



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Rafael Nadal wins 21st grand slam in historic Australian Open final

Detailed News On Page-06

Sharif family wants to loot country: Habib

Detailed News On Page-08

PPP workers on streets to send govt packing

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Judiciary needs to address its reputation

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Hussain on Sunday urged the judiciary to take stock of its rapidly declining reputation in the world rankings. In a tweet, Fawad mentioned the question raised by Minister for Law and Justice Feroze Khan Noon that if judges were not responsible for the assets of their wives and children, then how was it possible to hold politicians and bureaucrats accountable? The minister said that new Chief Justice would face this challenge when he would be sworn in.

Pak strongly condemns killing of 5 Kashmiris

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday strongly condemned the reported extra-judicial killing of five Kashmiris in Pulwama and Budgam in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), calling for international accountability of the Indian forces. "We also reiterate our call on the international community, including the United Nations, to hold India accountable for its gross and systematic human rights violations and crimes against humanity in IIOJK, without further delay," Foreign Office spokesperson said in a press release. The spokesperson said, in their unabated reign of terror, the Indian occupation forces had martyred at least 23 Kashmiris in fake encounters and so-called cordon-and-search operations in the month of January alone.

Announcement

Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan Adam M Tugios article 'Revisiting Discourse on Islam, Human Rights and Democracy to Navigate Present Muslim Challenges' appears on the Opinion pages. - Editor

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Trudeau's stance on Islamophobia laudable: PM

"I welcome Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's unequivocal condemnation of Islamophobia & his plan to appoint a Special Representative"



SHUJAAT HAMZA/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday welcomed Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's unequivocal condemnation of Islamophobia, calling for an end to hatred against Muslims. On his twitter handle, the prime minister also appreciated Trudeau's plans to appoint a special representative to cope with this contemporary scourge. He also stressed upon international efforts and cooperation to end the growing menace of Islamophobia. "I welcome Prime Minister Justin

Trudeau's unequivocal condemnation of Islamophobia & his plan to appoint a Special Representative to combat this contemporary scourge. His timely call to action resonates with what I have long argued. Let us join hands to put an end to this menace," prime minister Khan posted a tweet. The Canadian premier in a tweet had termed Islamophobia as unacceptable. "Full stop. We need to put an end to this hate and make our communities safer for Muslim Canadians. To help with that, we intend to appoint a Special Representative on combating Islamophobia," he added. Prime Minister Khan has been very effectively, consistently and vociferously advocating for the global efforts and cooperation to tackle the issue of Islamophobia which had resulted in number of unpleasant incidents in the West. In the recent past, Russian President Vladimir Putin in a televised interaction had also shared similar thoughts about Islamophobia.

NATO wants to 'drag' Ukraine into alliances

CENTRELINE REPORT
MOSCOW: Russia's foreign minister claims that NATO wants to pull Ukraine into the alliance, amid escalating tensions over NATO expansion and fears that Russia is preparing to invade Ukraine. In comments on state television Sunday, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also challenged NATO's claim to be a purely defensive structure. Russia's massing of an estimated 100,000 troops near the border with Ukraine has brought increasingly strong warnings from the West that Moscow intends to invade. Russia in turn demands that NATO promise never to allow Ukraine to join the alliance, and to stop

Johnson mulls major NATO deployment

AGENCIES
LONDON: Britain is poised to offer NATO a "major" deployment of troops, weapons, warships and jets in Europe to respond to rising "Russian hostility" towards Ukraine. "This package would send a clear message to the Kremlin - we will not tolerate their destabilising activity, and we will always stand with our NATO allies in the face Russian hostility," UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in a statement on late Saturday. Boris Johnson is expected to speak to the Russian President Vladimir

Rights violations: World can force Taliban thru economic sanctions

Analysis
SHAMIM SHAHID
PESHAWAR: Amidst rising violation of human rights, the Taliban rulers in Afghanistan are also facing pressure from the international community, asking for an acceptable coalition government. Though Taliban leaders are reluctant to do so, continuous silence on the part of US led allies and some of Afghan leaders stranded in Kabul are likely to force them (Taliban) to bow. Couple of days ago, protests in Oslo, Norway against the presence of Anas Haqqani in Afghanistan delegation and five Central Asian Republic and India's joint demand for a broad based coalition are the first instances of growing pressure against Taliban. In the wake of Oslo Norway protests, the war-stricken Afghans throughout the world are now motivating each other to stage similar protests against Taliban representatives, diplomats and delegations in respective stations or countries. Contrary to the last half of the previous 90's, handling situations for Taliban leaders is not an easy task. Likewise, it is also hard for Pakistan or its secret agencies to camouflage its "interference" in internal affairs of Afghanistan or its patronization of Taliban, especially the hard core militants called Haqqani Network. Even inside Afghanistan, the common Af-



KARACHI: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov along with wife posing for a picture in front of Mohatta Palace Museum, during his recent visit to Karachi. - DNA

Monal closure saddens Palestine envoy

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine Ahme Rabei has termed Monal restaurant as a very beautiful place with a distinctive view from the top of the high rising Mount Monal, where one enjoys the scenery of the dense forests with intertwined high trees and the animals that live there. In his message the ambassador said, from that place the capital, Islamabad lends to sight its splendid beauty, where one enjoys lovely pictorial beholding sight that one rarely finds elsewhere, and where one enjoys calm moments with distinguished hospitality, delicious food and comfortable service.... Unfortunately, I found this restaurant closed and I do not know why. Ambassador Rabei said what concerns us is the reopening of this distinguished landmark enterprise. I think that the owners of the project and the officials of Islamabad will not let it to remain closed.

Dr Moeed, Afghan leadership discuss economic issues

The visit yielded substantive outcomes in terms of forward movement on trade facilitation and social sector support



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD, National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf undertook two-day visit to Kabul to discuss with the Afghan leadership, the humanitarian requirements and Pakistan's proposals for deepening economic engagement to overcome the

Taliban offer refuge to pregnant journalist

NEWS DESK
WELLINGTON: A pregnant New Zealand journalist denied re-entry to her home country to give birth said she has instead been offered refuge by the Afghan Taliban. "This just feels like such a breach of trust," she said on Sunday (Jan 30) in an interview with Radio New Zealand. Ms Charlotte Bellis had been working for Al Jazeera in Afghanistan, where her photographer partner

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

KP govt plans to irrigate barren land

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government is planning to irrigate more than 109,721 acres of barren land besides generating 25.5 MW power by constructing three dams in Tank and Dera Ismael Khan districts. The new dams included Tank Zam Dam, ChodwanZam Dam and Daraban Dam would help improving water table in these areas. The provincial government has decided to construct these dams on priority basis as the region has been facing water shortage, said an official source.

These dams would also bring an agricultural revolution in province's improved zone, besides ensuring food security and creating job opportunities for the local people.

By using water efficient models the command area can be enhanced and would help in achieving self-sufficiency in food sector as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The decision of the provincial government was highly lauded by the people of Tank and DI Khan who were of the view that it would usher in a new era of prosperity in the area. - APP

Sixty One shopkeepers fined on profiteering

FAISALABAD: The price control magistrates have imposed fine of Rs.93,000 on 61 shopkeepers on charge of profiteering in the district during past 24 hours. A spokesman of local administration said on Sunday that price control magistrates inspected various shops in different markets and bazaars of Faisalabad and found 61 shopkeepers involved in profiteering and overcharging.

Therefore, the magistrates imposed a total fine of Rs.93,000 on them and warned that they would be sent behind bars if they did not mend their way of profiteering, he added. - APP

Health cards issuance in Faisalabad from Feb 9

FAISALABAD: Special Secretary (Development) Primary & Secondary Health-care Punjab Farrukh Naveed has said that health cards would be issued to the residents of Faisalabad from February 9, 2022.

Addressing an awareness session at Commissioner's Complex Sunday, he said that the government had set its priorities to provide quality health facilities to the masses at their doorsteps. He said that only those people would be given health cards who are registered with NADRA (National Database & Registration Authority). He said that children would be provided health facility through health card if they were mentioned in B-form whereas the newborn babies could get this facility on the hospital slip. The card holder family would be entitled to get free treatment up to Rs.1 million per annum, he added.

Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain also addressed the session and said that all possible measures would be taken to provide best medical facilities to card holder families without any complexity. - APP

FESCO issues shutdown schedule

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown schedule for Monday due to necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the schedule issued by the company, power supply from Gulab feeder emanating from 132-KV Scarp Colony grid station, Aasiyan and Dawar feeders originating from 132-KV Chiniot grid station, GIC, Korian Road College, feeders originating from 132-KV Jhang Road grid station, Zulfiqar Colony feeders emanating from 132-KV Factory Area grid station, al-Barkat feeder originating from 220-KV Samundri Road grid station, Hilal Road will observe shutdown from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday (January 31). - APP

Human development is the cornerstone of Pak strategy

Pakistan shows global leadership in initiating programs for poverty alleviation, universal Health Delivery services, environmental protection, improving human capital and curbing corruption, indicates World Economic Forum data

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The World Economic Forum Shares its Executive Opinion data with the country partner institute, Mishal Pakistan. The survey is an invaluable and unique source of high quality perceptions data providing globally comparable proxies for critical aspects of socio-economic development.

The Executive Opinion Survey is an invaluable and unique source of high-quality perceptions data providing globally comparable proxies for critical aspects of socio-economic devel-

opments. The data being shared by WEF shows Pakistan's value scores on more than 148 indicators. The data indicates that Pakistan has shown tremendous progress and achievements made by the government to have more future oriented policies and approaches. The government's short term and long-term vision has shown improvements as it is 4.42 this year from 3.88 last year. The personal dynamism of the top leadership in the country has also been instrumental in changing the perception of Pakistan.

Pakistan has also shown global leadership in putting more emphasis on human digni-

ty and social capital values through its Ehsaas Program. Pakistan has discovered the only solution (of CoronaVirus) is a smart lockdown, which allows for economic activity with standard operating procedure. Pakistan is amongst the pioneers of this approach. The world widely acknowledged Pakistan's anti-Covid efforts through smart lockdown strategy, mainly focusing on balanced between lives and livelihood. The Government's vision to provide universal health services through the health cards for addressing people's issues related to health and environment friendly initiatives in order

to have a clean and green Pakistan are unprecedented in the history of the region. Pakistan's apex anti corruption organization, NAB under the present management, has taken various steps in curbing corruption which has started yielding results. NAB during 2021, processed 30405 complaints, authorized 1681 complaint verifications, 1326 inquiries, 496 investigations and recovered Rs. 323 billion directly and indirectly in 2020 which is remarkable achievement as compared to previous years of NAB. Due to NAB's effective communication strategy, people are now more aware about the

ill effects of corruption and corrupt practices. The Pakistan Competitiveness Report will be published and launched by Mishal Pakistan in 2022 which will be the flagship Report for Pakistan to showcase its economic progress through leadership, social resilience, and business dynamism. Competitiveness Reports are designed to help policy-makers, business leaders and other stakeholders shape their economic strategies in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It will also serve as a call to action to engage in the visionary and bold leadership required to build

a new economic agenda for growing sustainable and inclusive economies that provide opportunity for all. Mishal Pakistan is the Country Partner Institute of the New Economy and Societies Platform, World Economic Forum. Mishal is Pakistan's leading strategic communication and research company. Mishal is responsible for generating primary data on more than 200 indicators measuring Pakistan's competitiveness. Mishal's foremost domain of activity is behavior change and strategic communication with a spotlight on public policy, perception, and reputation management.

Pakistan achieving goal of peace

DNA

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East Affairs Maulana Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said on Sunday that Pakistan was achieving the goal of peace and stability under the leadership of PM Imran Khan. Addressing the seminar on HazratSyeda Fatima-tu-Zahra (RA) organised at Punjab Institute of Quran and Seerat Studies here, he said the establishment of Madina-like state in the country was the solution to the prevailing social issues like divorce. He said that a real system of justice could only be established through accountability of everyone including judges. He said that Naya Pakistan QomiSehat Cards was a step towards the welfare state under the vision of prime minister Imran Khan. Ashrafi said that several regional and international forces wanted to destabilize the country through terrorism and extremism, but, the nation assured its army leadership that it was standing with Pak Army at every front. He said that respect of companions (Sehaba RA) and sacred family of the Prophet (PBUH), HazratSyeda Fatima (RA) and said women should follow her in their life.

Minister awards Bint-e-Hawa titles

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan awarded 30 prominent women who excelled in playing their role in various field including sports with a newly introduced title awards "Bint-e-Hawa" here in a ceremony organized by Regional Sports Office Mardan on Sunday.

A total of 25 prominent women from Mardan and five other women from other districts across the province got the title awards "Bint-e-Hawa" on their unmatched performance both at national and international levels in the field of sports with some of them are from other fields as well.

Federal Minister Ali Muhammad Khan, who was the chief guest on this occasion, formally distributed the title Bint-e-Hawa awards to more than 30 women. Besides him, Director General Sports Khalid Khan, DC MardanHabibullah Arif, Additional DC Mardan Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mardan for Finance and Planning Naik Mohammad Khan, Director Development Sports Mohammad Saleem Raza, Chairman Sports Department Abdul Wali Khan University Professor Dr. Farooq Hussain and Vice Chancellor Bacha Khan University Prof. Dr. Bashir Ahmed were present on the occasion. - APP



KARACHI: Chairman Anti-Corruption Dept. Govt of Sindh, Muhammad Nawaz Shaikh, while after Public grievances, keenly reading a credible Pakistan's first diplomatic Daily "Islamabad Post" here in his office. - DNA

Exchange of info between chambers is imperative

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD. Expeditious exchange of information through reliable linkages between chambers is imperative to survive in this age of rapid inventions and cutting edge technologies, said Muhammad Akram Sheikh Director General PASTIC. He was addressing an online meeting between Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) and Sardogha Chamber. He said that Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) and Pakistan Scientific and Technological Information Centre (PASTIC) are ready to play their key role in this connection. He said that PASTIC has expertise to compute and provide much needed information to the concerned quarters. He said that the focus of the current Government was also on enhancing industrial production and exports with a special emphasis on value addition. He



said that a workable relation between different chambers is necessary and this project has been launched to encourage development of a joint database of different trade bodies. He hoped that this project would provide an opportunity to the collaborating chambers to share their knowledge, database and experience for the benefit of each other. Mr. Muhammad Hasnain Deputy Director PASTIC Faisalabad said that this centre was making continuous efforts to convince students to adopt productive science subjects for their future studies. "We are also providing necessary information to the PhD scholars for their research projects",

he said and added that due to our efforts, a large number of students have switched over from arts subjects to science subjects. He said that now girls are studying science subjects and have excelled in their relevant fields. Engineer Ahmad Hassan, Chairman FCCI Standing Committee on Research and Development, said that full throttled scientific development has posed new challenges particularly for the developing countries to compete with the developed countries. He lamented that our industrial sector is still using obsolete versions of machinery and technologies which are neither cost effective nor efficient.

Swat to become winter tourism capital of country

MINGORA: Swat, a home to centuries old civilization of Ghandhara, is going to become a winter tourism capital of Pakistan due to its seven unique features including snow-clad mountains peaks, archaeological treasures, trout fish, snowfalls, adventure sports and Swat Motorway, which are attracting tourists from across the country in droves. Known as Switzerland of Pakistan, the Swat's seven unique characteristics, which are second to none in any other district of the country, has made it a centre of attraction for archeologists, adventurers, water sportsmen, mountaineers, snowfall lovers, foodies, and ecotourists arriving in large numbers following construction of Swat Motorway by the previous PTI Government that made the entire Malakand division a hub of tourism.

One of its seven features includes 150 kilometers long fresh water river originating water sources from glacial lakes in Mahodand and Gabral mountains, which offer unique opportunities for adventure sports enthusiasts to explore. Blessed with more than 50 high altitude lakes of varying proportions, the famous Mahodund lake in Upper Swat is a unique source of attraction of tourists, nature and adventure sports lovers to enjoy its blue-waters through boats riding in summer amid cold breezes. Besides a home to thick natural forests including the world famous Deodar trees and precious wildlife resources, this northern district of Pakistan is a home of snow-clad tall mountains ranges of Falakser, Mankial and Elum peaks offering great challenges to mountaineers and trekkers. - APP

Deputy Commissioner reviews KPIs for welfare initiatives

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: As many as 156 open mainholes have been covered during last week by WASA, Suigas and PTCL in the district and 11 City Councils have made zero open mainholes during this period also. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad chaired a high level meeting under Key Performance Indicators KPIs of public welfare initiatives. It was also informed the meeting that while road crossing of school childrens in safety way the speed breakers have also made specially in front of schools situated on main roads. It was further informed that 886 street lights were made function in last week by Metropolitan Corporation



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad chairs a meeting to review the KPIs for Public Welfare Initiatives. - DNA

and Municipal Committees. Four old bridges were surveyed and one has repaired. 38 choked drains and 83 sewer lines were cleared after cleanliness on public complaints. Faisalabad Waste Management Company lifted 8838 Tons waste from street, roads and shifted to dumping site in a safe manner and 14

City Councils were made Zero Waste. It was informed that buildings of 9 Public Transport white washed, benches of seating areas were made clean and continuous cleanliness process was underway on regular base. The play grounds and green belts were maintained and 21 illegal billboards were

removed and 208 installed billboards were made safety, wall chacking at 13 points were cleaned, 67 water storage tanks made clean, the complete cleanliness of 168 BHUs, 15 RHCs and 7 Hospitals were completed, besides awareness campaign at Mosques and Public & Private Schools were delivered.

Provision of basic facilities Govt's top priority

DC Captain (R) Shoaib Ali said while addressing meeting that suggestions from public representatives depicts the provision of basic facilities to people in their constituency

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHRAN: Member National Assembly MianShafiq-Araeen has said that public welfare and provision of basic facilities to them is Government's top priority. He added that all departments should work for public service with thorough plan of action while all ongoing and new development projects throughout the district should be completed on time. He expressed these remarks while addressing the District Coordination Committee's meeting at Deputy Commissioner Office's committee room. In the meeting detailed review of development schemes throughout the district including Annual Development Program was done. Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Shoaib Ali said while addressing the meeting that suggestions from public representatives depicts the provision of basic facilities to people in their constituency, he added that District officials should utilize all available resources and observing professional responsibilities timely resolve the suggestions of elected public represent-

atives in accordance with rules and regulations. During the meeting Deputy Director Development Fahad Anwar told that in the district in accordance with Annual Development Plan 2021-22' work orders of 58 development schemes have been issued. It was told that throughout the district 60 new, 10 ongoing while collectively working on 70 development schemes is in progress. In road sector 16, 3 in higher education, 1 special education, 3 of primary and secondary healthcare, 2 of Government buildings, 1 of

transport sector, 1 of Governance and information technology, 16 of Local Government and Community Development while 17 Water Supply and Sanitation schemes are in progress. In the meeting all development schemes were thoroughly reviewed.

In the meeting 5 schemes of Road Sector, 1 of Public Buildings, 3 of Sports and Youth Affairs, 1 of Stock and Dairy Development while collectively 10 schemes were reviewed, it was told that in road sector's projects Bypass road AddaDhanot, Duniyapur-Mail

si Road, Head Karanwala to SardarpurJhandeer, ChowkiSoobay Khan, ManjhaKotla road's widening and maintenance, Lodhran to JalalpurPirwala via KLM through Bahadarpur 39.80 kilometers construction, two way Khanewal-Lodhran road's 43KM long patch's construction, two way Lodhran-Kehrorpakka-mails, vehari road's remaining 20 km construction was reviewed.

In the meeting construction of District Public Prosecutor Lodhran's office, construction of new stadium in

KehrorPakka, Duniyapur's new stadium, KehrorPakka's Tehsil Sports Complex and for improving District Lodhran's Union Council level veterinary services project was reviewed.

In the meeting Tulhawala to BehadwalaMeterin Minor to Pull Bona 5.50 KM road metal road construction, BastiKhajiwala through Chohan Muhammad Sharif Pull MasaKotla 10 KM long metal road's construction, Adda Noor Gah to DuniyapurDokota Road AddaDarbarHazrat Sultan AyubQatal via Chak no. 315 WB, Chak no. 219WB Duniyapur to 12L Canal via BastiJhandeerwahaChak no. 271WB via BastiPiranaBasti-Duniyapur's roads construction, maintenance and widening projects were reviewed.

In the meeting 12 feet wide metal roads construction N5 to Pull SathHazari to Fatehpur via Mehmood Canal JalaAraeen project was reviewed. In the meeting New General Bus Stand KehrorPakka to ChowkiSoobay Khan via Rind Jada 12 KM road's construction, PindiwalaMor to Kowali via Mundeerwala, Qaboolwala, Muhammadaywala, Kalaywala, Ghareebabad, MozaSadulapur 6 kilometer road project was reviewed.

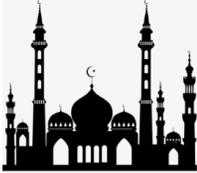


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Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Argentina along with Spanish diplomat taking interest in photographs during an exhibition titled Colors of Pakistan and Spain organized by the Spanish embassy at the Lok Virsa. – DNA

Awareness vital to protect Pangolins from poaching

The IWMB official informed that more protection lead to preservation and then to conservation that helped to completely protect the environment

ISLAMABAD: The wild experts in the wake of thriving species of the endangered Pangolins in the Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP) have urged the government to start massive public awareness campaign to protect harmless anteater from poaching and apprehensive human attacks jeopardizing the animal's survival in the natural habitat.

It is a scaly anteater and the most trafficked mammal in the world useful to protect forest trees from termites. The MHNP homes some 38 mammals, 27 reptiles and over 600 plant species and no doubt it is the habitat of the endangered scaly anteater under threat of poaching, hunting and human con-

licts, Manager Operations Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) Sakhawat Ali told APP. Sakhawat said the IWMB officials had confiscated around six pangolins from the poachers and released them in the wild. He said the increase in protection increases the number of species, adding, the animals population disperses after rise in number and becomes conspicuous to people. The IWMB official informed that more protection lead to preservation and then to conservation that helped to completely protect the environment. Overpopulation of any wild species needed management which was the fourth step of the above

mentioned, he said. Pakistan Wildlife Foundation (PWF) Vice Chairman Safwan Ahmed told that there were eight species of pangolin, four each in Asia and Africa and it was not found anywhere else in the world. "All are species of Pangolins are endangered. The Chinese pangolin is near extinction or critically endangered," he highlighted. PWF survey in 2019 regrettably found no species of Pangolins in their based habitats in Karak and D.I.Khan that was searched thoroughly. During the survey, he said there were many myths found by the Foundation. "In KP, there is one myth that Pangolin eats infants of human died in 100 days. In Punjab, as per the myth, the

people call it sinister and believe that it creates burrows in graves" He pointed out that Pangolins were only found in Potohar region of Punjab province as in central Punjab intensive cultivation completely vanished rodents and reptiles of all species. Interestingly, he said the AJK myth claimed that if one hung Pangolin's scales around a cow or buffalo's neck it will never lose its fertility and protects her calf from wild animal's attacks. In Sindh, it was considered ominous and its scales were used for black magic and conjuring to satiate envious nature of people whereas in Balochistan, women with infertility were

given grinded scales to bear kids, he added. To a question, he said in Islamabad he frequently witnessed Pangolins twice a year and also received phone calls from volunteers in F-7, F-8 and G-9 sectors to report presence of Pangolins. He added that they were mainly residing in these sectors due to nullahs and old vegetation suitable for their survival. "99 percent people do not dare to touch a pangolin due to its scary appearance with the perception that it may harm their life which is completely wrong as it's a very innocent animal. My five-year old daughter picks up a pangolin in her lap." He informed that the Indian pangolin specie was found

throughout the country except Gilgit Baltistan (GB). Safwan mentioned that the scales of pangolin were used by the mammal for its defence and that was why called scaly anteater eating termites and ants as its diet. In the past two decades, he said pangolins were overhunted globally for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) for medicinal purposes. Pangolin's soup was allegedly consumed by the Chinese elite as a cure to many diseases but it was not proven scientifically. Initially, the gypsies used to poach and sale it for Rs 20,000 to smugglers who used to sale it internationally for Rs 400,000 which has now been sold for Rs 2million. – APP

President condoles over death of Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday expressed his condolence on the death of Tasneem Siddiqui, a former civil servant, well known for his social activities. The president offered his condolence to the bereaved family and lauded services of late Siddiqui. On his twitter handle, the president posted, "Tasneem Siddiqui, outstanding hero & bureaucrat passes away. My condolences to the family, that includes all who live in katchi abadis, the poor, landless & homeless for whom he had ideas & compassion & whom he served. A great man indeed." A former civil servant and social activist Tasneem Ahmad Siddiqui died in Karachi on Saturday after suffering from a cardiac arrest at the age of 82. He behind his wife, Kishwar Sultana, two sons and a daughter. He was well known for devising a project 'Khuda Ki Basti' in Hyderabad, aimed at providing affordable housing to the urban poor and the reorganization of the Sindh Katchi Abadis Authority. – APP

10th meeting of the Federal Commission

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 10th meeting of the Islamabad Federal Commission was held on Saturday under the chairmanship of the Chairman, Capital Development Authority. The meeting was attended by officers of relevant departments and members of the commission. The meeting discussed different proposals including provision of best traveling facilities to the citizens of Islamabad. The meeting decided to hire NESPAK Consultant for Mass Transit System in Islamabad to ensure the provision of quality transport facilities in Islamabad. It was decided that NESPAK would update the previous study in view of the current situation. It was further decided that the assistance of the Beaura Statistics Department would be sought to assist the Planning Commission in planning according to the 2017 census records.

AAA, KJP hold job marathon for youth



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: AAA Associates in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Programme held AAA Job Marathon, 2022 on Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th January at Topi Rakh Ayub Park, Rawalpindi. Mr. Usman Dar, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs (SAPM) graced the occasion as chief guest. The event provided more than 100 jobs to aspiring candidates. AAA Associates understands the importance of induction of fresh talent into its outstanding team of architects, engineers, android developers, executive sales staff, data analysis, support and maintenance personnel in addition to a whole sleuth of domains. Mr. Usman Dar, SAPM on Youth Affairs appreciated the efforts of AAA Associates and emphasised on arranging such events frequently. Addressing the event, he said, "Such events should take place regularly, and companies from various business sectors should bring forth such

events to support the workforce find better job opportunities. This also helps employers to find right human resource as per their professional requirements" Mr. Dar said that a number of Initiatives have launched for youth development under the umbrella of Kamyab Jawan Programme. "We have disbursed about Rs. 32 billions for business loans to young entrepreneurs in our efforts to create employment opportunities in the country. Under Rs. 10 billion Kamyab Jawan's Skills Scholarships programme, more than 100,000 youth have been skilled, especially in hi-tech fields. Admissions for more than 60,000 more scholarships are open in about 1000 institutes across Pakistan". Mr. Dar said that the private sector must be the main provider and engine of creating jobs in the market. He stressed that youth must get skills to meet the growing needs of industries in the country. Mr. Sheikh Fawad Bashir, Chairman AAA Associates thanked the chief guest and respectable members of society for their participation in the event and making it a success.

NBF 50% discount on all books continues

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF) was continuing offering fifty percent discount on its published books at all its designated offices and shops which was attracting a large number of people from walks of life. Talking to APP, an official of NBF Muhammad Raza said "The NBF is offering unpublished books to promote and develop a taste of literary knowledge among the young generation and also aware them of history of various languages." Raza said National Book Foundation Readers Club was one of the most public oriented book promotional activity attracting readers to buy books of their choice at half price. Besides, promoting reading habit, it encouraged the overall book industry, help increasing literacy rate, create reasonable demand for good quality reading material and motivating young generation towards developing reading culture in the society, he added. "The activity in its previous phases ensured providing this facility," he added. – APP

CTP removes pickets set up in Murree

CTO said that 8,000 vehicles would be allowed to enter Murree on daily basis and the ban on entry of vehicles in Murree from 5am to 5pm was also lifted

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Wasim Riaz here on Sunday told that the City Traffic Police (CTP) has removed all temporary pickets set up in Murree after lifting ban on the entry of tourists. The hill station has been reopened for tourism after 20 days, after the installation of a new, state-of-the-art scientific system at all entrances of Murree to count all incoming vehicles, he said. The CTO said that 8,000 vehicles would be allowed to enter Murree on daily basis and the ban on entry of vehicles in Murree from 5am

to 5pm was also lifted. He urged the tourists to avoid wrong parking, double lines and taking selfies in the middle of the road. He told that Murree has parking capacity of about 3500 vehicles and additional traffic wardens had been deployed to facilitate the tourists. He advised the tourists to obey traffic rules and avoid over-speeding. He suggested the motorists to keep their vehicles fit before travelling to hill stations. Rawalpindi Police Radio Station 88.6, traffic police and all the official pages will also provide awareness to the citi-

zens about the severity of the weather and rush situation in Murree adding that citizens could contact the helpline number 051-9269200 in case of any emergency or for guidance. He advised the vehicle owners to avoid closing vehicles' windows while using heaters. Motorists should use chain on the tires of the vehicles as it is sleepy on the road during snowfall, he suggested. Awareness pamphlets were also distributed among the tourists and banners were exhibited on the highways and entrances of Murree, the CTO remarked. – DNA

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Briefs

Regional economic cooperation need of hour

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday stressed upon an urgent need of strengthening regional cooperation among member states to usher in an era of prosperity, progress, development and alleviating the object poverty in the region. Speaking at a reception hosted in his honour by MNA Ch Tahir Iqbal Arain and former President FPC- CI Ch Zahid Iqbal Arain, he stressed on the SAARC Council of Ministers to meet soon to address the procedural issues due to which SAARC and its apex allied bodies are greatly suffering and also take necessary measures to accelerate the economic and commercial growth among member states. He said the Nepal currently chairing the council should help resolve the issue on priority.

He emphasised the need for greater cooperation to foster greater regional economic integration in South Asia and all impediments hindering smooth flow of economic growth be done away with forthwith with mutual consensus among member states. MNA Ch Tahir Iqbal Arain in his welcome address eulogized the selfless life long meritorious services rendered by veteran octogenarian trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik for the promotion of trade and help accelerating the pace of industrialisation in country by becoming a bridge between business community and government.

Tanzara Gallery exhibition in full swing

ISLAMABAD: Tanzara Art Gallery exhibition titled 'Being and Becoming' by Zaam Arif, an American-Pakistani contemporary artist residing and working in Houston, is in full swing amid attracting huge crowd the exhibition aiming to showcase the hidden talent of forthcoming artist.

Noshi Qadir, Tanzara Gallery official said the works in Zaams first solo exhibition titled "Being and Becoming" at Tanzara were far more than a series of portraits. Each work was a deep exploration of the ontological existence of the human by the societal systems. He confronts it with a penetrating interpretation of human nature, transforming it into a visceral reality. The 21 oil and canvas paintings on display, explore much of the same ground.

Zaam expresses his understanding of the contemporary human condition along with insights garnered from his study of classical literature and psychology through his paintings that were so charged with an emotional resonance that they leave an indelible mark on viewers, she added. He is adamant in exploring the harsher truths and inner conflicts that plague us all, in this day and age, using visual contrast in all his pieces, whether through color, lack thereof, or the medium itself, to express. - APP

Girls' numbers in slums schools increasing

ISLAMABAD: In the middle of destitute and shoddy slums of the federal capital girls are likely to outnumber boys in acquiring education despite gruesome socio-economic challenges. The scenic federal capital resting in the foothills of Himalayas embraced a variety of ethnicities living in the country with open arms and nurtured the best brains out of simple innocent minds. The students of Pehli Kiran (the first ray of hope) School run by a non-governmental organization (NGO) has managed to educate a plethora of deserving students belonging to the downtrodden factions of the slum areas. There are some ten makeshift schools run by the NGO for providing education and assist in acquiring technical and entrepreneurial skills to the masses of slum areas mainly targeting children and the youth. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Art lovers taking interest in photographs during an exhibition titled Colors of Pakistan and Spain organized by the Spanish embassy at the Lok Virsa. DNA

British colonialism was a traumatizing experience

NIHCR Webinar on Discourse of History on Indo-Pak History from Antiquity to Modernity XIII: End of British Rule in India

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, January 30: British colonialism was certainly a far more traumatizing experience for colonial subjects than their colonizers as they suffered poverty, malnutrition, disease, cultural upheaval, economic exploitation, political disadvantage and a sense of social and racial inferiority. This was observed by the guest speaker Prof Emeritus Aslam Syed while addressing a Webinar on Discourse of History on Indo-Pak History from Antiquity to Modernity XIII:

End of British Rule in India here on Sunday.

Prof. Emeritus Aslam Syed has been serving the Centre for Religious Studies, Ruhr Universität, Bochum, Germany. He remained Chairman, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, and also served the NIHCR as its Director. Responding to a question, Prof Syed said that the British rule developed through a combination of military force and alliances with Indian rulers of princely states. India was perhaps the most important to Britain of the territories in the empire; it was run in a dif-

ferent way from most other parts of the empire because it was different from other parts of the empire, he said. The Webinar arranged online by the National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR), Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, was attended by over 700 participants ranging from students, teachers and researchers to have greater insights into the valuable views of the guest speaker.

Replying a question, Prof Syed said that the British rule developed through a combination of military

force and alliances with Indian rulers of princely states. British signed treaties and made military and trading alliances with many of the princely states that made up India, he said.

It was the 32nd consecutive session on the Discourse of History, a brainchild of the NIHCR Director Dr Sajid Mahmood Awan. This activity inculcates interest to learn more and more about history not only among students, scholars and historians as well as among ordinary people belonging to any field of life to know about nations' ways of running their States in a journey from an-

tiquity to modernity. Replying a question, Prof Syed said that when the British arrived in India in the 1700s they found out that India was highly populated. It was economically developed. There were states with governments that were just as complex as Britain, he said.

Responding to a question, Prof Syed said that by the later 1800s British rule in India was strong. However, there were only a tiny number of British soldiers and administrators in India. Indian civil servants did the majority of the day-to-day work that allowed British

rule to operate, he said.

Replying a question, Prof Syed observed that by the later 1800s there were many thousands of middle-class Indians who worked in the administration, who spoke English and who had an English education (often received in India).

The NIHCR Director Dr Awan conducted the Webinar by triggering a dialogue with Dr Syed for substantiating this discourse. This inclusive activity has been taken up every week for the benefit of students in general and capacity-building of the teachers and researchers in particular.

Admin directed to remove illegal buildings

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq has directed the authorities concerned to remove encroachments, repair all Dysfunctional streetlights and restore the green belts in Raja Bazaar.

According to a district administration spokesman, the DC instructed the officers of Metropolitan Corporation and Parks and Horticulture Authority to formulate a comprehensive plan for up gradation of Raja Bazaar. He ordered to remove all sort of encroachments from different markets of Raja Bazaar to facilitate the visitors, adding, Rawalpindi Municipal Corporation to launch a grand operation to remove temporary and permanent encroachments. - APP

Shah Alla Ditta Buddhist caves attract visitors

ISLAMABAD: Shah Allah Ditta a centuries old Buddhist caves located at the foothills of the Margalla Hills in federal capital was attracting a large number of visitors. The Buddhist caves were believed to be hundred years old and were used as route to Gandharan City of Taxila. Karim Ahmed, a visitor said that this place is very peaceful and calm, adding that he always enjoy visiting here with his family. The fresh water spring is also close to the caves which further increase the beauty and attraction of the site. Few food outlets were also available near the caves which facilitate the visitors with fresh snakes and foods. A food outlet owner said that people are coming to Shah Alla Ditta caves and particularly on weekend more people visit this place. According to CDA, relics of the Buddhist era dating back to the 8th century can be found here along with burnt diyas and trees with amulets tied to them. - APP

AIOU announces financial support to needy students



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has invited applications to provide concession in admission fee to poor and deserving students in the ongoing admissions of spring semester 2022. The students who had availed this facility in the previous semester are not required to apply again and they will be provided financial assistance in accordance to previously determined ratio.

Besides this, AIOU also provided free matriculation

education to the students of Gilgit Baltistan, Baluchistan and former FATA. The students of these areas have also been directed to apply for availing the facility.

In this regard, Directorate of Students Affairs has notified the regional directors not to collect fresh applications from the students of the previous semester for spring 2022 semester.

They are required to inform such students via any medium to download challan form of zero percent fee (in case of full fee concession) or whatever ratio of fee concession is applicable to

them whether 35 or 50 percent and deposit the fee.

These students are required to submit challan form of deposited fee in their respective regional offices for the record. Assessment committees have been established at the regional offices to process applications for fee concession.

University will provide fee concession in accordance with the recommendations given by these fee concession assessment committees. The deadline for the submission of fee concession applications via online mode is February 8, 2022. The students who will be granted fee concession will be able to generate fee challan from till February 12 while deadline for remaining fee submission is February 14.

It is pertinent to mention here that the deadline to submit admission application form for the programs offered in spring 2022 semester including BS, MSc, M Phil/MS and PhD is February 14 whereas February 22 is the deadline for the submission of admission application form for matriculation, intermediate and ICom programs. - APP

Diamer Basha Dam cableway bridge completed

ISLAMABAD: To expedite the transportation of heavy machinery and construction materials across the Indus River to the Diamer Basha Dam Project (DBDP), the construction of a 267-meter long temporary Cable Bridge has been completed, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

According to the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), the Cableway Bridge, which was completed on the other day, can bear 80 tons of weight.

"The Cableway Bridge on River Indus downstream will be used for the transportation from the left bank to the right bank for acceleration of construction activities on the Project," according to WAPDA. The cableway bridge will be officially inaugurated for transport shortly. Before the 267-meter long Cableway Bridge on River Indus downstream, three Cableway Bridges, upstream of Main Dam, are already operational for the transportation of heavy machinery and building materials. - APP

EVM - a way forward to flourishing democracy

ISLAMABAD, Jan 30 (APP): Technology driven innovations have played a significant role in rapidly transforming the democracies globally during the last few decades and reshaping the entire governance system. Pakistan's adoption to a universally acknowledged way of conducting elections through Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) is another move towards flourishing democracy, empowering citizens and countering electoral frauds.

The way idea of neutral umpire floated by the Prime Minister, Imran Khan once proved as a turning point for the history of cricket by ending controversies and en-

suring impartiality; EVM will emerge as a neutral technology to ensure transparency in the electoral process.

The governments in the past have been reluctant to go for transparent voting systems due to their own objectives; however, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led government proved to be different and turned its slogan of 'change' into a reality when it floated the idea of EVM to ensuring undisputed and fair elections.

The efforts for introducing EVM technology to conduct free and fair elections in the country initiated soon after the PTI government came into power. - APP

Sania participates in SCO's apex event on poverty alleviation

"PM Imran in 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: Senator Dr Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Imran Khan on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation spoke at the apex level event with heads of ministries and agencies of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on Poverty Alleviation, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. Jamshid Kuchkarov, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, Republic of Uzbekistan hosted the virtual event in Tashkent.

Speaking at the event, Dr Sania Nishtar thanked the SCO secretariat for encouraging all the members for co-operation in poverty alleviation as it was outlined in the Action Plan for 2021-2025 for the implementation of the SCO Development Strategy until 2025. "Prime Minister Imran Khan in 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 establishment of a leading knowledge center for poverty reduction within the SCO framework", she highlighted at the SCO meeting. Further, she reiterated: "There is an urgent need to establish a permanent mechanism for regular exchange of experiences and information on the

applied innovative measures aimed at poverty alleviation." Later, Dr Sania Nishtar reflected on Pakistan's experience in poverty alleviation. She remarked: "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." 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. 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.



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For further information please contact the following.

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Visit to China

PRIME Minister Imran Khan's coming trip to China, scheduled for February 3 will reportedly involve meeting Chinese leaders for an overall review of the entire gamut of bilateral ties, besides attending the inaugural session of the Winter Olympics in Beijing. This visit, just by its essence and timing, is an important political statement. The visit comes at a time when many Western countries have decided to boycott the Winter Olympics being hosted by Beijing. This boycott is clearly political and does not entirely, out of good faith, stem from US concerns about China's human rights record. It is no coincidence that this boycott effort comes at a time when US tensions with China over several political, economic and geographical reasons are at their peak. It is unfortunate that US foreign interests have pervaded into a joint Western effort, that will not contribute to the propagation of human rights, but will only lead to more hostility, and play into the political games of superpowers. Pakistan, through this visit and by pointedly attending the Winter Olympics, achieves two things. Pakistan lends support to China, its longstanding ally. Pakistan and China are partners in several bilateral cooperative efforts, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). China, through its border, also shares a lot of strategic regional interests with Pakistan, especially with regards to India, and new international cooperative efforts planned between Pakistan, China and Central Asian countries. The Prime Minister's visit, which will be taking place after two years, is a way to recommit to these shared interests and cooperative efforts. Secondly, this visit is also a statement that Pakistan will not play into international political controversies played in the name of human rights, especially when horrific human rights violations in IIOK have been ongoing with no international attention. An event like the Olympics, which symbolises globalism, peace and dialogue, should not be tarnished by politics.

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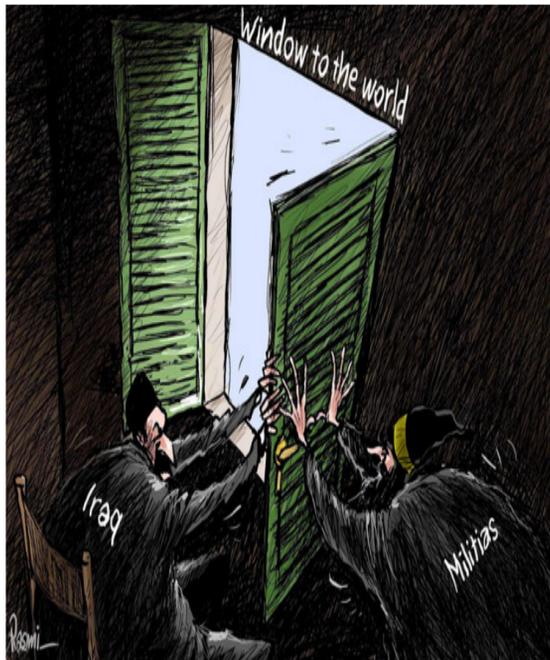
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A Sobering Loss

THE opposition's shock and disappointment at the passing of the State Bank of Pakistan Bill should not take away from the fact that this legislation could have been blocked very easily. All opposing parties really had to do was ensure that their majority was present and voting. The absence of key Senators including the Opposition Leader in a vote like this understandably raises eyebrows in the aftermath. A dissenting note at the end of the session does nothing to hide the fact that this loss is of the opposition's own making. This has become something of a pattern. The opposition fights tooth and nail in press conferences and speeches against proposed government legislation, and when it comes to the final vote, there is confusion within the ranks, and the treasury benches take full advantage. In this, the government is doing exactly what it should—getting its own agenda across even when it looks to have the odds stacked against it. But on the other side, the opposition is looking to take the fight to the government, yet has not been able to muster any real strength against its decisions. There are claims that March will bring about street rallies and other forms of protest against the ruling party, but parliamentary performance cannot be ignored either. In the Senate at least, with the opposition's numbers, blocking a legislation it is so blindly opposed to should have been a cakewalk. In fact, if it really did care about this bill, opposition leaders would have been reaching out to party members and ensuring attendance. For the government, it will be pleased to have finally completed the adjustments needed to qualify for the IMF bailout. The review can be finalised and the ruling party will gain some breathing space from the economic challenges it has been beset by since it came into power. For the opposition, this is once more, a sobering reminder that mere numbers should not inspire confidence; there is work to be done before a final vote. This can be anything from seeking out one's own party members or ensuring that there is enough of a split in the other side or a chink in the armour that can be exploited. It must look to do better against any government legislation it is so vehemently against.

Revisiting discourse on Islam, human rights and democracy to navigate present muslim challenges

Adam M. Tugio



Fast forward to our time, the OIC ratified the Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (IUDHR) in 2010. The OIC has further established the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) and in February 2012, Indonesia had the honor of hosting the maiden session of this august body. This positive step reflects the OIC's readiness to adhere to the UDHR's core human rights principles

WE hear a lot about Islam being misrepresented in the news these days. Reports of violence, discrimination, restrictions on women's rights have led to the erroneous conclusion that human rights and democracy has no place in Islam. Heinous acts by irresponsible people who use Islam as a pretext to further their nefarious intentions have exacerbated this misrepresentation, defaming Islam's genuine face as a religion of peace and a blessing to the entire universe, *rachmatan lil'allamin*. As a result, the Muslim community living outside their country has been facing several issues such as Islamophobia, discrimination and racial profiling. With the gradual spread of Islam, the relationship between Islam and democracy has continuously been the subject of scholarly debate. Both in the West and in the Muslim world, discourses on Islam, human rights, and democracy have gained traction and become hotly debated subject. Question about the compatibility of Islam and democracy is at the heart of this discourse as if the latter has no place in Islam. For Muslims, Islam is a divine revelation, a comprehensive set of principles and moral guidance from God Almighty (Theocentric). The human rights, on the other hand, are a set of values produced with logic or co-related with a human orientation (Ethnocentric), and associated with secularism due to the separation of roles and functions of the religion (church) and the state. Consequently, if one views Islam from formalistic approach as a structural organizational system, democracy will be seen incompatible with sharia Islam. In this case, a footnote is required however. Islam is silent on the type of government (monarchy or republic) or on the selection of a leader (*musyawarah*) by the council or bath or appointment). Both were used in different time in the early years of Islam. If one views Islam as a set of substantial values or principles that are critical to humanity, he or she will recognize that Islam and democracy are mutually reinforcing. Muslim scholars and historians should be credited in this regard by demonstrating that the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) meant the freedom of mankind from all forms of human rights violations. On account of its liberating theology, Islam is said to create a stable basis for society by eradicating *Jahili* traditions, and led to the establishment of human rights principles that we know in the modern times.

What we found fascinating is that Islamic values such as egalitarianism (*al mussawwa*), justice (*al addudiyah*), pluralism (*al-musyarakat*), personal freedom and protection and tolerance (*al tasamud*) are not only found in the Holy Qur'an, but also manifest themselves in the 6th Century Charter of Madina. To put things in context, comparable ideas were articulated in Magna Carta in the 12th Century or six centuries later. The United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) only in 1948. Given this lengthy interval, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that the Charter of Madina was well-ahead of its time. This is something that the Muslim community should be proud of, and as a reflection of developing effective means to encourage its implementation in today's environment. Fast forward to our time, the OIC ratified the Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (IUDHR) in 2010. The OIC has further established the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) and in February 2012, Indonesia had the honor of hosting the maiden session of this august body. This positive step reflects the OIC's readiness to adhere to the UDHR's core human rights principles. Given the preceding factors, it is quite evident that in terms of substantive values, Islam, human rights and democracy are not mutually reinforcing rather than competing. Consequently, debates on the universality and cultural relativity of human rights from Islamic perspectives seems less relevant. Islam and modernity can coexist together. The most pressing challenge for Muslim world is how to implement basic rights while preserving Islam as a source of energy for enforcing duly deserved rights in all the aspects of human life. Equally crucial is determining how Muslim majority countries can offer safeguards for their citizens to exercise their constitutional rights in a free and in a responsible manner through democratic processes so as to deliver socio-economic benefits to the society and nation. The Muslim world, like in other parts of the globe, is in a state of flux, with its youth facing cultural disorientation. The amazing expansion of social media in the twenty-first century meant that peoples' thoughts are more powerful than they had ever been before. As people seek more political space and more engagement in the shaping of their futures, effective government requires the backing of civil society, as well as a strong belief in and tireless nurturing of democracy.

In this connection, this available information sheds light on some important areas of concern that needs our immediate attention. The Human Development Index (HDI) reveals 36% of the 57 OIC members were in the low human Women's Empowerment Policy Index. The Gender Development Index (GDI) indicates the majority of women and girls in OIC countries face considerable impediments to education, healthcare, and economic prospects, among other things. The Islamic Indices of 2020 shows that, on average, non-Muslim majority nations outperform Muslim-majority countries, with the bulk of Muslim-dominated countries falling to the bottom of the list. It is noteworthy that the Islamic Indices recognizes the importance of Islamic principles and teachings from the Holy Quran and Hadith's in establishing successful institutions and enhancing Islamic state governance. The Islamic Indices includes good governance and the rule of law, freedom and equitable opportunity for self-development, and a free market and high economic performance. However, we should not be offended by these findings, but rather use them as a reflection for improving the status and conditions of people in Muslim world, thereby honoring the Madani society's moral inspiration. The OIC has charted a pathway to close the gap of women empowerment with the adoption of the POA for the Advancement of Women in 2016. The POA outlines measures for mainstreaming gender equality in education, health, and promoting women's economic empowerment. The OIC also adopted series of resolutions last year urging members to pay special attention to women in economic adaptation efforts throughout the COVID pandemic and afterwards. The human talent works best in a conducive environment, which opens ways for socio-economic advancement and development. As Islam and democracy are mutually reinforcing, a broad democratic approach and sharing of lessons learned would certainly help the Muslim world to strengthen its common commitments and practices of Islam as a religion of peace and blessing for all mankind, *rahmatan lil'allamin*.

— Adam M Tugio, Indonesian Ambassador to Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Views expressed here are personal

Geopolitical reality and major powers

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



And the new perspective on politics takes multilateral relations of interest and global security to a new level. Likewise, strategic planning in which countries make internal national goals at all levels of government and adapt to international contexts facilitates the development of a state

THE current geopolitical reality imposes new challenges and opportunities to resolve conflicts of interest through international cooperation, while maintaining a strategic vision or calling into question the balance of power. However,

uncertainty is constant, as are circumstances and actors. In this constant concern for improvement, we cannot fail to evoke two kinds of strategic ideas. First from a real political point of view (The enemy of my enemy is my friend), which facilitates the formation of alliances. Second, by following a strategic and confrontational approach (The success or achievement of my opponent's goals affects my accomplishment), it is therefore important that the opponent does not achieve his goals. Despite the complexity of the strategic environment, it has been observed that countries are increasingly interconnected and interdependent due to the global nature of the threats and the common aspects of their development. Currently, there are very competitive regional blocs, where robotics, electronics, communications, biotechnology, as well as their military capabilities and levels of interoperability are measured. All this, marked by a common aspect: defending their interests. In this context, everything indicates that in the 21st century the following aspects will mark geopolitics: the impact of an economy in a market that has neither flag nor nationality, technology is a certain variable, hostility to alternative cooperation, sustainable development within the framework of a supernatural policy of environmental protection and the promotion of democracy with security as a key element of development and welfare. Regarding these aspects, it described a free market as the most important economic model in the world, with the exception of certain activities considered appropriate for the state, such as laws, public order, rehabilitation or national defense, etc. In this sense, when we refer to the free market, we consider that these economic activities and transactions depend exclusively on the free initiative of individuals. This

interaction creates an environment in which individuals are free to achieve their goals and maximize their profits without state intervention. However, there are contradictions between these activities, which one way or another, the state should control, and which should be an independent initiative. Therefore, the production of wealth without any control, through the exploitation of the resources necessary for the life and development of a state, is complex and controversial from a nationalist and conservative point of view. In this regard, a look back at Peru at the beginning of the 20th century shows that the influx of foreign capital introduced an economic export policy which benefited a particular group. However, this situation has not made it possible to increase national power and capacity, as these power groups have a brief idea of what homeland and state mean. In many cases, these ideas are not just in your imagination. There is a question, how can we estimate the power of a state? To answer this question, econometric models make it easier to determine national strength and capacity for which a state owner considers the number of square kilometers as the basic variable. That is, the larger the area, the greater the power. The other aspect is related to technological development. In this regard, in the field of cyberspace, the absence of an international regulatory framework facilitates the understanding of the threats to States and the people are exposed. This situation leads to activities involving identity theft, financial crime or the handling of weapons of mass destruction. These scenarios allow us to analyze how an increase in technology and mechanization can have a fundamental impact on global production models, as well as on production costs and labor costs. Under this approach, countries that dominate the technology will set stand-

ards in electricity generation and national potential. The third aspect explains how animosity between two states resolves regional disputes by force of arms. Moreover, if the two states fail to implement this concept of war, they have their own consequences, but through the interests of third parties. At present, however, international cooperation and various organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) is setting the tone for dialogue and building new spaces for trade. The fourth aspect of sustainable development, as the basis for the development of new generations, is the commitment not only to the people of the country but also to the people of the world. The country that depends on the export of raw materials, it is necessary to set the goals and objectives of public and private institutions to achieve sustainable economic, political, social and environmental development. A responsible country is therefore a country recognized and integrated into the international community. And the new perspective on politics takes multilateral relations of interest and global security to a new level. Likewise, strategic planning in which countries make internal national goals at all levels of government and adapt to international contexts facilitates the development of a state. On the other hand, the possibility for states to join supranational organizations and foreign trade opportunities builds national capacity and strength. Furthermore, it is important to remember that in the international context, States are not friends, but have common interests where the instruments of national power complement each other for weight and negotiating capacity. Therefore, one must understand the method of studying geopolitics that allows important pieces of a state to be strategically transferred to the Grand International Council.

Briefs

NATO wants to 'drag' Ukraine into alliances

FROM PAGE 01
The deployment of NATO weapons near Russian borders and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe. The head of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, on Sunday rejected Western warnings about a planned invasion. "At this time, they're saying that Russia threatens Ukraine - that's completely ridiculous," he was quoted as saying by state news agency Tass. "We don't want war and we don't need it at all."
Russia has long resented NATO's granting membership to countries that were once part of the Soviet Union or were in its sphere of influence as members of the Warsaw Pact. NATO "has already come close to Ukraine. They also want to drag this country there," Lavrov said. "Although everyone understands that Ukraine is not ready and could make no contribution to strengthening NATO security." Ukraine has sought NATO membership for years, but any prospects of joining appear far off as the country struggles to find political stability and attack corruption.

Johnson mulls major NATO deployment

FROM PAGE 01
Putin this week, and travel to the region. The offer, set to be made to NATO military chiefs next week, could see London double the approximately 1,150 UK troops currently in eastern European countries and "defensive weapons" sent to Estonia, his office said. "I have ordered our Armed Forces to prepare to deploy across Europe next week, ensuring we are able to support our NATO allies on land, at sea and in the air," Johnson added. The British leader said if Russian President Putin chose "bloodshed and destruction" in Ukraine, it would be "a tragedy for Europe".

Dr Moeed, Afghan leadership discuss economic issues

FROM PAGE 01
current challenges their country was facing. During the visit, the NSA who also heads Afghanistan Inter-Ministerial Coordination Cell (AICC), called on Afghanistan's Acting Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdus Salam Hanafi and the Acting Foreign Minister Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi to discuss the current situation in Afghanistan and strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries. The visit yielded substantive outcomes in terms of forward movement on trade facilitation and social sector support, a press release from the office of NSA said on Sunday. Both sides also reiterated their commitment to early completion of the three major connectivity projects, CASA-1000, TAPI, and Trans-Afghan Rail project. "Both sides agreed to establish a National Level Coordination Mechanism for enhancing facilitation at Border Crossing Points. They also agreed to initiate barter trade, modalities for which will be worked out immediately," it said. Special Envoy for Afghanistan Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq and senior officials from relevant ministries were part of his delegation. Dr Moeed Yousuf also held delegation level meetings with other relevant Afghan ministers and senior officials dealing with humanitarian and economic issues. During the visit, Pakistan offered Afghanistan capacity building and training support in multiple sectors including health, education, banking, customs, railways and aviation among others. Afghanistan and Pakistan emphasized their commitment to ensuring peace and stability in both countries. Dr. Yusuf thanked the interim Afghan government for their warm hospitality.

Nadal wins 21st grand slam in epic Australian Open final

Nadal won his first Australian Open title in 2009 and lost four other finals at Melbourne Park before his dramatic win over US Open champion Medvedev

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal got to 21 first, breaking the men's record for most Grand Slam singles titles and doing it the hard way by coming back from two sets down to beat Daniil Medvedev in an almost 5 1/2-hour Australian Open final.

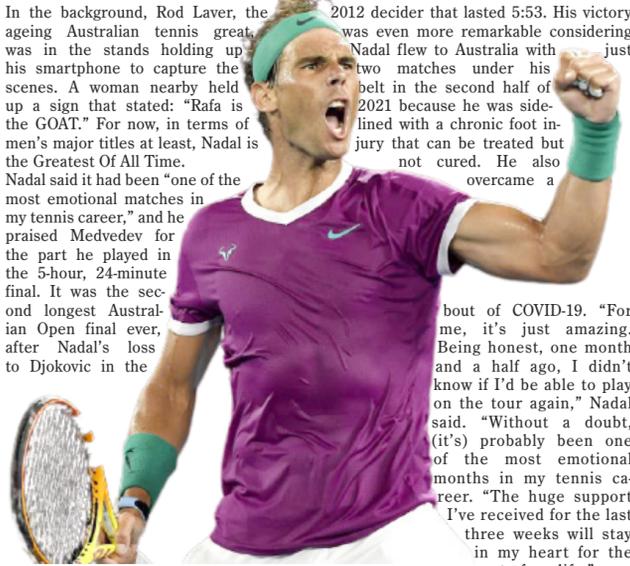
Nadal was broken when serving for the championship for the first time at 5-4 in the fifth set, but he made no mistake two games later by served an ace to earn three championship points and converted it on the first attempt. The 35-year-old Spaniard now has one more major title than Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, his long-time rivals in the so-called Big Three.

With the 2-6, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 win that started Sunday night, was delayed in the 84-minute second set when a protester jumped onto the court, and then finished early Monday morning, Nadal also became just the fourth man in history to win all four of the sport's major titles at least twice.

"Good evening. No, good morning!" Nadal, looking at his watch, told the crowd at Rod Laver Arena when he finally got up for his acceptance speech at 1:30 a.m.

In the background, Rod Laver, the ageing Australian tennis great, was in the stands holding up his smartphone to capture the scenes. A woman nearby held up a sign that stated: "Rafa is the GOAT." For now, in terms of men's major titles at least, Nadal is the Greatest Of All Time.

Nadal said it had been "one of the most emotional matches in my tennis career," and he praised Medvedev for the part he played in the 5-hour, 24-minute final. It was the second longest Australian Open final ever, after Nadal's loss to Djokovic in the



2012 decider that lasted 5:53. His victory was even more remarkable considering Nadal flew to Australia with just two matches under his belt in the second half of 2021 because he was sidelined with a chronic foot injury that can be treated but not cured. He also overcame a bout of COVID-19. "For me, it's just amazing. Being honest, one month and a half ago, I didn't know if I'd be able to play on the tour again," Nadal said. "Without a doubt, (it's) probably been one of the most emotional months in my tennis career. "The huge support I've received for the last three weeks will stay in my heart for the rest of my life."

Nadal won his first Australian Open title in 2009 and lost four other finals at Melbourne Park before his dramatic win over U.S. Open champion Medvedev. His conversion rate in major finals is now 21 out of 29. Federer and Djokovic each have 20 majors from 31 finals appearances.

Medvedev, who was aiming to be the first man in the Open era to win his second Grand Slam title at the very next major, was ever-so-close to spoiling another 21st celebration. Djokovic was chasing the same record at the U.S. Open last year, and a calendar-year Grand Slam, when Medvedev beat him in straight sets in the final. Federer also had his chance at 21, but Djokovic stopped that when he saved match points before winning the 2019 Wimbledon final. Medvedev now joins Andy Murray among those who've lost the final at the next major tournament after their career breakthrough at the highest level.

It was just the fourth time Nadal has rallied from two sets down to win a best-of-five-set match, and the first since a fourth-round victory in 2007 at Wimbledon over Mikhail Youzhny. He's the first Australian Open champion to come back to win after dropping the first two sets of the final since Roy Emerson in 1965.

North Korea tests longest range missile

NEWS DESK

SEOUL: North Korea on Sunday fired what appeared to be the most powerful missile it has tested since President Joe Biden took office, as it revives its old playbook in brinkmanship to wrest concessions from Washington and neighbors amid a prolonged stalemate in diplomacy.

The Japanese and South Korean militaries said the missile was launched on a lofted trajectory, apparently to avoid the territorial spaces of neighbors, and reached a maximum altitude of 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles) and traveled 800 kilometers (497 miles) before landing in the sea.

Taliban offer refuge to pregnant journalist

FROM PAGE 01

Jim Huylebroek is also based. But she did not realise she was pregnant until she returned to Al Jazeera's headquarters in Doha, Qatar. It is illegal to be pregnant and unmarried in Qatar, so Bellis kept the pregnancy secret as she prepared to return to New Zealand.

When told she did not qualify for an exemption under New Zealand's strict COVID-19-enforced border controls and with Afghanistan the only other place she and Mr Huylebroek had visas to live, Ms Bellis said she called senior Taliban contacts and was told she could give birth there.

"We're happy for you, you can come and you won't have a problem," Bellis said the Taliban told her in an interview with the New Zealand Herald. "Don't worry. Everything will be fine," she added they said.

"In my time of need, the New Zealand government said you're not welcome here. "When the Taliban offer you - a pregnant, unmarried woman - safe haven, you know your situation is messed up."

After going public with her situation, and involving lawyers, Ms Bellis said she had been contacted by New Zealand officials who said her rejected application was under review. The government's COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins said he had asked officials to check whether the proper procedures had been followed in Ms Bellis' case, "which appeared at first sight to warrant further explanation".

NYT report on Pegasus: Modi gov't has committed treason: Rahul

DNA

NEW DELHI: The Congress has attacked the Modi government over a New York Times report which claimed that the Indian government bought the Pegasus spy tool in 2017 as part of a deal with Israel, saying that the government indulged in illegal snooping using the spyware which amounts to "treason". Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a tweet said that the Modi government "bought" Pegasus to "spy on our primary democratic institutions, politicians and public". "Govt functionaries, opposition leaders, armed forces, judiciary all were targeted by these phone tapping. This is treason and 'Modi Govt has committed treason,'" he tweeted. Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said on Twitter, "Why did Modi gov't act like the enemies of India and use a warfare weapon against Indian citizens?" "Illegal snooping using Pegasus amounts to treason. No one is above the law and we will ensure that justice is served," he said. Citing the media report, Congress spokesperson Shama Moammed said this is "irrefutable proof" that the BJP government used military grade spyware to snoop on the citizens of India, including former Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

PSL is a high-quality league: Imran Tahir



KARACHI: Experienced South African cricketer Imran Tahir feels that the Pakistan Super League is a high-quality league, and there's a tough competition between bat and bowlers, especially with the short boundaries, and it challenges bowlers to do more if they want to be effective. "A bowler knows the importance of keeping the line and length because if you miss the line, you'll be hit for a boundary, so it gives you challenge and makes you perfect as a bowler," he said. The experienced cricketer said that with the innovation of cricket shots, the bowlers are also thinking of different techniques and are getting as clever as batters are. He is fit enough to represent South Africa in the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup in Australia. He hopes that South African selectors will consider his recent performances in world leagues. In an exclusive interview to Geo News, the 42-year-old cricketer said that he feels that he has still a year or so before deciding on his plans to hang boots. Pakistan-born cricketer, who played most of his initial cricket in Pakistan, also shared his feelings on being a foreign cricketer in the league of his birthplace. "It is a strange feeling that I am an overseas player in the country where I was born and played my initial cricket. But I am thankful to South Africa that it gave me a chance to reach my dreams and prove myself in international cricket," he said. "The love I receive here from the fans and the support from my teammates always make me feel at home," he added. Imran has represented Pakistan U19, Pakistan A, and domestic teams Lahore, WAPDA, and Redco before moving to South Africa to pursue an international career after being overlooked by selectors in Pakistan. He got the opportunity to represent South Africa in 2011, and since then, Imran has played 107 ODIs, 38 T20Is, and 20 Test matches. He last donned South Africa's jersey in the 2019 World Cup in England, but he has plans not to retire from international cricket. "I am still available for selection in T20 internationals," Imran said. "I believe I am fit enough to play the World Cup [in Australia], I hope that selectors will consider my performances in leagues around the world, and if they do, then I am sure they'll find me a deserving candidate," he said. - DNA

Barty 'humbled' after joining tennis royalty

MELBOURNE: Ashleigh Barty says she feels "humbled" to have joined tennis royalty's most exclusive club with a Grand Slam crown on three different surfaces, but vowed: "There's still work to be done." The 25-year-old achieved the feat by becoming the Australian Open's first home champion in 44 years when she came from 1-5 down in the second set of Saturday's final to beat Danielle Collins 6-3, 7-6 (7/2). It followed her breakthrough French Open success in 2019 and Wimbledon last year, putting her in elite company. The only other active players to snare majors on clay, grass and hard courts are legends of the sport - Serena Williams, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, and Novak Djokovic. Barty and Williams are the only two to win their first three Slams on three surfaces. "I feel very humble to be in such a select group. To be honest, I don't really feel like I belong with those champions of our sport," said the world number one. "I'm still very much learning and trying to refine my craft and try and learn every single day and get better and better." Even her coach Craig Tyzzer is amazed at what Barty has achieved. "I think we've all got to sit



back and just look at what she's been able to do on different surfaces and just her ability to play the level of tennis that she does," he said. "I mean, sometimes I'm just in awe of it." Widely seen as one of the best players on tour, Barty has

also rapidly become its best, with her dizzying array of slices, pinpoint serving and seamless forehand typifying her all-round game. She often pays tribute to Tyzzer for helping her become the player that she is, but it started at a much younger age with childhood coach Jim Joyce. "Ultimately that was one of the biggest challenges that Jim set out for me when I was young - to be a complete player and be really consistent across all surfaces and be able to play on all surfaces," she said. - APP

Lawmakers from over 20 countries wish Beijing 2022 success

BEIJING: More than 30 lawmakers from over 20 countries across the world including Pakistan have expressed their wishes for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and voiced opposition to the politicization of the Games. The lawmakers made the remarks at a special program of CGTN dedicated to Beijing 2022. The program, themed "The Beauty of the Winter Olympics: A Celebration of the Human Spirit," is part of the China Media Group (CMG) Forum. The lawmakers spoke highly of China's efforts to host a "simple, safe and splendid" Winter Olympics despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and wished the Games a success. CMG President Shen Haixiong welcomed the lawmakers to take part in the program. He said peaceful development and shared destiny are key elements of building a community with a shared future for mankind - a vision advocated by Chinese President Xi Jinping and also ideals of the Olympic movement. "The Beijing Winter Olympics embodies mankind's yearning for peace and excellence," Shen said. "It is more important than ever for us to come 'Together,'" he stressed. Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman of the Pakistani Senate's Defense Committee, said Pakistan and other Asian countries firmly oppose the boycott of Beijing 2022 in any form and any attempt to instigate confrontation and division. The Olympic spirit calls for friendship and cooperation, he said. Gong Tapananci, former deputy prime minister of Thailand, expressed confidence that the Games will achieve a great success. Despite the lack of ice and snow in Thailand, the country has decided to send a delegation to attend the Winter Olympics, he said. Wang Yanxia, member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee and Deputy Minister of the Sports Department of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, said the smooth preparations for the event owe a great deal to the Chinese people's love for winter sports, the support from the Chinese government, and the help offered by experts and technicians from various countries. Filatova Irina Anatolyevna, member of the Russian State Duma, said China and Russia are friendly neighbors. The significance of their mutual trust has been demonstrated through sports, she added. Sainkhuu Ganbaatar, member of parliament of Mongolia, said the Olympic Games should not be obstructed by COVID-19 or political issues. The Games organizers have made orderly preparations for the event under "almost impossible" circumstances, winning respect and support from the world, he said. - APP

Beijing sees record cases since June

BEIJING: Beijing recorded its highest number of new Covid-19 cases for a year and a half on Sunday, as the Chinese capital gears up to host the Winter Olympics in five days. China will hold the Games in a strict "closed-loop" bubble as part of its zero-Covid strategy of targeted lockdowns, border restrictions and lengthy quarantines. The approach has helped the world's second-largest economy keep the number of new infections far lower than many other countries, but it is battling local outbreaks in several cities as well as in the Olympic bubble. The upcoming Lunar New Year - China's biggest national holiday - presents further challenges as millions of people return to their hometowns and mingle with family and friends. Beijing's tally of 20 new cases on Sunday was the city's highest since June 2020, according to the National Health Commission (NHC). City authorities have locked down some housing compounds, while officials in Fengtai district - where most of Sunday's infections were detected - have begun testing around 2 million people for the virus. The Olympics bubble separates everyone involved in the Games from the wider Chinese population to curb the risk of infections leaking out. - Agencies

Islamabad United thrash Peshawar Zalmi

Islamabad chased down the target in 15.5 overs and stamped their authority by announcing themselves in the HBL PSL 7. Earlier, Peshawar Zalmi were asked to bat first after Shadab Khan won the toss for Islamabad United



STAFF REPORT

KARACHI: Alex Hales and Paul Stirling helped Islamabad United chase down a 169-run target set by Peshawar Zalmi in the fifth match of the HBL PSL 7.

The Islamabad United openers put up an entertaining display as they registered a convincing victory over a largely unimpressive Zalmi side. Stirling opened his account with a half-century from just 18 balls as he smashed 7 boundaries and 3 maximums. However, soon after raising his bat, he was run out by Zalmi captain Wahab. Alex Hales continued the aggression despite losing Stirling in the 10th over and was supported well by Rahmanul

lah Gurbaz from the other end. Hales scored an unbeaten 82 which included 13 boundaries and 3 maximums. Islamabad chased down the target in 15.5 overs and stamped their authority by announcing themselves in the HBL PSL 7. Earlier, Peshawar Zalmi were asked to bat first after Shadab Khan won the toss for Islamabad United.

Zalmi found it difficult early on as they lost four wickets for 35 runs; Faheem Ashraf dismissed Yasir Khan (14) and Hussain Talat (2) whereas Hasan Ali and Shadab Khan picked up the other two wickets. Shoaib Malik (25) and Ben Cutting (26) both made decent contributions but the show was stolen by Sherfane Rutherford who scored an unbeaten 70 from 46 balls. Zalmi finished their innings on 168/6.

Briefs

President Aliyev visits Ganja city

BAKU: President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has visited the city of Ganja, Azertag reported on January 30. The head of state laid flowers at a statue of national leader Heydar Aliyev in the center of the city of Ganja. President Ilham Aliyev attended the inauguration of a new building of Ganja State Drama Theatre, and Ganja regional "ASAN xidmat" Center No.2. The head of state viewed the construction progress at Ganja Sports Palace, attended the opening of a locomotive depot of the Azerbaijan Railways Closed Joint Stock Company, and laid a foundation stone for Ganja Memorial Complex. President Ilham Aliyev was interviewed by Azerbaijan State News Agency. – APP

Storm Malik hits northern Europe

HELSINKI: A powerful winter storm swept through northern Europe over the weekend, killing at least four people, destroying houses and cars, closing bridges and causing flooding and halting transport while leaving thousands of households without electricity. Storm Malik was advancing in the Nordic region on Sunday, bringing strong gusts of wind, and extensive rain and snowfall in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Malik reached the Nordic region and northern Germany late Saturday after moving in from Britain where it caused havoc with material damage and transport chaos, hitting Scotland particularly bad. In Scotland, a boy and a 60-year-old woman were killed Saturday by falling trees as strong winds battered northern parts of Britain. Wind gusts of more than 100 mph (160 kph) have been reported in parts of Scotland, causing widespread disruption to transport and power cuts to tens of thousands of homes. Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon warned that another storm due to hit the region on Sunday may be "more severe for parts of Scotland" than anticipated. In Denmark, excessively strong winds with heavy rain caused the temporary closure of several bridges on Saturday including the key Oeresund road and rail bridge connecting Copenhagen and the Swedish city of Malmö. Danish media reported that a 78-year-old woman died from severe injuries after falling in strong winds. In neighboring Germany, local media reported that a man was killed on Saturday after being hit by a billboard that was loosened by the storm. Flooding in many parts of Denmark caused substantial material damage. Several traffic crashes caused by falling trees and flying debris were reported to police. – APP

Uzbekistan, S Korea mark 30th anniversary

TASHKENT: On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea, the heads of the foreign ministries of the two countries exchanged congratulatory messages. The message of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov notes that Uzbekistan values close and trusting relations with the Republic of Korea, which is regarded as a reliable friend and time-tested partner. "A close political dialogue has been established at the highest level, between parliaments, governments, ministries of foreign affairs. Our countries closely cooperate within the framework of international organizations, have similar approaches to regional and global issues," the Uzbek Foreign Minister said in a letter. In turn, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, Chung Eui-yong, emphasizes that relations between the two countries are developing dynamically in the political, economic, cultural and many other fields in the spirit of a special strategic partnership. The legal basis of the Uzbek-Korean cooperation is 197 documents. – APP

Ukraine calls on West to be 'firm' in Russia talks

Britain is set to double the NATO force with troops, weapons, warships and jets, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Saturday, as Washington warned Kremlin had massed enough troops and hardware at border to threaten the whole of Ukraine

WEB DESK

KYIV: Kyiv on Saturday urged the West to remain "vigilant and firm" in its talks with Russia, as US President Joe Biden announced a small troop deployment to eastern Europe amid fears Moscow could order the invasion of Ukraine. Britain is set to double the NATO force with troops, weapons, warships and jets, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Saturday, as Washington warned the Kremlin had massed enough troops and hardware at the border to threaten the whole of Ukraine. As top US defence officials have called for further diplomatic efforts to avert a "horrific" conflict, Western lead-

ers have scrambled to defuse the crisis by reaching out to Russian President Vladimir Putin, while also trying to keep the pressure up by vowing unprecedented sanctions should he send in his forces. As Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday urged his Western partners to avoid stirring "panic" over the massive Russian troop buildup, Putin and French President Emmanuel Macron agreed on the need for de-escalation. According to a Macron aide, Putin told the French leader in a call lasting more than an hour that he had "no offensive plans". In Washington, Biden nevertheless said he would soon send a small number of US troops to bolster the NATO presence in

French, German foreign ministers to visit Ukraine

PARIS: The French and German foreign ministers will travel to Ukraine as part of efforts to de-escalate tensions with Russia. A statement by the French Foreign Ministry said that Jean-Yves Le Drian and his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock will visit Kyiv on Feb. 7-8. Russia recently amassed tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's eastern border, prompting fears that the Kremlin could be planning another military offensive against its former Soviet neighbor. Moscow has denied that it is preparing to invade and said its troops are there for exercises. Le Drian said he assured the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba of "full support and solidarity." "Our mobilization continues, particularly in the Normandy format, for the de-escalation of tensions," he said on Twitter. Earlier this week, France hosted a high-level meeting of advisors to the heads of State of Normandy Four – Germany, France, Russia, and Ukraine – in Paris. President Emmanuel Macron has been personally engaging in dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. – APP

eastern Europe as tensions remain heightened. The United States already has tens of thousands of troops stationed across mostly Western Europe. France said Saturday that it was planning to send hundreds of troops to eastern NATO ally Romania as part of a deployment first touted by Macron earlier this month. Meanwhile Britain's offer – set to be made to NATO next week – could see London double the approximately 1,150 UK troops currently in eastern European countries and "defensive weapons" sent to Estonia, Johnson's office said late Saturday. "This package would send a clear message to the Kremlin – we will not tolerate

their destabilising activity, and we will always stand with our NATO allies in the face of Russian hostility," he said. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Saturday issued a call for the West to remain "vigilant and firm in contacts with the Russian side" in a conversation with French counterpart Yves Le Drian. The talks underlined the need to "refrain from steps that could fuel anxiety" in Ukrainian society and "undermine the financial stability" of the post-Soviet country, a Ukrainian statement said. Le Drian is expected to visit Ukraine together with his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock on February 7-8 as part of a flurry of diplomacy.

Portugal picks new government

LISBON: Portuguese voters went to the polls Sunday in an early election that looked set to produce another vulnerable minority government, just as the country is poised to start spending a huge windfall of European Union funds. That outcome would leave Portugal back where it started two months ago, when lawmakers rejected the minority Socialist government's spending bill and the country's president dissolved parliament. The center-left Socialists and their main rivals, the center-right Social Democratic Party, were in a tight race, opinion polls suggested. Those two parties traditionally collect around 70% of the vote and have for decades alternated in power in Western Europe's poorest country. The landslide victory needed to form a majority government, which can pass most legislation despite opposition in parliament, is rare. Portugal has had just three majority governments in the past half-century. That means one of the two main parties likely will have to form parliamentary alliances by cutting deals with smaller parties. The stakes are high: Portugal, a country of around 10.3 million people, is poised to begin deploying some 45 billion euros (\$50 billion) of aid as a member of the EU to help spur the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic. Two-thirds of that sum is intended for public projects, such as major infrastructure, giving the next government a financial bonanza. The other third is to be awarded to private companies. – APP

Russia's Covid tally hits pandemic record

MOSCOW: Russia's daily count of new coronavirus infections surged to more than 121,000 on Sunday, an eightfold increase compared with the beginning of the month as the highly contagious omicron variant spreads through the country. The state coronavirus task force reported 121,288 new infections over the past 24 hours – an all-time high and 8,000 more than a day earlier. The country's infection numbers have rocketed since early January, when only about 15,000 new cases per day were tallied. The task force said 668 people died of COVID-19 in the past day, bring Russia's total fatality count for the pandemic to 330,728, by far the largest in Europe. Despite the surging infections, authorities have avoided imposing any major restrictions to stem the surge, saying the health system has been coping with the influx of patients. Earlier this month, parliament indefinitely postponed introducing restrictions on the unvaccinated that would have proven unpopular among vaccine-hesitant Russians. And this week health officials cut the required isolation period for those who came in contact with COVID-19 patients from 14 days to seven without offering any explanation for the move. – APP

French left tries 'people's primary'

PARIS: A four-day "peoples primary", to pick a left-wing candidate for the French presidency from a divided and squabbling field, ends Sunday with doubts remaining that a unifying figure on the left will emerge. A total of 467,000 people have signed up to take part in the online vote, which started on Thursday. They have to rank five professional politicians and two civil society candidates on a scale from "very good" to "inadequate". Whoever wins the best grades average would be expected to rally all the other candidates and their voters behind them, giving the left a fighting chance to unseat President Emmanuel Macron in the April election. But the exercise, initiated by political activists including environmentalists, feminists and anti-racists groups, has been dogged by serious drawbacks. The biggest is the upfront refusal by leading candidates Jean-Luc Melenchon, a hard-left politician, Yannick Jadot, a Green, and Socialist Anne Hidalgo to pay any attention to its result. – APP



KARACHI: PTI Secretary General and Federal Minister Asad Umer and PTI Sindh President and Federal Minister Syed Ali Haider Zaidi addressing a press conference after PTI's Provincial Advisory Council. – APP

Italy re-elects Mattarella as president

ROME: Italy's parliament on Saturday voted for President Sergio Mattarella to serve a second term, putting an end to a six-day stalemate that threatened the survival of the country's government. Mattarella, who needed at least 505 votes, received 759 out of 983 ballots cast in the lower house of parliament, with the far-right Brothers of Italy the sole party officially opposing him. Lawmakers broke into applause as the result was read out. The 80-year-old, whose term was due to end on Feb. 3, had repeatedly said he did not want a second go at the seven-year presidency, but parties within Prime Minister Mario Draghi's grand coalition turned to Mattarella after multiple failed attempts to find a successor. In a short acceptance speech, he said Italy's present challenges meant that "we cannot shirk the duties to which we are called, and of course they must prevail over other considerations and over different personal plans." Draghi hailed his re-election as "splendid news for Italians." Mattarella, a former Christian democrat minister and constitutional court judge who went into politics after his brother was slain by the Sicilian mafia in 1980, is the second president in a row, after Giorgio Napolitano, to serve a second term. In Italy, presidents are the cornerstone of the political system, serving a seven-year tenure. Presidents name prime ministers, call elections, influence government policy discreetly and can veto laws or ministerial appointments. Mattarella's re-election means that Draghi, the former president of the European Central Bank (ECB), will continue leading the government. He had his own presidential ambitions, which were dashed. "Keeping Mattarella in the Quirinale (presidential palace) and Draghi in the Chigi (prime ministerial palace) is the only way to preserve Italy from harebrained follies and lack of political direction," Former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi wrote on Facebook. Promoting Draghi to the presidency proved impossible as the disparate alliance of parties supporting his government – stretching from the center-left Democratic Party to the hard-right League – proved unable to agree on who could take his place. – APP

Turkey, Bahrain share united, stable Gulf region vision

MANAMA: Turkey and Bahrain share the vision of a united, stable and secure Gulf region, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said on Sunday as he pays an official two-day visit to the kingdom. Çavuşoğlu is visiting Bahrain upon the invitation of his counterpart, Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani, to exchange views on bilateral relations, as well as regional and international issues. Speaking to the Bahraini press ahead of his visit to Manama, Çavuşoğlu said: "The new dialogue and cooperation period in our region opens a window for permanent peace, stability and prosperity. Turkey is ready to do its part for regional cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and a common vision." He added that Turkey welcomes the atmosphere of dialogue, diplomacy and cooperation among regional countries. "In this field, we appreciate the successful efforts of Bahrain," he added. The year 2021 saw Turkey seeking warmer ties with several regional countries and longtime foes after many tumultuous years. Converging interests have driven regional power shifts in the Middle East, mainly

led by regional powerhouses Turkey and the UAE. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ) visited Turkey for the first time since 2012 in November of last year. Similarly, Ankara and Cairo have recently exchanged positive signals in an attempt to restore relations after more than seven years of political estrangement. In May, a delegation of senior Turkish officials traveled to Egypt for an official visit – the first since

Çavuşoğlu further stated that the two countries stood side by side during difficult times and that it was King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa who was the first leader to visit Turkey following the failed 2016 coup attempt of the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ) in Turkey. "The Turkish people and leadership will not forget this example of honest solidarity in difficult times," he said. Turkey and Bahrain, two countries with historical and



2013 – to discuss normalizing diplomatic relations amid efforts by the two countries to improve ties that deteriorated following the Arab Spring. The move was reciprocated by a second round in Ankara. Moreover, Ankara and Riyadh have in recent months attempted to repair some diplomatic damage after a decade of tension, especially after the 2018 murder of dis-

sident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Saudi Arabia's Istanbul Consulate. After years of looking abroad for answers, countries in the Middle East now appear to instead be talking to each other to find solutions following two decades defined by war and political upheaval. The diplomatic maneuvering signals a growing realization across the region that the United States' interest is moving elsewhere and that now is the time for negotia-

tions that were unthinkable just a year ago. "I believe that this is the right moment to further Turkey, Bahrain relations. Let us make use of that. We must ensure that the 50th year of bilateral diplomatic ties, becomes a cornerstone in bilateral cooperation. This will be to the advantage of the whole region," the foreign minister said. cultural ties, have established their relations on the basis of mutual interest and dialogue. The two countries also formed the Turkish-Bahraini Business Council, based on the agreement signed by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) in 2006 in Istanbul. – APP

France, Iran talk about nuclear deal

The Iranian presidency said in a statement that "in the negotiations, the Islamic Republic has demonstrated its willingness and seriousness to reach an agreement, and any effort by the other side in this regard should include lifting of sanctions, verification and a meaningful guarantee"

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron insisted on "the need to accelerate" the process to "achieve progress" in the Iranian nuclear talks. During a "long exchange" with his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi, Emmanuel Macron stressed "the need for Iran to demonstrate a constructive approach and return to the full implementation of its obligations." "On the 2015 nuclear agreement, the President of the Republic reiterated his conviction that a diplomatic solution is possible and imperative, and stated that any agreement will require clear and sufficient commitments from all parties, which France is working on with all its partners,"

the French presidency said in a statement on Sunday. The Iranian presidency said in a statement that "in the negotiations, the Islamic Republic has demonstrated its willingness and seriousness to reach an agreement, and any effort by the other side in this regard should include the lifting of sanctions, verification and a meaningful guarantee." On Friday, France had said that the negotiation could "succeed", while talks between the West and Tehran in Vienna were paused for the participants to return to their respective capitals for consultations and instructions to return next week. Tehran this week reported "pro-

gress in the right direction" although "important issues remain" that require "political decisions from Washington". The talks resumed at the end of November in the Austrian capital after a five-month break between Iran and the countries still party to the agreement concluded in 2015, which include France, the UK, Germany, Russia, and China. The aim of the talks is to reinstate the US, which withdrew from the pact in 2018, as well as to bring Iran back into compliance with its commitments. The 2015 deal offered Iran relief from international sanctions in exchange for drastically limiting its nuclear programme, which

is under strict UN control, and guarantees that it is not seeking to acquire a nuclear bomb, as it has always claimed. French President Emmanuel Macron called for the "immediate release" of a French-Iranian researcher imprisoned in Iran, officials said on Sunday. Macron made the plea in a "long" phone call on Saturday with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, according to a statement from the French presidency. Fariba Adelkhah, a 62-year-old anthropologist, has been detained in Iran since June 2019. She had been under house arrest since October 2020 but was sent back to prison earlier this month. Adelkhah was given a five-year sentence for "gathering and col-

lusion" against Iran's security. French authorities said her conviction is "purely political and arbitrary." Macron also expressed his "concerns" over the situation of another French national detained in Iran who is on a hunger strike to protest his treatment, according to the French presidency's statement. Benjamin Briere, 36 has been sentenced to eight years in prison on what his lawyer said are trumped-up espionage and propaganda charges. Briere was arrested in May 2020 after taking pictures in a desert area where photography is prohibited and asking questions on social media about Iran's obligatory Islamic headscarf for women. – Agencies

Briefs

Azerbaijan plans Karabakh restoration

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan will prepare proposals for restoration and reconstruction work in Karabakh, which will cover 2023-2026. This was reflected in the order signed by Prime Minister Ali Asadov on the preparation of the draft state budget of Azerbaijan for 2023, as well as the concept of the country's economic and social development and medium-term forecasts.

"The relevant central, local executive authorities of Azerbaijan and other state bodies must submit proposals to the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Finance by March 1, 2022, on the funds necessary to carry out restoration and reconstruction work in the liberated territories in the period from 2023 to 2026," reads the order.

UK plans to unveil new sanctions legislation on Russia

LONDON: Britain has been set to announce new sanctions legislation next week to hit "a much wider variety" of Russian economic targets as part of efforts to deter Moscow from invading Ukraine. "The draft law will widen the country's sanctions toolbox so "any company of interest to the Kremlin and the regime in Russia" could be targeted, UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said on Sunday.

"What I'll be announcing later this week is improved legislation on sanctions so we can target more Russian interests that are of direct relevance to the Kremlin," Truss told Sky News. "There will be nowhere to hide for Putin's oligarchs," she added. "What the legislation enables us to do is hit a much wider variety of targets, so there can be nobody who thinks that they will be immune to those sanctions." Relations between Russia and the West are at their lowest point since the Cold War after Moscow deployed tens of thousands of troops on the border of Ukraine. The military buildup has prompted fears that Russia is planning an invasion, spooking NATO and its members in the region and prompting the Western alliance to explore bolstering its own deployments there. Britain is preparing to offer NATO a "major" deployment of troops, weapons, warships and jets in Europe as soon as next week, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Saturday. In her interview, Truss also warned that European allies must remain united in deterring Moscow, and prioritise "defending freedom and democracy" over "immediate financial issues". - APP

Houthi continuing to violate arms embargo

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The Houthi rebels have been continuing to violate a UN-imposed arms embargo in Yemen and to recruit children to fight in the seven-year war. "All military and paramilitary forces loyal to the Sanaa-based authorities fall under this definition" of having violated the arms embargo, said an annual report provided to the Security Council and published on Saturday. The report said the Houthis had continued "to source critical components for their weapon systems from companies in Europe and Asia, using a complex network of intermediaries to obscure the chain of custody." It said that "most types of unmanned aerial vehicles, waterborne improvised explosive devices and short-range rockets are assembled in Houthi-controlled areas." Components such as engines and electronics, the report said, "are sourced from abroad using a complex network of intermediaries in Europe, the Middle East and Asia." The report did not confirm frequent US and Saudi allegations that Iran is directly involved in the violations. While Tehran admits it supports the Houthis politically, it denies it has helped them obtain arms.



NALTAR: An attractive and eye catching view of clouds and snow covered the Naltar Valley Mountains. - APP

PPP workers on streets to send govt packing: Bilawal

- Says getting rid of Imran Khan is vital for country

STAFF REPORT

SARGODHA: Slamming the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government for what he alleged bringing 'destruction' instead of tabdeeli (change) in the country, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Sunday that the party workers were now out on the streets to send the 'selected' government home. Addressing a mammoth public gathering at Sial Sharif on the occasion of former PTI ticket holder from NA-92, Pir Sahebzada Naemuddin Sialvi joining PPP formally with his associates, the PPP Chairman said that it would be written in history in golden words that these were the PPP jiyalas (activists) who kicked the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government out of the corridors of power. "Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto gave us four principles for the party and Shaheed Mohtarma Bezar added another one. Islam is our religion, democracy is our pol-



itics, equality is our economy, all powers to the people and martyrdom is our goal, are the five principles," he said while welcoming Pir Sahebzada Naemuddin Sialvi to the party of martyrs. Chairman PPP said that Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Bezar Bhutto made this party the voice of innocent to give them their rights. They faced dictators like General Ayub, General Zia and General Musharraf. Now, we will start our march from Karachi to dislodge this puppet Imran Khan and put our demands before every-

Opposition parties themselves are in turmoil: Qureshi

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Pakistan Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Sunday said that the opposition parties themselves are in turmoil. Addressing the media in Multan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that all parties rejected the Sindh Local Govt Act. The PML-N is saying that PPP has done injustice with them. Making South Punjab a province is included in our manifesto, if the opposition parties are so concerned about making South Punjab a province, they must move forward and join hands with the federal government. The FM said that China, like Pakistan, considers Kashmir an Indian illegally occupied and disputed territory. China also has a clear position on the issue of IIOJK. - DNA

one in Islamabad. This government has destroyed the country in the name of change. We know that the deal with the IMF is not in the interest of the people as it compromises our sovereignty. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that we held Kissan marches all over the country to express solidarity with them. Our growers are thrown from pillar to post for a bag of urea. The growers are not given the appropriate support prices of their crops. This puppet has destroyed the agriculture of the country, which is the backbone of our economy. He said that whenever the PPP is in power, from the time of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and President Asif Ali Zardari, it gives relief to the growers, labourers, students, pensioners and the salaried class while dealing with poverty, unemployment and price-hike. During the worst recession in the world, PPP introduced the Benazir Income Support Programme and increased salaries and pensions.

WHO's Asia-Pacific chief probed over racism, misconduct

AGENCIES

NEW YORK: World Health Organisation head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced an investigation into a "senior staff" member, the UN agency's Western Pacific chief, over claims of racism and misconduct. "We have been aware of some concerns since late 2021 and have been following due process. With the cooperation of the staff member, an investigation process is underway," Tedros said on the final day of the WHO's executive council meeting in Geneva. The WHO chief didn't say when the enquiry opened, adding that "there is a limit to what we can say at this time". However, Tedros added that "we take these allegations seriously". The serious accusations, detailed in an email seen by AFP after the affair was revealed on Thursday by the Associated Press, target the head of the agency's Western Pacific region Japanese doctor Takeshi Kasai, who has already said he is ready to cooperate in any investigation. According to AP, dozens of WHO staff members filed an internal complaint in October before sending an email in mid-January to the countries on the UN agency's executive board. In the email, they accused Kasai of "authoritarian and racist leadership" add-



ing that he had regularly shared privileged information with the Japanese Foreign Ministry, of not wanting to criticise China and of having "wasted" donor money. Many countries expressed their concerns over the matter earlier this week. On Saturday, several diplomats again called on the WHO to investigate all allegations of misconduct. "We take all allegations seriously and expect that independent investigations will be progressed as a matter of priority," an Australian representative said Saturday. A British representative said: "once again we regret to have heard of this first in the media." A Norwegian official said "we need a WHO that we all trust, member states as well as staff, beneficiaries and the global community. This includes creating an organizational culture that promotes good ethics and builds trust within the organization and having solid systems in place to enable this".

Senior UK official was watching cricket as Kabul fell

MONITORING REPORT

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's top aide spent a full day watching a cricket match just three days before Kabul fell, the Telegraph newspaper reported. Dan Rosenfield, the prime minister's chief of staff, attended a match at Lord's cricket ground on Aug. 12 between England and India while officials were rushing through plans to send a UK force to Afghanistan to secure Britain's biggest airlift evacuation since World War II. Rosenfield returned to Lord's on Aug. 21 for another match, this time on a Saturday, as the crisis worsened in Kabul. When Rosenfield was at Lord's in the evening of Aug. 21, Kabul's airport was shut down and the city was in full flight, with thousands desperately attempting to flee. Gen. Lord Richard Dannatt, the former head of the army, said the government had been "asleep on the watch" a week after the capital fell to the Taliban. A Downing Street source insisted to the Telegraph that Rosenfield had been "in constant contact with the office".

Pak likely to import over 500,000 tonnes of petrol

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: In a bid to meet the country's demand, Pakistan may import over 500,000 tonnes of petrol and around 250,000 tonnes of diesel next month. Estimates from oil industry placed the demand for petrol at 712,500 tonnes in February 2022 and for diesel at 647,500 tonnes. The demand for furnace oil in the coming month is expected to reach 161,000 tonnes, the approximations calculated by the domestic industry revealed. Pakistan relies almost

80% on imported oil as local production is not enough to meet the surging demand. Domestic prices are around their highest in the country's history due to a swell in global oil prices, which burdens consumers more as the rupee has massively devalued against the dollar. The country would be importing diesel and petrol for local consumption as local supply from the refineries would not be enough to meet demand. However, no import of furnace oil would be made as local refineries were overflowing with this fuel owing to almost zero demand from independent power producers, the major consumers of furnace oil.

Sharif family wants to loot country, says Farrukh Habib



ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: State Minister for Information & Broadcasting Farrukh Habib has said that judiciary is fully independent and the government will not allow anybody to sabotage the supremacy of courts. Talking to the media at the inaugural ceremony of a marriage hall here on Sunday, he strongly condemned the statement of opposition leader Rana Sanaullah that "they would besiege the courts

if Shehbaz Sharif is convicted". He said that the government would not allow anybody to take the law into his own hands. "The country is running under a constitution and law and the courts are independent to take action against anything ultra vires to the law." He said that the Sharif doctrine was introduced after non-political elections of 1985. The ultimate objective of that doctrine was to usurp power and to loot and plunder the national wealth. In case of accountability, the doctrine was aimed to intimidate and attack the state institutions, bribe the government functionaries and use other coercive measures. He said that courtiers of Nawaz Sharif also indulged in loot and plunder and now they were making hue and cry as the anti-corruption court of the FIA was going to start hearing of Shehbaz Sharif case from Feb 1. He said that no doubt Shehbaz Sharif had not been involved in corruption of a penny but of billions of rupees from 2008 to 2018. Their hue and cry proves that they were involved in loot and plunder, he added. He said that the Sharif doctrine was pleaded and promoted by Rana Sanaullah, Nihal Hashmi, Talal Chaudhry and Daniyal Aziz, while most of the supporters of the Sharif family had started their political journey from motorbikes. He said that the Sharif family tried to malign Justice (retd) Hamid Farooq whereas Justice (retd) Asif Saeed Khosa had dubbed them as Sicilian mafia.

29 killed due to Covid-19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's active COVID-19 case count stayed over the 100,000 mark for the second consecutive day, National Command and Operation Centre's (NCO) data showed Sunday morning, as the country's positivity rate is again on the rise after a slight decline. The stats issued by the NCO suggested that 7,978 new infections were detected overnight after 64,016 diagnostic tests were conducted across Pakistan. The new cases pushed the countrywide positivity ratio to 12.46% and the current number of active cases stand at 100,005. The first time Pakistan's active case count crossed the hundred thousand mark was on Saturday, when the country logged 104,095 cases, as per the NCO. However, the tally was lowered as 12,019 patients suffering from COVID-19 recuperated overnight. Meanwhile, 29 patients succumbed to coronavirus during the last 24 hours, taking the country's COVID-19 death toll to 29,248. The NCO has extended coronavirus curbs in the country from January 31 till February 15, as thousands continue to contract the infection amid a spread of the Omicron variant. The NCO had imposed non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) on January 19, which were to be reviewed on January 27 in light of the COVID-19 situation in the country.

Indian man gets Pakistani visa

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: When 76-year-old Sikka Khan learnt he had been granted a visa to Pakistan to spend two months with his elder brother, he burst in tears, and hugged the Pakistani Embassy official in New Delhi who handed him the stamped passport. Sikka and his 84-year-old brother, Sadiq Khan, had been separated since British India split into two independent states - India and Pakistan - in August 1947. The partition triggered one of the biggest migrations in history, forcing about 15 million Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs to swap countries in a political upheaval that cost more than a million lives. Sikka and Sadiq were eventually able to briefly meet earlier this month, in Kartarpur, where Pakistan has opened a visa-free crossing to allow Indian Sikh pilgrims access to one of the holiest sites of their religion, Gurdwara Darbar Sahib.

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