800 crane recently completed the lifting of Pakistan's largest wind turbine (2.5 megawatts), lifting its weight by nearly 90 tons at a central height of

90 meters. With the strong support of ZCC5800, the overall construction is stable and efficient, and Zoomlion Heavy Industry Science & Technology Co., Ltd. has made another contribution to Pakistan's wind power construction. Zoomlion Mobile Crane has carried out numerous wind construction projects in Pakistan so far: Indus Wind, ACT 2 Wind, Lakeside Energy, Din Energy, Tricom Wind and Liberty Wind. Up to now, as the largest crane manufacturer in wind power construction in Pakistan, Zoomlion has built more than 500 megawatts of renewable capacity for Pakistan, said Simon, Country Manager of Zoomlion Concrete Machinery Overseas Marketing Company, in an interview with Gwadar Pro. Driven by the belt and Road Initiative, Pakistan has started to develop wind power projects to promote the concept of green economy. Wind power makes up more than 6% of the total electricity production in the country. - APP

Belarus will go to war if Russia attacked

Belarus will never be a source of war, Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko said as he delivered Address to the Belarusian people and NA in Minsk on 28 January, BelTA has learned

MINSK: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko Friday said in case of a possible attack against its ally Russia, Belarus would also get involved in the war, siding with Russia. Addressing the parliament, Lukashenko said his country would help defend its close ally Russia within the framework of allied agreements if Russia was directly attacked, according to the state-run BelTA news agency. Highlighting Belarus's commitment to be against wars, he said Belarusian people are concerned about whether there would be a war or

not. "It will happen but only in two cases," the president said. "In the case of a direct attack or a hot war being initiated against Belarus. The second case is if our ally Russia comes under direct attack." The West is "very interested" in the question of whether Russian soldiers will be deployed in Belarus or not, he said, adding Russian soldiers will come to Belarus in case of an attack against Belarus. Belarus will never be a source of war, Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko said as he delivered the Address to the



to worry about your sons. I have three. You know them. They will never hide behind other people's backs. If need be, they will go to war," Aleksandr Lukashenko said. "But I have never said that I will send troops to foreign land against some people. You mentioned Ukraine. God forbid I fight against this people. My great-grandfathers probably hail from there. I am a peaceful person and I do not give such orders. I have cited you two cases when Belarus may become involved in a war. I think they will never happen." The president admitted

that it was not easy for him to send peacekeepers to Kazakhstan. "Those were about 250 people. These were my children, not just yours. I prayed to God that they would all come back safe. And so it happened. Although the scumbags wanted at least one dead, to create some political hype on this," the president noted. "We have the army to defend ourselves. But if they come to kill us, then we will fight tooth and nail, both on our land and elsewhere. But we will never be a source of war," the Belarusian leader stressed. - APP

Briefs

Bennett says Netanyahu 'threatened' him over govt

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said his predecessor Benjamin Netanyahu "threatened" him last year when he was fighting to unseat the veteran leader, in an interview published Friday.

The Jewish nationalist Bennett became prime minister in June 2021, after he banded with blocs ranging from right to left to Arab Islamic conservatives to end Netanyahu's 12-year rule. "Establishing the government was very hard for me. I knew clearly where I was going. I knew I was about to get hit with the mother of all battles," Bennett told Haaretz newspaper. Bennett said he had been negotiating with Netanyahu in May as the long-serving PM fought hard to stay in power, but their talks hit a brick wall. "When he realised that I didn't intend to let him drag Israel into a fifth election, he really threatened me," Bennett said.

"Listen," he said to me, 'If I understand correctly what you're going to do, you should know that I am going to turn my whole machine on you, the army,' he said, recounting what Netanyahu had told him. He said Netanyahu followed his comments by making a gesture with his arm as if to indicate "an airplane descending for an attack", Haaretz reported. According to Bennett, the former prime minister had told him: "I will send the drones at you, and we'll see". Bennett said he thought that with those remarks, Netanyahu was threatening to unleash against him "his army of bots" of broadcasters from television, radio and social media. "A kind of change came over me. I realised that everything was resting on my shoulders" and that Netanyahu's re-election "would have thrown us into a terrible spin", Bennett said. "I know that this sounds big, but I think we saved the state," he added. Bennett's coalition won a wafer-thin margin of 60 votes to 59 in parliament in June last year, allowing him to form a government. A tech millionaire, Bennett was once an ally of Netanyahu. - APP

Nearly 40% of Tigrayans face 'extreme lack of food': UN

ADDIS ABABA: Nearly 40 percent of people in Ethiopia's Tigray are suffering "an extreme lack of food" in the face of an extended de-facto blockade of the war-hit region, a UN agency said Friday. The dire assessment published by the World Food Programme (WFP) comes as humanitarian groups are forced to increasingly curtail activities because of fuel and supply shortages, with aid having to be delivered by foot.

Fresh fighting in northern Ethiopia, which has been gripped by deadly conflict for almost 15 months, is also limiting avenues for getting in aid. The data was included in what the WFP described as the first reliable food security assessment conducted since a UN report more than six months ago, which estimated that hundreds of thousands of people in Tigray faced "famine-like conditions." The new assessment found 4.6 million people in Tigray - or 83 percent of the population - were food-insecure, two million of them "severely" so. "Families are exhausting all means to feed themselves, with three quarters of the population using extreme coping strategies to survive," WFP said in a statement. "Diets are increasingly impoverished as food items become unavailable and families rely almost exclusively on cereals while limiting portion sizes and the number of meals they eat each day to make whatever food is available stretch further," it added. WFP also sounded the alarm about rising hunger in neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions, which have been hit hard by fighting in recent months. - APP

German industry seeks ladder out of supply chain woes

GUENZBERG: A new warehouse with a freshly unboxed smell is the consequence of the coronavirus pandemic for the German ladder, stool and scaffold-maker Munk. In the southern town of Guenzburg on the banks of the Danube, the group has invested 10 million euros (\$11.3 million) into the complex to stockpile enough raw materials and components to keep production running amid serious disruption to supply. "I have not experienced anything like it in my 40 years," CEO Ferdinand Munk said of the shortages that hampered the country's comeback from the economic impact of the pandemic over the past year. - APP

Unclear policy, arrests affect Afghan journalists

Hujjatullah Mujaddidi, VP of Afghanistan Independent Journalists Association, said one of the reasons for the problems was that the Taliban had issued a guideline for journalists when there was no media law

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Violence, arrests and unclear media rules have made it difficult for Afghan journalists to carry out their professional duties, and these hardships continue to escalate throughout in that war devastated country. Since empowering of Taliban on August 15th 2021, several journalists have been attacked or detained. And those who have been beaten say the Taliban have not held those responsible, responsible for the attacks. Even Taliban officials are exonerating them of such aggression against media workers. The media experts including employees and employers say the lack of

state institutions and laws is making matters worse. At least four journalists have been detained since the beginning of the year. Three of them were arrested on January 6 while covering a protest in Panjshir province, where a Taliban fighter One civilian was killed. The Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid accused the journalists of fabricating news. Mujahid told VOA that a team of so-called journalists was arrested as they were returning from Panjshir in the northeast, where they made a fuss without investigating the matter. Make videos. The spokesman said Taliban intelligence arrested the journalists to punish them and explained to them that this could harm public and national security.

The Taliban also arrested Faizullah Jalal, a professor of law and politics at Kabul University, on January 8. Jalal was detained for four days on charges of making "absurd statements" and killing people. Incite against Taliban. After his release, Jalal told VOA's Radio Azadi that his arrest was linked to a November televised debate in which he participated with a Taliban spokesman. Hujjatullah Mujaddidi, vice-president of the Afghanistan Independent Journalists Association, said one of the reasons for the problems was that the Taliban had issued a guideline for journalists when there was no media law. In September, the Taliban issued a number of instructions to the media, banning content against Islam or national figures and saying that the media should contact the authorities for reporting. But journalists and media analysts say the Taliban did not say whether the media laws of the previous government were still in force. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has condemned the alleged repression and called on the Taliban to release the arrested journalists and provide justice to those who have been attacked or threatened. In his statement, he said that the Taliban should stop harassing the media and make a clear commitment to protect the freedom of the press. Misbah, a member of the lawyers' union in Afghanistan, said the Taliban should guarantee the country's journalists access to justice.

Petrol price may go up by Rs6 per litre

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The petrol price in Pakistan is expected to be raised by six rupees as the international prices have touched a seven-year high on Friday. The soaring international rates have also spurred the ex-factory cost of petroleum products, giving room to the possibility that the petrol price in Pakistan may be raised by Rs5.85 per litre, taking the one-litre to above Rs150 for the first time in the country's history. In the international market, London Brent oil has touched its highest level in seven years which was \$88 per barrel. Sources in the refinery said that this will certainly impact Pakistan and the prices of petroleum products here may skyrocket by up to Rs10.72 per litre. Diesel price may go up by Rs10.72 per litre, kerosene oil Rs10.03 per litre and light speed diesel Rs9.17 per litre. It may be mentioned here that the prices will cost dearly if the government retained the petroleum levy and sales tax on the petroleum products.

Russia will defend its interests: minister

MOSCOW: Moscow doesn't want war but will not allow its interests to be ignored, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Friday as tensions continue to simmer over Ukraine. The West has accused Russia of massing 100,000 troops on the border with Ukraine and has threatened unprecedented sanctions if Moscow invades. "If it depends on Russia, there will be no war. We do not want wars," Lavrov said in an interview with the heads of four Russian radio stations. "We will also not allow our interests to be ignored," he added. His remarks come after the United States and NATO responded to security demands put forward by Russia in exchange for a de-escalation of tensions over Ukraine. The demands include a ban on Ukraine joining NATO and on new military bases in former Soviet countries. Russia said Thursday that its views were not addressed in the response it received but did not rule out further talks. Lavrov said Friday that the US response contained "grains of rationality" on secondary issues. He added that the response from the US was "almost an example of diplomatic propriety", while the NATO response was highly "idealised". "I was a little ashamed for the people who wrote these texts," Lavrov said. - APP

NCOC urges masses to ensure vaccination

ISLAMABAD: National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Friday urged the general public to ensure vaccination, received booster dose (if eligible) and follow SOPs including mask wearing and social distancing in order to prevent from Omicron. In a Tweet, NCOC said that new variant of coronavirus 'Omicron' continues spreading countrywide. NCOC also stressed to take special care of elderly as admissions and mortality rate is higher in older people. NCOC also shared the details of cities with high positivity, i.e Peshawar 29.65%, Karachi 27.92%, Muzafarabad 26.40%, Mardan 22.73%, Hyderabad 20.59%, Lahore 20.58%, Gilgit 18.23%, Islamabad 17.13%, Nowshera 17.01%, Abbottabad 12.93%, Swabi 11.21%, and Mirpur 11.04%.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan gets briefed on Central Business Project. - DNA

Bilawal reiterates vision of providing free healthcare in country - Inaugurates bone marrow transplant institute at Gambat

DNA
GAMBAT: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Friday challenged the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab governments on the free healthcare facilities in the public hospitals as compared to the Sindh. Bilawal said that the budget of three hospitals in Sindh is more than the health card of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Bilawal inaugurated Rapid Response Center, Nuclear Medicine Cancer Care Research Center and Hematology and Bone Marrow Transplant Center at Gambat and addressed the gathering. He also reiterated his vision of providing free healthcare to all parts of Pakistan. The PPP chairman said there is no hospital in any other province except Sindh where the treatment of cancer, kidney and liver is free. He said that he challenged the Punjab government to show free treatment of patients. Criticizing the Imran led government's Health card, Bilawal said Prime Minister

RAND study faults US military over civilian killings

MONITORING DESK
WASHINGTON: A study by the RAND Corporation think-tank has faulted the US military for "considerable weaknesses" and inconsistencies in its review of allegations of civilian casualties, and the Pentagon announced a broad review. The RAND study, which was required by Congressional legislation, concluded in a report released on Thursday that systemic weaknesses at the Department of Defense (DoD) were causing it to fall short of its duties on civilian casualties. "DoD is not adequately organised, trained, or equipped to fulfill its current responsibilities for addressing civilian harm," the report concluded. The US military is under intense scrutiny over its procedures to guard against civilian casualties following a high-profile drone strike in Kabul on August 29 that killed 10 civilians, including seven children. Not only did the US military botch the targeting but, in the strike's initial aftermath, the Pentagon's assessment concluded that it killed Daesh terrorists preparing a bombing attack against US troops.

Germany reports over 190,000 virus cases

BERLIN: Germany reported more than 190,000 coronavirus infections for the second straight day on Friday, as the highly contagious omicron variant continues its rapid spread. The Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the country's disease control agency, confirmed 190,148 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, and 170 coronavirus-related fatalities. The figure was slightly lower than the record daily tally of 203,136 infections reported on Thursday. According to the institute, the omicron variant now accounts for an estimated 95% of new cases in the country, up from 89% reported last week. Speaking at a news conference in Berlin, the RKI's chief Lothar Wieler warned that hospitalizations of COVID-19 patients are beginning to rise again, especially among younger adults. He called on people to strictly follow anti-coronavirus measures, hygiene and social distancing rules, and get vaccinated as soon as possible. "Vaccination is the best way to achieve immunity," he stressed. To date, nearly 74% of German population have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and 52% have received their booster shots, according to the RKI. Germany is among the countries hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in Western Europe, and it has the fifth-highest tally of reported cases, behind France, the UK, Italy, and Spain. The country of 83 million has reported more than 9.4 million coronavirus infections and nearly 118,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic. - APP

CAA official caught facilitating money laundering

DNA
ISLAMABAD: It appears that the scourge of money laundering is no longer limited to politicians and businessmen only as a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) official has been caught at Islamabad's international airport while facilitating the passengers launder money to Dubai. According to sources, 64, 000 Saudi Riyal and 71, 500 Euros were recovered from Gul Nawaz Abbasi. The foreign currency, they added, recovered from Abbasi was the equivalent of 17.2 million in Pak Rupees. Sources further disclosed that the CAA official, who was deputized at the international arrival lounge, was found visiting the international departure lounge to escort the passengers with a protocol. Taking notice of that, the airport security force (ASF) personnel arrested him and started interrogating him in connection with the crime. The passengers whom Abbasi had facilitated were also offloaded from the plane.

UNODC, Govt launch EU-supported project "PACT"

Mr. Asim Khan, UNODC Country Representative, Dr. Jeremy Milsom, the Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Her Excellency Androulla Kaminara, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Mr. Sohail Mahmood graced the occasion with their presence

DNA
ISLAMABAD: UNODC, in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, launched the "Customized Practical Guide for Pakistan on Requesting Electronic Evidence Across Borders," in a ceremony held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad, under the framework of a European Union (EU) supported project entitled "Pakistan's Action to Counter-Terrorism" (PACT). Pakistan was the first country in Asia to partner with UNODC to customize the Global Practical Guide in line with its domestic legal framework and procedures with the aim of providing national and provincial practitioners with necessary methods and skills to access the critical electronic evidence needed to prevent, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorism offences. The customization was a joint venture of UNODC and the Counter-Terrorism Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with input from representatives of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Central Authority of Pakistan at the Ministry of In-



terior, Sindh Judicial Academy and Counter-Terrorism Departments. The Director-General Counter Terrorism Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Asim Khan, UNODC Country Representative, Dr. Jeremy Milsom, the Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Her Excellency Androulla Kaminara, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Mr. Sohail Mahmood graced the occasion with their presence and addressed the participants.

After deadlock, Italy speeds up presidential vote

ROME: Italian political leaders agreed Friday to speed up voting for the post of president after days of deadlock that has paralysed Prime Minister Mario Draghi's government. Four rounds of voting in parliament since Monday have failed to produce anything close to a winner, with most lawmakers casting blank ballots or abstaining due to a lack of agreement between the parties. The fifth round will go ahead as planned from 11:00am (1000 GMT), with another added at 5:00pm, according to Italian news agencies. - APP