



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, February 03, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**China visit to boost Pak-China mutual ties, says PM Imran**

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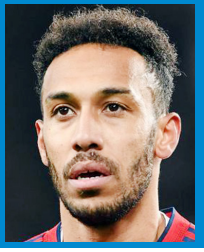
**Dutch PM urges dialogue in Ukraine crisis**

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**Aubameyang signs for FC Barcelona**

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**Briefs**

**Shehbaz responds to AGP letter**

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the attorney general of Pakistan's January 24 letter to him seeking fresh reports on the medical condition of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was driven by "political motivation" and is tantamount to "contempt of court" since the matter was already pending with the Lahore High Court. In his response to the AGP's letter, Shehbaz pointed out that the requisite reports were being submitted in the office of Registrar LHC periodically.

**Punjab govt will offer 130,000 jobs**

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Chief Minister Usman Buzdar said that Punjab government will offer 130,000 jobs and candidate will be given relaxation of two years as stated in the notification issued. While addressing the public in Dera Ghazi Khan, CM said that in the first step, advertisement for these government jobs has been published and the contestants will be granted a relaxation of two years in the upper age limit. Usman Buzdar also said that Pakistan had deviated from its track in the past because of the wrong decisions taken by the previous governments.

**Inflation at highest level**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said that inflation is at highest level of two years and no end of this tsunami is in sight. Sherry Rehman, in a tweet, said that with 0.39 percent increase, the inflation has risen to 13 percent meanwhile price of cooking oil has increased by 54.33 percent, pulses 41.3 percent and power tariff by 56 percent. Petrol price has increased by Rs35 per liter and diesel by Rs30 in first seven months of the current fiscal year.

## China visit to boost mutual ties, says PM

The Premier will leave for China today; chairs high level preparatory meeting

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday expressed the confidence that his visit to China on Thursday would take the strong bilateral relations between the two countries to new heights. He expressed these views while chairing a high-level meeting ahead of his upcoming four-day visit to China. The prime minister was given a detailed briefing on projects related to China Pakistan Economic Corridor, Special Economic Zones, trade, information technology and agriculture. The meeting was attended by federal ministers including Shaukat Tareen, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Asad Umer and Hammad Azhar, Commerce Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood, State Minister Farrukh Habib, National security Adviser Dr Moeed Yousaf, Special Assistant Shahbaz Gill and Khalid Mansoor. Prime Minister Imran Khan, on the special invitation of the Chinese

**PM strongly condemns Houthi attack on UAE**



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday "strongly condemned" last week's attempted missile attack by Houthis against the UAE in a telephone call with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh

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**Fawad, Egyptian envoy mull co-op in dramas, films**  
Fawad says the two countries' relations are rooted in centuries old cultural, religious and fraternal links

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Egyptian Ambassador Tarek Mohamed Dahroug Wednesday called on Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain here, and discussed matters of mutual interest, especially related to film, drama, and regional and international situations. During the meeting, they agreed to open dubbing centres in their countries to translate both the

Egyptian and Pakistani films and dramas in respective languages. Talking to the envoy, Fawad said the two countries' relations were rooted in centuries old cultural, religious and fraternal links of their citizens. "They share a great cultural heritage." The current situation in Afghanistan and Prime Minister Imran Khan's upcoming visit to China also came under discussion in the meeting.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi administering the oath to Justice Umar Ata Bandial as Chief Justice of Pakistan. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov. - DNA

**Azerbaijan ambassador meets Naval Chief**  
Both countries enjoy excellent relations in all fields

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov called on the Chief of Naval Staff at the Naval Headquarters. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest. Pakistan and Azerbaijan enjoy excellent relations. Both countries share each other's views on various regional as well international issues. Azerbaijan has been supporting Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir from day one. Azerbaijan believes the issues should be resolved as per the United Nations resolutions. Likewise, Pakistan also extended full moral and diplomatic support to Azerbaijan during its 44 day Patriotic War with Armenia. Pakistan strongly believes that Armenia had illegally occupied Azerbaijani territories and Baku had full mandate to get its territories liberated.

**IMF approves 6th tranche for Pakistan, says Tarin**

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved 6th tranche of Extended Fund Facility programme for Pakistan, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin said Wednesday. "I am pleased to announce that IMF Board has approved 6th tranche of their programme for Pakistan," the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue tweeted. The IMF mission led by Ernesto Ramirez Rigo had held virtual discussions during October 4-November 18, 2021 in the context of the 2021 Article IV consultations and the sixth review of the authorities' reform program supported by the IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF). It is pertinent to mention here that the fund had approved \$6 billion, three-year loan facility for Pakistan back in July 2019 to help resuscitate the country's ailing economy. - APP

**6 women activists still missing in Afghanistan: UN**

"We are gravely concerned for their well-being and safety", Ravina Shamdasani says

CENTRELINE REPORT

UNITED NATIONS: The UN human rights office has expressed alarm over the continued disappearance of six people who it said were abducted in Kabul in connection with recent women's rights protests. "We are gravely concerned for their well-being and safety, Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights," told journalists at a regular press briefing in Geneva. Despite the "de facto" authorities' announcement on Saturday of an investigation into the disappearance two weeks ago of these individuals, "there is still no confirmed information on their whereabouts", she added. In the early evening of 19 January,

**Afghanistan's varsities reopen**

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Some public universities have opened in Afghanistan for the first time since the Taliban seized power in August, with a trickle of women attending classes that officials said would be segregated by gender. Most secondary schools for girls and all public universities were shuttered when the group stormed back to power, sparking fears

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**Tarin thanks Japan for development support**

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Shaukat Tarin at the Finance Division Wednesday. Extending warm welcome to Wada Mitsuhiro, the Finance Minister stated that Pakistan and Japan have enjoyed cordial and friendly relations over the years and this relationship will continue to become even stronger with every passing day. The Finance Minister appreciated the support extended by the Government of Japan for infrastructural and institutional development in Pakistan. He further said that Japan is a major development partner of Pakistan. The Finance Minister also highlighted the initiatives taken by the Government for economic progress and social uplift of the masses. Wada



Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan said that Japan greatly values its bilateral relations with Pakistan. He highlighted operations of the Japanese entities in Pakistan and expressed confidence that business and economic linkages would further strengthen between the two countries. Both reviewed the spectrum of business and investment relations and identified areas for further strengthening and expanding economic cooperation. He congratulated the Finance Minister on achieving important economic reforms.

**Inside...**

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- US and Russia escalate war of words over Ukraine - Page 06
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- US willing to discuss troop limits with Russia - Page 08

## Spanish envoy calls for enhancing bilateral trade

Talking to a delegation of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he appreciated efforts of the government and said that it had adopted the best strategy to overcome impacts of the corona as it affected the global economies

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

ISLAMABAD: "Pakistan Economic Conference" conceived by the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) will play a major role in giving a quantum jump to the exports in addition to attracting maximum Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for the expeditious industrial growth of Pakistan, said His Excellency Mr. Manuel Durán Giménez-Rico ambassador of the Spain. He was talking to a delegation of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). It was headed by Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh President FCCI while Mr. Muhammad Azhar Chaudhary Chairman Economic Conference Committee and Engineer Asim Munir Chairman FCCI

Standing Committee also accompanied him. He said that Pakistan and Spain are enjoying cordial business relations and we must make fresh efforts to further enhance the bilateral trade between the two countries. About Pakistani exports, he said that currently it is restricted to the textile sector and serious efforts are needed to diversify it to survive in this fast changing environment. He also appreciated efforts of the Government of Pakistan and said that it has adopted the best strategy to overcome the ill impacts of the corona as it has dampened the global economies. He said that as corona is now phasing out and we must make collaborated efforts to revisit our policies with a focus on bilateral trade. He expressed satisfaction over the development of two mega indus-

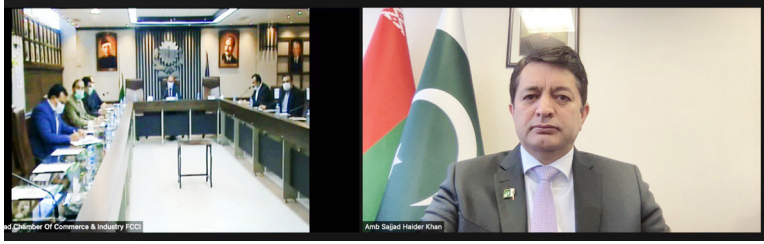


trial estates in Faisalabad and said that Spain will also explore the emerging opportunities for investment in this area. He assured that he would contact and convince the Spanish investors to participate in the scheduled Pakistan Economic Conference. "It will also provide them an opportunity to personally visit M3 and Allama Iqbal industrial estates and explore the emerging investment opportunities in this region", he said and hoped that they would set up hi-tech industrial units with sufficient FDI. He also endorsed the idea to exchange sector specific trade delegations. Atif Munir Sheikh President FCCI said that more than one lac expatriate Pakistani are contributing their productive role in the overall development of Spain who are also cementing our bilateral relations.



# Pak should take advantage of Belarusian market

Ambassador Sajjad said that so far 18 MoUs have been signed to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and Belarus while 12 more are in the pipeline. He said that Belarus also has 9 SEZs where there is a huge potential for joint ventures



## BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: There are vast prospects for enhancing trade relations with Belarus in the near future which Pakistani exporters will have to take immediate steps to take advantage of. This was stated by Pakistani Ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan while addressing a zoom meeting with members of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The conference was also specially attended by the Minister of Trade and Investment stationed in Moscow. Sajjad Haider said that Belarus is a country with a population of 9.4 million but it is far ahead of us in technology which we should take advantage of. He said that 20% of Belarus's exports are minerals and fuel. He said that at present Pakistan is exporting 15 million dollars to Belarus. The country's exports to Pakistan are 35 million. Thus, the balance of trade is in Belarus' favor. He said that although the banking system of Belarus and Pakistan is similar

but there are no reliable statistics in this regard. He said that Pakistani exporters should take full advantage of this market as they had organized 120 events during the last year in which Mango Fair was at the forefront. More than 5,000 people attended the festival. He said that so far 18 MoUs have been signed to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and Belarus while 12 more are in the pipeline.

He said that Belarus also has 9 special economic zones where there is a huge potential for joint ventures. He said that Belarus was exporting 6.65 billion worth of dairy products while Pakistan could benefit from their experience and expertise in this field. He said that at present the number of Pakistanis residing in Belarus is less than 70 out of which 28 are students. Referring to Faisalabad, he said that besides textiles and hosiery, canoes can also be exported from here.

He asked the exporters of Faisalabad to visit Belarus to help them understand the potential of this country. He further said that besides welcoming

the delegation from Faisalabad, he could also arrange direct meetings with the Belarusian importers. Earlier, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Munir Sheikh said that in line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the industrialists of Faisalabad are striving to increase trade. Given that large-scale foreign investment is expected in the coming years.

He said that many foreign companies have been set up in M3 and Allama Iqbal Industrial Estates while by the end of this year, besides China, Turkey and many European countries are also setting up their units here. He said that Belarusian investors should also take advantage of the facilities available in Pakistan. Atif Munir Sheikh said that we should take advantage of Belarus technology and in this regard a trade delegation of Faisalabad Chamber would visit Belarus very soon for direct contact between investors of both the countries.

Earlier, Senior Vice President Imran Mehmood Sheikh gave a brief introduction of Faisalabad and Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and said that exports would have to be increased to sustain Pakistan's economy on a sustainable basis. Bilal Jamil, Mohammad Tayyab, Mohammad Ammar Saeed, Shehzad Hussain, Khalid Nadeem, Shahbaz Ahmed, Rana Habib and Engineer Asim Munir also attended the event.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Abdull Qayyum Niazi calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan at Islamabad. – DNA

## 500,000 people in KP to be vaccinated on a daily basis

PESHAWAR: The anti coronavirus vaccination campaign has continued in 22 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where 500,000 people would be vaccinated on daily basis to eradicate the fatal viral infection.

Dr Niaz Khan, Director General, Health Services KP, told journalists on Wednesday that the door vaccination campaign, which was started on February 1 in 22 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is underway with a target to vaccinate five lakh people on daily basis. The campaign would continue till February 14, 2022. He said a special vaccination campaign in snowfall districts would be launched next month.

He said the first dose's ratio would be increased to over 90 percent in these districts and the second dose would also be administered to people at the same time. Dr. Niaz Khan said over 16,000 teams comprising vaccinators, social mobilizers, and assistants have been constituted who were visiting door to door to vaccinate people.

He said each union council has been distributed into 12 blocks so that no person could be left from the facility. – APP

## FESCO striving hard for customers

CEO said that this project would not only give relief to the existing 14 grid stations and transmission lines but also help FESCO to end the load shedding

### ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Completion of 500KV Faisalabad West Grid Station project will ensure uninterrupted electricity to the sustained industrial, commercial and agriculture consumers, said Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO).

He said that this project would not only give relief to the existing 14 grid stations and transmission lines but also help FESCO to end the forced load shedding in the area. He said that it would also help FESCO to give new electricity connection to the China Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC) related industrial projects. This project will also play an instrumental role in overcoming the line losses and generating the maximum revenue.

He said that Jhang city, Toba, Khewa, Garh Mahraja, Ahmed Pur Sial, Nia Lahore, Gojra, Samundari, Haveli Bahadar Shah were facing chronic problems of low voltage, which would be resolved with the generating of this grid station. He said that the 220KV Toba grid station was facing issues of low voltage while the 500-KV Gatti grid station was experiencing the overloading problem. He said that the 500-KV west Faisalabad grid station resolved all these problems and 19 thousand tube wells in this area would get quality service from FESCO.

Meanwhile, Chairman FESCO Board of Directors (BOD) Syed Husnain Haider

and other board members have sanctioned Rs.310 million for re-conducting of 132-KV double circuit Samundari road to Gojra transmission. Permission has also been granted for the emergency purchase of material with estimated cost of Rs.180 million for 132-KV double circuit transmission line from 500-KV Faisalabad west to Nia Lahore and Gojra.

The Board of Directors (BOD) is taking keen interest in the early completion of these transmission lines so that FESCO



could ensure smooth power supply during the upcoming hot season. He disclosed that completion of 500-KV Faisalabad west grid station would pave the way to get 450 Megawatt of electricity before the start of summer season; on the other hand, it will help FESCO to expedite the process of issuing new industrial and commercial connections

in these particular areas. It will also ensure sufficient electricity supply to the industrial consumers of Gatti and Nishtabad. One power transformer of 250MVA has been energized with an estimated cost of Rs.9.4 billion while 2 transformers of 750MVA and 3 transformers of 250MVA would also be installed to give much needed relief to the consumers before summer season and particularly during the Holy month of Ramadan. He further said that operation of the 500KV Faisalabad west grid station would also help FESCO to bring much needed sustainability in its transmission system.

## Rescue 1122 Abbottabad handles 705 emergencies during Jan 21

ABBOTTABAD: Rescue 1122 Abbottabad provided its services in 705 emergency situations to save the people and their properties. This was disclosed in the monthly performance report of January 2022. The spokesperson Rescue 1122 Abbottabad Sajid Iqbal informed the media that a total of 34732 calls were received, where 17374 calls were for information and help. District Emergency Officer Imran while informing about the monthly report said that Rescue 1122 Abbottabad provided timely professional services to 504 persons.

## COURT NOTICE

In the court of Ms Nasir Zadi Mehwish Sahiba Civil Judge 1st Class (admin) Judge Jhelum Title of case: Husnain Ali Raja Muhammad VS public at large Etc Respondent: Amanat Ali Kiyani s/o Liaqat Ali Maryam Kiyani D/O Liaqat Ali R/O Almere, Stad Almere Netherlands claim: Declaration

In each case, the respondents are informed through advertisement. As it is not possible to call the respondent through Summons in the instant case so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear or be a legal advisor in the court on 04-02-2022 at 9:00AM, otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.

## KCCI, industrialists on streets over gas supply

### DNA

KARACHI: Hundreds of demonstrators including the leadership of Businessmen Group and Karachi Chamber along with Presidents/ Representatives of All Industrial Town Associations and sector-specific trade associations on Wednesday gathered outside the Head Office of Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) where they warned that this campaign to demand immediate restoration of gas supply at all the industrial zones would continue and may intensify further with each passing day until gas supply to all the industrial units is fully restored and normalized.

Accompanied by prominent business figures, Chairman BMG Zubair Motiwala, Vice Chairman BMG Jawed Bilwani and President KCCI Muhammad Idrees expressed deep concerns over government's inattentive attitude towards resolving the most pressing issue being suffered by the business and industrial community of Karachi where the industrialists were suffering huge losses due to no gas or low pressure.

The industrialists of Karachi were totally stunned and disappointed to see government's sheer negligence in response to press releases, appeals and also a recent press conference over looming gas/ RLNG crises being suffered since last more than 100 days.



They said that losses of up to Rs45 billion were being suffered each day due to unavailability of gas to Karachi, which despite facing so many challenges at almost all the fronts, continues to contribute more than 68 percent revenue to the national exchequer, 54 percent to national exports while 52 percent of textile exports also take place from Karachi. While referring to erroneous allocation of 211 mcmfd gas from Sindh's resources to SNGPL, BMG and KCCI Leadership demanded that in order to revive the industrial activities in Karachi, Sindh's gas has to be returned to the province as it was highly unfair to keep the industries of Karachi deprived of Sindh's own gas resources.

They said that the rising demand for gas in Baluchistan during winter season was being fulfilled by SSGCL alone which receives 125mcmfd gas from Sui whereas SNGPL, which takes away 180mcmfd from Sui, stands completely spared from sharing the burden of rising gas demand in Baluchistan which was beyond anyone's understanding. They stressed that the rising demand for gas in Baluchistan has to be meted out by SSGCL and SNGPL as per ratio of gas being received by them which means that the extra demand of 160mcmfd in Baluchistan during winter should be rationally divided with 41 percent (65mcmfd) burden on SSGCL and the remaining 59 percent (95mcmfd) must be borne by SNGPL.

## 13 criminals arrested

FAISALABAD: Police claimed on Tuesday to have arrested 13 criminals and recovered drugs and illegal weapons from their possession in the district during the last 24 hours.

According to police, raiding teams nabbed 4 drug pushers and recovered 0.2 Kg hashish and 9 litres liquor from their possession.

In a crackdown against illegal weapons, police arrested 9 persons and recovered 5 pistols, one gun, 2 rifles, one dagger and a number of bullets from them. – APP

## Scott Mastic calls on Moonis Elahi

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Water Resources Moonis Elahi on Tuesday said that Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) was committed to the longevity and strengthening of democracy in the country. Talking to International Republican Institute America (IRI) delegation led by Vice President Scott Mastic at his residence

here, he said Pakistan PML-Q's politics revolved around good governance, human development, social and economic progress, electoral reforms, and rights of the youth, women and the underprivileged in the country.

Resident Director IRI Pakistan Nargis Khan was present during the meeting. – APP

## Man arrested over illegal hunting

### KAMRAN GUJJAR

JHELUM: Wildlife department Jhelum has arrested a resident of Lahore, Sheikh Asad for illegal hunting of animals and birds in the forest area of Jhelum region and also seized 7mm rifle with telescope, bullets and knife. The accused was remanded in custody and the area magistrate's court imposed a fine of Rs.100,000. The accused deposited the said amount in the public treasury as a fine. The wildlife de-

partment has issued orders to expedite operations against hunters. Instructions have also been issued for strict monitoring of hunters in the forests across the district.

All set to observe Kashmir Day Kashmir Solidarity Day will be celebrated with great enthusiasm on February 05 in Jhelum district. On the direction of DC Jhelum Noman Hafeez, banners will be put up in all markets, squares and prominent places on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day. On this occasion, the Department

of Education and the Director Colleges will organize speech competitions, special programs and walks in educational institutions. Through which the importance of Kashmir issue will be made clear to the students. National goal will be highlighted through rallies and seminars throughout the district. In addition to hoisting black flags outside all educational institutions and health centers, all government officials will show solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren by wearing black armbands.

## IUCN celebrates World Wetlands Day 2022 with coastal communities

### NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Programme Office of IUCN Pakistan on Wednesday celebrated the World Wetlands Day 2022. The celebrations organized and led by Natural resource Management coordinator Dr. Babar Hussain along with other mangroves specialists team members. On the occasion, the sites was chosen for the celebrations included Bhera, Dam, in Balochistan.

Coastal communities, both men, women, and other prime stakeholders, such as representatives of the Balochistan Forest Department, Pakistan Navy, and the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami team, participated in the event.

The event included mangroves plantation and community trainings were imparted the experts and IUCN team in the field. IUCN Pakistan Celebrated World



Wetland Day 2022 with Balochistan Forest Department Pak Navy and Coastal Communities

at Somian Bahra Balochistan told IUCN Karachi office. As the themes recommends let us

act together to ensure sustainability of the wetlands for sustainable future of our future generations.

## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY WATER SUPPLY DIRECTORATE Distribution Division (South)

### TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis at NIT cost from Contractor enlisted with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in appropriate category/code and having valid PEC license along with NTN number as applicable for the work as below:-

S/No	Name of works	NIT Cost	Earnest Money	Tender Fee Non refundable	Tender receiving Date & Time	Tender Opening date & time
01	Installation of One Public Drinking Water Filtration Plant Near Block-56, Abbasi Market in sector 1-9/4, Islamabad.	Rs.2303215/-	69096/-	5000.00	21-02-2022 At 11.30 AM	21-02-2022 At 12:00 Noon
02	Installation of One Public Drinking Water Filtration Plant Near Stump in sector 1-8/1, Islamabad.	Rs.2303215/-	69096/-	5000.00	21-02-2022 At 11.30 AM	21-02-2022 At 12:00 Noon
03	Installation of One Public Drinking Water Filtration Plant in sector 1-9, Markaz, Islamabad.	Rs.2303215/-	69096/-	5000.00	21-02-2022 At 11.30 AM	21-02-2022 At 12:00 Noon

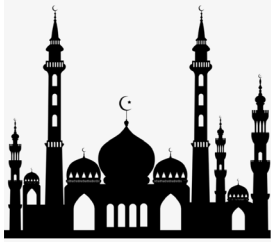
- Tender forms can be purchased on cash payment (Non refundable) for above mentioned works from office of the Dy Director Distribution Division (South), CDA located at old naval head quarter Room No 164 Sector G-6 melody islamabad during working hours. No tender will be sold on the date of opening of tender.
- Application for issuance of tender documents of the work mentioned above shall be received upto 18-02-2022 till 12: Noon from the date of advertisement publication of tender notice in the press with accompany the name, address(s), signature of contractor and valid enlistment/renewal PEC/NTN Number as applicable. Neither any application after 18-02-2022 shall be entertained nor any tender will be sold.
- Authority letter in favour of person deputed by the contractor to submit the application and collect the tender form is required form enlisted contractor along with copy of CNIC subject to verification from the original CNIC/PEC license.
- Earnest Money in the shape of deposit at call in favour of Deputy Director Distribution Division (South) CDA from local schedule bank of Islamabad must accompany with the application. Without call deposit no application for issuance of tender will be entertained. Cash/Cheque will not be accepted.
- If any contractor wants participate in tender opening process through their representative, then they should issue authority letter on letter head pad of the firm depicting complete valid address & contact numbers along with attested copy of CNIC.
- Tender for the work mentioned above will be received and opened by the Director (Water Supply) Room No.16, CDA Old Naval Headquarter Building, G-6, Islamabad in presence of the contractors or their authorized representatives who cares to attend.
- The contractor will be submitting the documents as per NIT / instruction of tender document along with their tender, without which tender will be liable for rejection.
- In case the total bid amount is less than 10% below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10% of NIT amount. That is required performance security = NIT amount - total bid amount - 10% of NIT amount. This call deposit shall be addition to the earnest money for the work and shall be deposited at the time of submission of bids, not carrying the performance security shall be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of the project.
- The Bid Security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank account and same may be return after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder.
- Competent Authority may have rights to accept or reject all the bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal. The CDA shall upon request, communication to any supplier or contractor who submitted as bid or proposal, the grounds for their rejection of all bids or proposals, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- The eligibility criteria of the firms with the relevant experience i.e. at least three no of work orders in last two financial year may be observe / fulfilled before issuance of tender documents.
- Advertisement is also available on CDA web site: [www.cda.gov.pk](http://www.cda.gov.pk) and PPRa website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)

Deputy Director  
Distribution Division (South) CDA  
Ph.9210171

PID (I) No. 5316/21



## SERVICES



### Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:39 am
Zohr.....	12:21 pm
Asr.....	04:01 pm
Maghrib.....	05:40 pm
Isha.....	07:05 pm



### Hotels & Restaurants

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



### Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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### Islamabad Metropolitan

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

### Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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# ADB proposes measures to maximize CPEC benefits

The Primary objective of ECD is to enhance the competitiveness and productivity of economies to promote a higher, more sustainable, and inclusive development process

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has proposed certain policy actions to fully explore the potential benefits of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and to raise income from exports and enhance fiscal capacity of the government. A case study on Economic Corridor Development (ECD) in Pakistan released by the ADB on Wednesday proposed to utilize the transport infrastructure built under the CPEC more effectively and efficiently to maximize investment return by converting it into a multilateral initiative. For

instance, it said economic connectivity and integration with the landlocked Central Asian countries could provide the CAREC participating countries with efficient and effective access to global markets through the strategically located Gwadar port. This could help Pakistan maximize its strategic location and become the economic hub in Central, West, and South Asia. In this context, links with the CAREC countries could be strengthened, particularly on trade-related issues, such as standards, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, customs procedures, rules of origin, e-commerce, and intellectual property rights.

Consequently, Pakistan could increase toll and tax revenues while developing mutually beneficial economic partnerships for boosting export income. The primary objective of ECD is to enhance the competitiveness and productivity of economies to promote a higher, more sustainable, and inclusive development process. Once ECD is successfully installed, ECD becomes a sound industrial and diversified regional base by attracting investments into sectors, such as manufacturing, for both domestic and export markets. Through the process, countries with successful ECD become competitive and productive, which results in poverty alleviation through job creation. Meanwhile,

the study also called for expediting the development of the nine Special Economic Zones (SEZs) planned along the CPEC routes. Given their high-risk and high-return nature, SEZs should be developed based on global best practices and local knowledge with an aim to attract the China's export-oriented sunset industries. The China's wage rise and the policy shift from low-end manufacturing to technologically advanced manufacturing have made the production of export-oriented goods and services unfeasible in the China. The Chinese government, therefore, is expected to relocate these industries to other developing coun-

tries. Pakistan could be well-positioned to negotiate for the relocation of such industries on mutually beneficial terms. The recent consultation between Pakistan and the China on the framework agreement for industrial cooperation through business joint ventures and SEZs development is welcome and could promote Pakistan's industrial activities. Moreover, the Pakistan government notified in December 2020 a high-level Special Technology Zone Authority with its Board of Governors headed by the Prime Minister. This should help foster the development of technology zones and high-tech industrial parks to help revive and diversify Pakistan's

re-manufacturing and exports. The study also suggested to undertake structural reforms to unleash the potential for private sector development. Structural reforms to support the private sector will enhance Pakistan's competitiveness, productivity, and access to the global market. They could be critical to reducing the large trade deficit and boosting the foreign exchange reserves. Possible reforms could include rationalizing business regulations and taxation; improving trade facilitation and logistics; augmenting human capital development and labor market efficiency; and strengthening financial inclusion along with deepening the capital market.

## NH&MP advises to avoid hill stations amid snowfall

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorways Police (NH&MP) has issued an advisory to all the tourists to avoid visit different hill stations from February 2 to 3 as rain and snowfall expected particularly in the northern region of the country. In an advisory issued here, the NH&MP said that tourists avoid visiting hill stations during next two days as snowfall forecast was issued by the Met office. Referring to met office advisory, in which, claimed that a westerly wave was likely to enter Upper and Central Parts of the country on Wednesday and Thursday (2-3 February 2022, evening/night) that predicted light to moderate rain-wind thunder-storm and snowfall was expected during said period in various parts of the country. The possible impacts were mentioned that light to moderate snowfall may cause road closure in Murree and prevailing dense foggy conditions were likely to subside. - APP

## Ashrafi calls on Dar to discuss KJP initiatives

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative of the Prime Minister for Religious Harmony and the Middle East Maulana Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi was called on SAPM on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar on Wednesday to discuss 'Kamyab Jawan' initiatives. Tahir Ashrafi lauded the efforts of Usman Dar for successfully implemented the Kamyab Jawan Programme and its remarkable achievement, said a news release. Under the Kamyab Jawan Programme, high tech labs will be set up in madrassas to provide technical education to its students, Usman Dar said. Under the 'Skills for All' programme, scholarships will be provided to Madrasa students for various training courses in traditional and high-tech trades, he added. - DNA



RAWALPINDI: A delegation led by President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nadeem Rauf presenting bouquet to congratulate Zahid Latif Khan on being elected unopposed Chairman of ISE REIT for the year 2022-25. - DNA

## RCCI felicitates newly elected Chairman ISE REIT

DNA  
RAWALPINDI: The delegation led by President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) Nadeem Rauf visited ISE Tower and congratulated Zahid Latif Khan on being elected unopposed Chairman of ISE REIT for the year 2022-25. Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Asim Malik and executive members were also present on the occasion. He said that Zahid Latif Khan, who has also been the President of Rawalpindi Chamber, has been elected Chairman for the third time, which is an honor for the Rawalpindi Chamber. He also congratulated Group Leader Sohail Altaf and Executive Member Farrukh Younis on becoming Board Directors. He expressed hope that Zahid Latif Khan as Chairman REIT Management Company would actively utilize his capabilities in ISE Tower.

## Kashmir Youth Alliance rejects fake Indian report

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Youth Alliance on Wednesday, while strongly condemning India's "reprehensible tactics" of linking the ongoing struggle in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir for the right to self-determination with terrorism, said the recent report of India's Disinfo Lab is "false and nothing more than a trash". These views were expressed by Secretary General Kashmir Youth Alliance

Razi Tahir. He said The Kashmir Youth Alliance under the leadership of Dr Syed Mujahid Gilani and its affiliated organizations are carrying out the duty of advocating for the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). "India is trying to throw dust in the eyes of the whole world to suppress the voice of the people of Kashmir and trying to link the ongoing struggle in Indian occupied Kashmir for the right to self-determination with terrorism." He added. He urged India to "eschew

the use of false propaganda as an instrument of state policy". Such Indian ploys of spreading misinformation are doomed to fail. He clarified that the "Kashmir Youth Alliance" is engaged in peacefully exposing the "Indian atrocities" to global community that how Human rights abuses being inflicted on the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by India. We do condemn terrorism but we never did allow anyone to link freedom movement with terrorism.

India itself is responsible for state terrorism in occupied Kashmir. He said that the family of Dr Mujahid Gilani, Syeda Aasia Andrabi & Dr Muhammad Qasim Faktoe are struggling front line for right to self determination. Asiya Andrabi has been under illegal and inhuman incarceration for more than 15 years and Qasim Faktoe is more than 29 years on fabricated charges under draconian laws aimed at perpetuating India's occupation of IIOJK by assaulting and brutalizing Kashmiri people.

## Kashmir Solidarity Day to be observed on February 5

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Kashmir Solidarity Day will be observed on Feb 5 to express wholehearted support of the Pakistani nation to the just struggle of Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination under United Nations resolutions. It will be a public holiday and preparations are in full swing to observe the day to highlight the plight of the oppressed Kashmiri people and remind the world community of its obligations towards the resolution of the longstanding dispute. This time the day is being observed after India revoked the special status of held Kashmir in August 2019 in breach of all international laws, and since then the entire population of the occupied territory has been under a lockdown. Human chains will be formed at Kohala, Mangla, Holar and Azad Pattan points linking Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. Rallies, public meetings, and seminars will be held to draw attention of the world community towards grave human rights violations and brutalities

against innocent Kashmiris by the Indian security forces. The banners highlighting the plight of innocent Kashmiris have been put on display at all important points and roads in twin cities like other parts of the country. The Education Department would organize special programmes in educational institutions to draw the attention towards the Kashmir issue which could not be settled down despite the clear-cut resolutions in favour of innocent people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Like other parts of Pakistan, the preparations have begun in Rawalpindi division including Rawalpindi city to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 to reiterate complete solidarity with the brethren of IIOJK state. The bleeding Occupied Valley has been turned into the world's largest prison following imprisonment of the people protesting against the nefarious Indian action under the shadow of guns of occupying forces. The arrangements are being made here to observe the Day with traditional zeal and fervor.

## Pakistan earns \$291 mln from transport services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$291.003 million by providing different transport services in various countries during the first five months of financial year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. This shows growth of 11.95 percent as compared to \$259.950 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year (2020-21), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the period under review, the exports of sea transport services witnessed an increase of 18.64 percent, by

going up from \$35.250 million last year to \$41.810 million during the period under review. Among the sea transport services, the exports of freight services increased by 62.26 percent from \$15.820 million last year to \$25.670 million whereas the exports of other air transport services however decrease by 16.89 percent from \$19.420 million to \$16.140 million current year, the PBS data revealed. The exports of air transport rose by 14.47 percent by going up from \$212 million last year to \$242.673 million during July-November (2021-22). Among the air transport services,

the exports of passenger services increased by 18.12 percent, from \$136.570 million to \$161.310 million, whereas the exports of freight services dipped by 17.77 percent, from \$15.080 million to \$12.400 million, in addition the export of other air transport services increased by 14.27 percent from \$60.350 million to \$68.963 million. Meanwhile, the exports of road transport services during the period under review witnessed a decline of 53.30 percent by going down from \$7.880 million to \$3.680 million during this year, it added. - DNA

## HEC Selection Board for Executive Director today

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan will hold the Selection Board for the appointment of Executive Director HEC on Thursday. The selection board consists of Chairman HEC, Executive Director, Secretary Ministry of Education, Secretary Ministry of Science & Technology, Member O&T, a Vice Chancellors of a public sector university, and an expert of the field. In this regard, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training had raised some objections to the composition of the board. However, HEC in a statement termed the Ministry's objections as unjustified, patently mala fide, and tantamount to interference in the internal matters of an autonomous institution. The Ministry has objected to the replacement of two members, who had been appointed by the previous dispensation. HEC clarified that these two expert members are always appointed by the Chairman for each selection cycle, and that there is no precedent wherein the selection board was ever constituted in any different way. The Ministry also made some rather opaque and intrusive observations to coerce HEC into adopting the government's MP Scale Policy 2020 whole sale. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Usman Dar called on Federal Minister for Science and Technology Shibli Faraz. - DNA

## PNCA to display Rabia Zuberi collection on Feb 3

DNA  
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) exhibition titled "Forms of Existence"- a show to pay tribute to a legendary master artist Rabia Zuberi on February 3. The show is an amalgamation of drawings, sculptures and paintings from National Art Gallery's permanent collection. The senior officials of Visual Arts Division, PNCA told APP that the show will be on display till February 10, 2022. COVID SOPs will be strictly followed at the premises of display. Rabia Zuberi, sometime referred to in Pakistan as Queen Mother of Arts, was a sculptor, painter, former chairperson of the Pakistan Arts Council, teacher and Pakistan's first woman sculptor. Some of her drawings includes Duputta, Quest for Peace and some sculptures titled "Peace Message from the Progressive World and Peace Message" were acquired by the National Art Gallery, Pakistan during an exhibition in 2003. - APP

## 'Textile sector growing rapidly'

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said on Wednesday that despite the outbreak of coronavirus, due to Prime Minister Imran Khan's industry-friendly policies, the textile sector was growing by leaps and bounds. In a tweet, the minister of state said textile exports rose by 17 per cent and touched \$ 1.5 billion figure in January this year. - APP



## Briefs

## PCRWR to hold scientific exploration contest

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) in collaboration with The Fortune Pakistan has announced to hold a scientific exploration contest titled "Addressing-Drinking Water Crisis". The contest is aimed to address the issue of waterborne threats being faced by the country, an official of PCRWR told media.

Students participating in the contest are required to build a water purification filter that is low-cost, sustainable and can be used in every home. The water purification filter must also have the ability to examine water purification and be able to reduce household expenses.

The official informed that the competition, to be held at BATAR-Baghbala Agro Tourism and Agronomy Resort, Chakwal, will engage nine member three teams comprising over boys and girls.

The Team-1 will comprise of three researchers who will examine and proffer solutions to address water impurity while the Team-2 will consist of mechanical developers who will develop water purification filter for domestic use and exhibit finished product.

The Team-3 will consist of three sales and marketing members who will find out ways and means for product sale and marketing and exhibit product sale and marketing tools. The registration for the competition will remain open till mid of February while the competition will be held by mid of March, the official said. - APP

## Preparations finalizes to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The cultural and literary organizations have finalized all preparations to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day in befitting manner on February 5.

In this regard, National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage - LokVirsa would organize an exhibition of Photographs on Kashmir, Kashmiri Artisans-at-work exhibition, screening of videos documentaries on Kashmir and display of banners at LokVirsa premises, Shakarparian.

All activities are being organized in collaboration with Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with the ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan would also organize special events on the Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 to express solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiri brothers.

Special children programme will be held in which students from twin cities will sing Kashmiri songs, present tableau and make speeches to show solidarity with Kashmiri brethren.

Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) would also organize a literary seminar on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day. Eminent scholars would be invited to participate in the seminar.

Different educational institutions would also organize special events to express solidarity with Kashmiri brethren on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day.

## PNCA regional office to organize music classes

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Regional Office for Sindh will hold a session of Music Classes from February 3 in Karachi.

According to an announcement, PNCA local folk artists will train young emerging musicians.

PNCA will also plan to organize music classes for young artists at regional offices. Folk artist Bag Chand Lakhani lauded PNCA for announcing special music classes for young artists of Sindh. - APP

## ICCI for increasing Pak-Turk bilateral trade to \$5 billion

He assured that ICCI was ready to work with Turkey Alumnus to promote exchanges of students and trade delegations to strengthen people-to-people and B2B relations between the two countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that during the last visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Pakistan, the leadership of both countries had agreed to increase the bilateral trade volume to USD 5 billion by 2023 and urged that both countries should strengthen business linkages between their private sectors to capitalize on Pak-Turkish bilateral trade potential in order to achieve the mutually beneficial outcomes for their economies. He said this while speaking as Chief Guest at a seminar on Business Opportunities between Pakistan and Turkey organized by Turkey Alumni in Pakistan. Jamsheed Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President ICCI, Muhammad Naveed Malik former Senior Vice President, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Saiful Islam Khan President



Turkey Alumni in Pakistan and a large number of alumnus of Turkish universities were present at the occasion. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that Pakistan and Turkey have great potential to enhance bilateral trade in many fields and both countries should facilitate strengthening B2B relations

and target rights sectors and industries to improve their business relations. He welcomed the operationalisation of road-based transport and trade between Pakistan and Turkey, which would take the bilateral business to the next levels. He said that Pakistan and Turkey have good potential

to enhance cooperation in many fields including marble & granite, construction, tourism, transport, agriculture, industry and stressed that they should make strong efforts to strengthen mutual collaboration to take benefit of all available opportunities of promoting bilateral trade and economic

relations. He assured that ICCI was ready to work with Turkey Alumnus to promote exchanges of students and trade delegations to strengthen people-to-people and B2B relations between the two countries. Speaking at the occasion, Saiful Islam Khan, President, Turkey Alumni in Pa-

kistan thanked Muhammad Shakeel Munir for attending the seminar as Chief Guest. He said that this platform will facilitate the current and future alumni of Turkish Universities and utilize their experiences to further strengthen the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Turkey.

## AIOU equips Pakistani youth with vocational skills

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is taking various initiatives to equip Pakistani youth with vocational skills to earn respectable livelihood under the banner of Prime Minister's Hunarmand Pakistan Program. University is offering various skills-based courses including hotel management to Pakistani youth located in distant and underdeveloped areas of the country. According to Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum, Pakistani youth faces a lot of difficulties in getting employment despite of being

highly qualified. Therefore, it is the primary responsibility of the universities to provide them skilled training besides formal education so that they can play their due role in the process of social and economic development of the country. In order to achieve this objective, AIOU has initiated hotel management course in collabora-

tion with Aight Pakistan with the slogan of 'learn a skill and be skillful'. The primary objective of this six-week training course is to equip Pakistani youth with hotel management skills to promote tourism and to boost tourism industry in GB and Skardu. This training program would be expanded to other tourism popular regions

of the country gradually. It is expected that this training program will play a pivotal role in the social and economic development of the country as hotel industry is progressing by leaps and bounds. Admission application form can be downloaded from the university website ([www.aiou.edu.pk](http://www.aiou.edu.pk)). In case of any further details, interested candidates may contact Gilgit regional office as well as Skardu regional offices on 05811-960378/9606030 and 0585-960258 respectively. - APP

## Ugly face of India should be exposed to World: Barrister Sultan

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on Wednesday said that whole nation would mark February 5 as Kashmir day in impressive manner to express solidarity with the brothers and sisters of Indian Occupied Kashmir and ugly face of India should be exposed to the World.

In a statement, he said "We mark February 5 as Kashmir Day from last three decades and the entire nation would be mobilized against Indian oppression in the light of Prime Minister's vision and leadership". Barrister Sultan Mahmood said that our mothers and sisters in IOK were giving sacrifices and it was our responsibility to take part in the public gathering in connection with Kashmir Day.

He said that the workers and leaderships of all the political parties of Azad Jammu Kashmir would also participate in Kashmir Day public gathering and rallies. The President of AJK further said that Occupied Kashmir is currently looking like a military cantonment in the presence of one million Indian troops and the Kashmiri people are facing a serious situation due to Indian oppression and barbarism. - APP

## SMEDA to organize three day training

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) will organize a three-day workshop on "Online Business Management for SMEs" for profitable business growth from February 11 to 13.

The session will be organized by SMEDA under National Business Development Programme (NBDDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to sources in the authority.

The training programme will provide information about online business model, online business opportunities, financial, legal, and risk consideration, e-commerce portal framework, strategic and operational aspects, customer need identification, digital media tools for marketing and selling, customer follow up, feedback and evaluation, establishing reputes for long term customer relation. The session would be attended by individuals from training services, consultancy services, business support services, SMEs owned and their staff.

## PDP leader found unconscious in IIOJK jail

ISLAMABAD: The illegally detained youth leader from People's Democratic Party, Waheed Parra was found unconscious in jail Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to Kashmir Media Service, Waheed Parra, currently detained under black law, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) over various fake cases imposed by BharatiyaJanata Party, (BJP), regime on him was found unconscious in Central Jail, Srinagar.

The jail inmates were alarmed about his unconsciousness, so the jail authorities took him to the Police Hospital for check up. It was said that doctors while checking Waheed had recommended further treatment, Echo scan and follow-up check up in Super Speciality.

The family of Waheed Parra said that, "Waheed's health is worsening day-by-day and we are in shock to hear that he was found unconscious in a barrack by fellow detainees." The family has demanded better medical facilities for Waheed Parra.

Official sources told media that Waheed was taken to hospital after his Blood Pressure (BP) suddenly dropped. After giving medical aid, Parra was discharged from the hospital and was shifted back to Central Jail, Srinagar, the sourced added.

It is pertinent to mention here that Para was arrested by the dreaded, Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA) on November 25, 2020, just a day after he announced his candidacy for the District Development Council (DDC) elections and filed nomination papers. - APP

## CDNS collects Rs 560 bln fresh deposits

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) on Wednesday obtained Rs 560 billion fresh deposits in last seven months of current fiscal year 2021-22 from the month (July 1st to January 31st).

The CDNS has set an annual gross receipt target of Rs 980 billion from July 1 to June 30 of the previous fiscal year 2020-21 to promote savings in the country, a senior official of CDNS told APP here. The senior official said the CDNS had set Rs 250 billion annual collection target from July 1 to June 30 for the year 2020-21 as compared to Rs 352 billion for the previous year (2019-20) same time span to enhance savings in the country. The CDNS had set Rs 352 billion annual collection target for the year 2019-20 as compared to Rs 350 billion for the previous year (2018-19), he said. The senior official said that (CDNS) has started working to increase new investment opportunities and promote digital investment through many new projects. - APP

## Women entrepreneurs breaking barriers

ISLAMABAD: The country in recent past has witnessed a significant change on economic front and the number of women entrepreneurs is rising, but still a lot more is required to be done to utilize the true potential of this segment. These views were expressed by the head of Potohar Organization of Development Advocacy, Samina Nazir after conclusion of an exhibition arranged for the promotion of local arts and crafts here.

She said the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) has always been instrumental in facilitating, subsidizing and promoting Women Entrepreneur or women-led businesses through various initiatives such as training programmes.

"Exhibitions were arranged to create linkages among local artisans and the international buyers for the local arts and crafts, achieving sustainability and livelihood of artisans," she said. She said this will create economic livelihood opportunities for the local artisans, besides women's economic empowerment which would help improve their social status and needed to be supported at all levels. The official further said that rural women artisans need special recognition and incentives because they face greater hardships in the society as compared to the urban segment. A woman artisan from BharaKahu said the skill she achieved was now imparting to new students to bring them in mainstream businesses to share the economic burden of their families.

"Ten years ago I had never picked a paint brush in my life but today I am a master artisan and teaching other rural girls how to be creative and become economically independent," artisan DeebaRana said. The women artisans selling the crafts were also happy that many visitors in various exhibitions were appreciating their handmade items and they were being paid good amount of their work, besides recognition. Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and hospitality has always been a great attraction for the foreigners; unfortunately homeland artisans lack exposure and linkages with the national and International markets since majority of them even don't have basic education. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan Ambassador Bénédict de Cerjat planting a Mango tree at Swiss embassy in Islamabad. - DNA

## Experts make steady progress on toposheets' geological mapping

ISLAMABAD: Geological experts are making steady progress in mapping toposheets of the outcrop area of Balochistan to maintain data for the exploration of metallic and non-metallic minerals, dimension stones, aggregates and limestone reserves in the province. Under the project, for which the government has allocated Rs 30 million in the Public Sector Development Programme 2021-22, the geological mapping of 50 toposheets

out of 354 unmapped toposheets of the outcrop area of Balochistan would be carried out. As per the project updates, the experts successfully performed the initial study of maps, toposheets, aerial photography and satellite imagery. "Unmapped areas including parts of Chagai, Khuzdar and Lasbela Districts have been selected for detailed mapping based on mineral potential and geological complexity," according to

an official report available with APP. Previous literature and maps were being studied by the field parties and about 40 per cent of technical work has been completed. "Reconnaissance geological fieldwork/mapping has been carried out in the District Khuzdar and surrounding areas. Sites have been identified on toposheets to collect geochemical stream sediments from Khuzdar," it added. - APP

## Time travel: A possibility?



MUHAMMAD MUJTABA IQBAL

TIME Travel has been a thing of fiction and stories, with one of its first iterations coming into

being in Jules Verne's Book 'The Time Machine'. And in the popular franchise 'Back to the Future'. But in reality this may be achieved with some basic principles of quantum mechanics, graph theory and some simple logic.

Let's get the first postulation out of the way, when one travels time they create a branch of a new timeline, so if you travel back in time to end World War 2 before it began, but if you went forward in time, World War 2 would still happen. You may travel into the past or future but you may not necessarily CHANGE it.

This holds true with the laws of physics and actually solves one of the oldest logical paradoxes pertaining to time travel. 'The Grandfather Paradox' Secondly let's also put time into perspective, time is just a function of relative velocity. Time is all relative to the observer in inertial frames of reference that is the

main gist of Einstein's Theory of Relativity and that also proves to us that Light has actually travelled through time too, considering that light from the far corners of the universe takes a lot of time to travel, so who knows maybe the photons that we experience from far off Gamma Energy Bursts carry information with regards to quantum and astrophysical states from the beginning of time.

The simplest method we know to date to travel through time is to go at the speed of light. However, this destroys matter at one of the most sophisticated levels as of date. Another is a very ingenuitive get intriguing method developed by famous mathematician Kurt Godel. Godel was the father of the Godel Incompleteness Theorem and the Godel Metric. He is one of the only known mathematicians to date which have solved the Einstein field equations.

He, in a very long worded letter, disproved Einstein's results for the field equation on the day of Einstein's birthday. The main context is this:space-time is like a sheet, so what happens if you fold that sheet over itself, then you create a manifold, and if you create a small teleporation wormhole between the manifolds that creates a 'Closed Timelike Curve' which is just an einsteinrosen bridge between two manifolds in space time. Godel, created a solution to the Einstein field equation; create a wormhole. This wouldn't break the laws of relativity nor would it require for the object to move faster than the speed of light.

All in all, time travel is possible and it actually may be possible in the near centuries to come, but the question still stands, on why we would want to change the past if we can currently change the future just with our present actions.



## TAPI pipeline

**A**FTER spending two years trying to settle differences, Pakistan and Turkmenistan have revived formal discussions on the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan and India (TAPI) gas pipeline project. This is the perfect time to embark upon such a venture and actively work towards making it a reality given how the gas crisis has worsened through the years. No doubt there are certain reassurances that have to be made—especially with regards to security—but the government must work towards finishing the project by the end of this year as well. The objective of the meeting is purely technical; crafting a roadmap for the construction of the pipeline through Afghanistan and within Pakistan. Turkmenistan has already begun the development process domestically and we must follow suit too. Our gas situation has deteriorated considerably since the last two years. There is a nine percent drop in reserves every single year, the share of the LNG has shot up and inconsistent suppliers have defaulted on their commitments at the most crucial points in time. The only way to deal with these problems is to secure a steady gas supply which Turkmenistan is willing to supply, should we take the country up seriously on their offer. The unfortunate reality is that a significant portion of the pipeline will have to pass through Afghanistan before it can reach Pakistan and here is where some anxieties are caused. There are legitimate concerns of security under the Taliban government and no move can be made unless it reassures all stakeholders that the country will be a safe ground for regional economic deals. Any incidents during the course of construction, or afterwards, will hamper the initiative, result in immense losses for all stakeholders involved and will worsen the gas crisis. The Taliban government must also realise the immense promise this deal has for its country as well, since it will not have to rely on other less-friendly countries for gas imports. Our government must focus all its energy on ensuring that this deal comes to fruition and that gas is then able to flow freely between all the relevant countries. If we are able to get the reassurances we need, and complete construction, by the end of the year as well, that would make the entire process much smoother.

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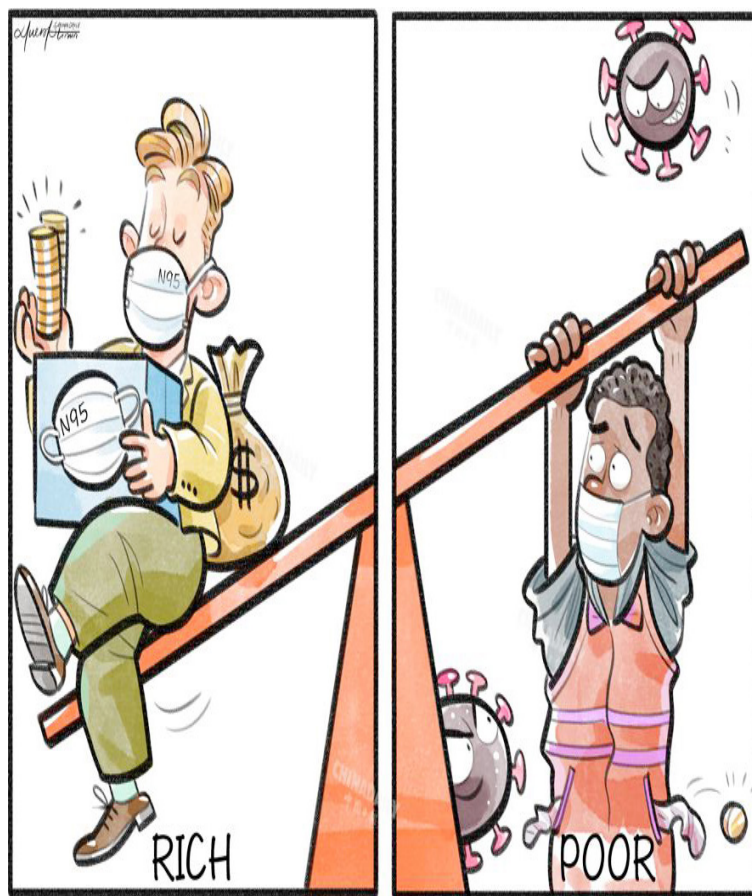
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## New province

**A** bill seeking the formation of the Hazara province has landed in the Senate, and has invited the encouragement of several parliamentarians. State Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Mohammad Khan approved of the idea behind the bill, saying that there should be more administrative units in the country. JUI-F Senator Muhammad Talha Mehmood, who introduced the bill, stated there is a need to make more provinces, and that since the PTI, PPP and JUI all supported the creation of more provinces, this bill should be adopted unanimously as the creation of administrative units was imperative for the resolution of the people's problems. The question of whether there should be more provinces for ease of administrative purposes is a pertinent debate to have, particularly in this climate when the topic of more provinces has seen enormous political support. There are several worthy benefits to more provinces—it will bring more connectivity, especially to the Hazara and Saraiki speaking community, who are at this time at a disadvantage in terms of distance from provincial centres. Small provinces theoretically provide a more favourable environment to explore the economic potential of the areas under their jurisdiction. More provinces can also mean a more efficient and equal distribution of funds, an improvement over the current situation where only a few major provincial centres receive major benefits as a result of planning and development. However, while this debate must be had, it should not be made political, as it is being done so currently. All political parties must put forward their arguments on the topic based on administrative ease and cultural protection, rather than political motivations and blame games. The creation of any new province is an enormous responsibility that can change the future of the country forever—it involves bringing in constitutional amendments, a renewed Water Accord, revision of the National Financial Commission, and a rearrangement of the Senate and National Assembly. Such decisions should be made keeping the betterment of the country in mind.

## We should call settler violence what it is ... terrorism

Yossi Mekelberg



**Who massacred 29 Palestinian Muslim worshippers in the holy place of the Cave of the Patriarchs, also in Hebron —to mention just a few such atrocities**

**W**HEN Israeli Public Security Minister Omer Bar-Lev, in a meeting with a visiting US diplomat, dared to express his concern over “settler violence,” the entire settlement movement’s PR machine, including right-wing politicians and media, embarked on a concerted campaign of incitement against him, even threatening his life. In social media he was called a murderer and a traitor, ignoring his many years of service in the military. A leading right-wing member of the Knesset accused him of “spilling blood in a nasty manner and participating in a false and antisemitic campaign that besmirches settlers ... Shame on you, little man.” And all for speaking the plain truth. No surprise, then, that the police assigned him round-the-clock protection from Jewish extremists. Those who protest that Bar Lev, whose job is to ensure law and order, is defaming their reputation by pointing out that there is Jewish terrorism, are apparently incapable of seeing that by calling for him to be lynched they are proving his point in the most powerful way. This irony probably escapes them

entirely. Furthermore, Bar Lev, and rightly so, has never described the entire community of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Jerusalem as violent or terrorist, but simply claimed that there are such elements among them, which is no more than stating what we already know. He should have probably acknowledged too, as ample evidence demonstrates, that in many cases the Israeli authorities are turning a blind eye to those who terrorize innocent Palestinians, and there are cases where the security forces have actively supported them with barely any legal repercussions. Although the very act of occupation and imposition of the will of one political entity on a defenseless population through superior military force is an act of violence, and most definitely feeds into the minds (and the mindlessness) of some of the settlers, it could conceptually be treated separately from the very acts of terrorism which are committed by the most radical elements among these settlers and some of their allies from within Israel proper. This phenomenon is not new and was already under way in the 1980s, with assassination attempts against Palestinian West Bank mayors; an attack on the Islamic College in Hebron that claimed the lives of three students and injured a further 33; a plot by some radical messianic Jews to blow up the Dome of the Rock, including Al-Aqsa mosque; and the murderous attack by the contemptible religious extremist settler Baruch Goldstein, who massacred 29 Palestinian Muslim worshippers in the holy place of the Cave of the Patriarchs, also in Hebron—to mention just a few such atrocities. Furthermore, it was an Israeli-Jewish terrorist who killed Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin in cold blood, in the middle of the Oslo peace process, with the sole aim of ending the prospect of peace. Therefore, to deny the existence of Jewish terrorism is to ignore reality. By any definition of terrorism, these and other acts of political violence constitute terrorism committed by Jews, which is a reflection of their extreme and much distorted version of Judaism and Zi-

onism. The Israeli security services have an entire division dedicated solely to combating Jewish political violence and protecting politicians who are threatened because they oppose the occupation and the settlements. After all, there is conclusive evidence of settlers shooting at Palestinians, hurling rocks and Molotov cocktails at cars and houses, illegally entering Palestinian homes and vandalizing them, torching fields and destroying crops. In very few of these cases are any of the perpetrators brought to justice and in many cases they commit these crimes while protected by Israeli soldiers. Only last week in the West Bank village of Burin, dozens of masked Jewish extremists torched a car and beat up Israeli and Palestinian peace activists with batons and shovels; the activists had come to help local Palestinian villagers plant trees. And this was not an isolated case. In 2021 alone the UN reported 496 attacks by settlers or Jewish extremists against Palestinians, 126 of them resulting in physical harm. There is only way to refer to this violence, and that is to call it by its name – terrorism. Whatever the nature of disputes in Israel about its future relations with the Palestinians of the West Bank, if Israel wants to be regarded as a respected member of the international community, and especially of the democratic world, there must be wall-to-wall condemnation of any form of violence against Palestinians, who are already living under an oppressive occupation and have done so for many years. Those who do not denounce these brutal attacks against innocent people just because they are Palestinians, those who turn a blind eye to such activities or those who vitriolically attack people such as Bar Lev who speak the truth, are just as complicit in these crimes as those who commit them. It is time for all Israelis to hold an open and honest discussion about settlers’ violence against Palestinians and to stop excusing their behavior, as it is morally reprehensible, and without a consensus against it the entire country is implicated in their terrorist crimes.

—Courtesy: Arab News

## Success strategy in Punjab

Tazeen Akhtar



**A section of Punjab bureaucracy has always been charged with political affiliations. These officers would never let any neutral officer continue and perform as per the policies of the present government. This section is habitual of neither working themselves nor letting anyone else work. They think Chief Secretary of Punjab is six months post**

**W**HEN we see the performance of PTI as a ruling party, the first impression comes from Lahore and Punjab. Punjab is the biggest province of Pakistan with respect to both population and area. The Prime Minister took a risk while appointing Usman Buzdar as Chief Minister because he had no experience of governance in the past and it was not to govern or manage a division or district but it was the governance of the largest province. Usman Buzdar was new but with the passage of time he learned from his mistakes and took advice from experienced persons. He had to get many Chief Secretaries and Inspector Generals transferred before settling with Dr. Kamran Afzal the Chief Secretary. Now both of them have formed a good team to govern the province. Both have the confidence of the Prime Minister and both have learnt a lot about what are the major issues in the province and how they can be solved. The Chief Secretary is not only a highly qualified bureaucrat but he has deep knowledge of the economy as well. Economy is the main hurdle in the way of the Prime Minister to implement his vision of New Pakistan and bring reforms in the country. The Chief Secretary can use his experience in this sector in the largest province that has the largest economy in the country and has potential to give bright results. It is the time when the Prime Minister needs a CM and Chief Secretary who enjoy full confidence of the PM and who have been working closely with him. They understand better what the leader wants and they know how to implement it. Fourth year of the PTI government is on, while next year is the last before general elections. This is the time when the Prime Minister needs performance and results. At this

stage, Chief Secretary Punjab can deliver a lot with respect to good governance and management in the province. Punjab being the largest province has maximum seats in the National Assembly. If PTI is successful in delivering in this province even in the second last and last year of the tenure, it will benefit the party in the next elections to win the province. The post of Chief Secretary of Punjab has been the most vulnerable seat throughout the last 3 years. That is the reason, the bureaucracy of Punjab seems non active and not performing the duties in an amicable manner. The Chief Secretary is like the leader and head of the provincial bureaucracy. How can the bureaucracy be dutiful and productive when their own boss does not know the next day he will be in office or not? How can he perform when he has no safety and surety of taking big decisions? A section of Punjab bureaucracy has always been charged with political affiliations. These officers would never let any neutral officer continue and perform as per the policies of the present government. This section is habitual of neither working themselves nor letting anyone else work. They think Chief Secretary of Punjab is six months post. Therefore no need to do anything except attending the offices but doing nothing except spreading rumors or hatching conspiracy theories, the whole day. Dr. Kamran Afzal having good relations with most of the administrative officers can deliver on price control that is the first major problem for the government. Common public is directly attached to the prices of daily commodities. Unfortunately the government increases one rupee on one kilo but the mafia raises the prices up to 10 rupees kilo only because people have already made up their minds that only the government is responsible for inflation and not the market mafia. This mafia can be bridled only with check and balance of the bureaucracy at district level. Punjab is the producer of bread for the whole country. Government attaches great importance with the well being of the farmers. That is why the government continued gas supply to the fertilizer manufacturing industries but the result was opposite. The farmers cannot find fertilizers for their next crop. If the government can solve this issue, it will be a big success in the large population that lives in villages and cultivates the land. The Chief Secretary's office is relevant in this case as well. Dr. Kamran Afzal, as an experienced administrative officer can console the farmers' organizations and convince the fertilizer producing firms to solve the crisis. History has been very unfortunate in a sense that the chief secretaries have always been transferred after six seven months. Now when Dr. Kamran Afzal has completed six months, all eyes are on him when he is transferred. Bureaucracy stops working when it is discovered that the boss does not have more time at the seat. This phenomenon has paralyzed the bureaucracy of Punjab. This should come to an end now if we want a vibrant performing bureaucracy in the province. Dr. Kamran Afzal is in take off position right now with respect to performance, deliverance and solution of the issues in the province. He needs tasks and not transfer orders. Prime Minister and Chief Minister can give the targets and take the required results.

## Will Biden be able to pursue his Middle East policies?

Kerry Boyd Anderson

**Biden has focused specifically on what the US can reasonably achieve in the region with limited costs**

**J**ANUARY marked the end of US President Joe Biden's first year in office. The month's events in the Middle East, such as Houthi strikes against the UAE and militia strikes targeting US troops in Syria and Iraq, also highlighted the ongoing risks in the region. The Biden administration came into office with a clear intention to shift focus to East Asia and Europe. Many Americans are tired of years of focus on the Middle East. The Obama and Trump administrations also tried to pivot focus to East Asia, but with limited success. Biden's policy toward the Middle East has focused on diplomacy, partnerships with key states and focusing on top priorities, such as nuclear nonproliferation and counterterrorism. While Biden and senior officials often cite the importance of promoting human rights and democracy, they have taken a pragmatic approach to the region that has not placed a strong emphasis on those issues. Steven Cook

persuasively argued in a recent Foreign Policy article that the Biden team has pursued a strategy of “ruthless pragmatism” toward the Middle East – with a clear-eyed focus on pursuing US interests in the region while recognizing resource constraints. Biden has focused specifically on what the US can reasonably achieve in the region with limited costs. In a November speech, Brett McGurk, the National Security Council coordinator for the Middle East, said that the US remains committed to engagement in the Middle East, but that the Biden administration is rejecting the “maximalist” aims of the last three presidents. He described a plan to get “back to basics” in the region, focusing on alliances, “sound strategy,” “clear aims,” and the “finite base of resources.” The administration has specifically rejected the concept of “regime change.” In addition to its strategic approach, the administration has specific policy goals for 2022. These include assisting Iraqi military forces and maintaining a small US military presence in Syria to prevent the reemergence of Daesh. The White House supports the Abraham Accords, initiated by Donald Trump's administration, and hopes to promote normalized relations between Israel and other Arab states. The Biden team has repeatedly stated its “ironclad” support for Israel, while restoring some aid to the Palestinians. Although Biden has expressed support for a two-state solution, the administration

has little interest in devoting political capital to pursuing that goal. Another objective, as stated by Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, is to help “Gulf partners defend themselves against threats from Houthi forces.” There also are global risks that could undermine Biden's ability to pursue his intended policies in the Middle East. The most immediate foreign policy peril is the situation in Ukraine, which is demanding the focus of senior officials in Washington. The White House's intention to focus on East Asia stems from real dangers; managing relations and risks with China will require extensive US focus and resources. Russia and China together could take up all the oxygen in the foreign policy space, leaving little room for other priorities. Meanwhile, Biden must continue to deal with the consequences of the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Middle East also offers opportunities, if Biden's team has the time to focus on leveraging them. Regional powers' recent efforts to improve their relations and de-escalate tensions creates more breathing room for addressing a range of concerns. An agreement with Iran could go a long way toward stabilizing strategic risks. The region's young population and geostategic position offer political, economic and cultural opportunities. The question will be whether Washington has sufficient bandwidth to pursue its policies and foster opportunities in the Middle East.

—Courtesy: Arab News



## Briefs

## PM strongly condemns...

FROM PAGE 01

Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, said his office. In a series of tweets, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that PM Imran Khan had a telephone call with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. "The prime minister strongly condemned the recent attempted missile attack by Houthis against the UAE on January 30, 2022. He commended the timely and effective air defence response of the UAE that saved valuable precious lives," said the tweets.

The PMO said that the premier "expressed abiding solidarity" with the UAE's leadership, government and people. "He expressed deep concern at the recent escalation in attacks that have seriously threatened regional peace and security. The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's abiding support for efforts to protect and promote regional peace and security through dialogue and diplomacy," said the PMO. Apart from the recent attack, the two leaders also "discussed bilateral co-operation and issues of mutual interest". They "agreed to continue regular and close consultations at the highest level. Earlier this week, the UAE said it intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by Yemen's Houthi rebels towards the Gulf country with no casualties reported, the third such incident this month.

## 6 women activists...

FROM PAGE 01

Parwana Ibrahim Khil and her brother-in-law were abducted while traveling in Kabul, according to the UN. Later that same evening, Tamana Paryani and her three sisters were taken from a house in the city. On 16 January, both Ms. Khil and Ms. Paryani had taken part in peaceful demonstrations calling for the rights of women to be respected by the Taliban, who swept back into power last August. Since then, there have been reports coming in of house searches of other women who participated in protests.

"The lack of clear information on the location and well-being of these and other individuals, perpetuates a climate of fear and uncertainty", Ms. Shamdassani said. These reports have also brought into focus what appears to be "a pattern of arbitrary arrests and detentions", as well as torture and ill-treatment of civil society activists, journalists, and media workers, as well as former Government and security forces personnel in Afghanistan, she said.

Moreover, as control over dissent appears to be tightening, the UN rights office said it continues to receive credible allegations of other gross human rights violations. "We call on the 'de facto' authorities to publicly report on the findings of their investigation into the abduction and disappearance of these women activists and their relatives, to take all possible measures to ensure their safe and immediate release, and to hold those responsible to account", Ms. Shamdassani said. She also urged Taliban officials to "guarantee that all reports of this nature" are investigated promptly and effectively, and that those responsible for abductions and arbitrary arrests be held accountable, in line with international human rights law.

## Fawad, Egyptian...

FROM PAGE 01

The minister said a humanitarian crisis was brewing in Afghanistan, and the international community should not leave the country alone to cope with the difficult times. He said the world had to come forward for providing assistance to the Afghan people and Egypt should also play its role in that regard.

Both Egypt and Pakistan had common stance on global affairs, the minister noted. He said the prime minister would discuss Afghanistan issue during his visit to China. The Egyptian ambassador said his country wanted to further strengthen its ties with Pakistan. He extended gratitude to the minister for the meeting.

## Lahore Qalandars outclass Peshawar Zalmi by 29 runs

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Lahore Qalandars have posted a mammoth 199-run total for the loss of four wickets in 20 overs, courtesy of Fakhar Zaman's blazing 66 off 38 balls and late hitting from Mohammad Hafeez and Rashid Khan after they were invited to bat first by Peshawar Zalmi captain Wahab Riaz in the ninth match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2022 at National Stadium in Karachi. Zaman continued his rich form as he forged a 94-run opening stand with Abdullah Shafique, who scored 41 runs.

Other batters also contributed with small cameos; Kamran Ghulam scored 30, Hafeez 37, and Rashid Khan 22. Hussain Talat was the most economical bowler with the figure of 1-19 in three overs. Salman Irshad took two wickets but went for 47 runs in four overs, and Wahab gave 33 runs in four overs without taking a wicket.

Peshawar Zalmi won the toss and elected to bowl first against Lahore Qalandars in their third match of the ongoing seventh edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at the National Cricket Stadium Karachi.



## Beijing torch begins COVID-shortened Olympic torch relay



SPORTS DESK

BEIJING: Beijing's COVID-shortened Olympic torch relay began on Wednesday with basketball great Yao Ming and a Chinese soldier wounded in a bloody 2020 border clash with India among the first to carry the symbolic flame on a journey that will last only three days. The route taking the flame to landmarks including the

Great Wall is far more modest than the globe-spanning tour ahead of Beijing's 2008 Summer Games that was disrupted by protests. Because of COVID-19, only selected members of the public will witness the relay, as will be the case during the Feb. 4-20 Games, which take place inside a "closed loop" keeping competitors and other Olympics personnel away from the public.

"That is, of course, bad luck but what

can you do?", Georgios Iliopoulos, Greece's ambassador to China and a torch-bearer, said when asked if he was worried that the 2022 Games would be remembered as the "corona Olympics".

"You cannot stop life and we do the best we can to continue with what we have to deal with," he said before carrying the red-and-silver spiral that resembles a fluttering ribbon.

COVID-19 and China's battle against it was reflected in Wednesday's lineup, which included Pang Xinghuo, vice director at the Beijing Center for Disease Prevention and Control and a regular at coronavirus media briefings. Movie director Zhang Yimou, who is reprising his 2008 role as opening ceremony director, was torch-bearer number 134.

"I really hope Gu Ailing can win a medal," Zhang told Chinese media, referring to the U.S. born freestyle skier also known as Eileen Gu, who is competing for China.

The flame will travel to competition zones before ending its journey with the lighting of the Olympic cauldron at Friday's opening ceremony.

Wednesday's event began when Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng lit a torch from a cauldron in the shape of traditional vessel known as a zun, then handed it to 80-year-old Luo Zhihuan, who as a speed skater was China's first winter sports world champion.

## No surprise if some Aussies skip Pak tour

SYDNEY: Australian pace bowler Josh Hazlewood said on Wednesday he would not be surprised if security fears prompt some players to opt out of the upcoming Pakistan tour, as he eyes a comeback to the national team after recovering from injury.

Australia are scheduled to play three tests, three one-day internationals and one Twenty20 starting on March 3 in their first trip to Pakistan in 24 years.

A media report last week said many in the Australian camp were apprehensive about whether Pakistan would be safe. Hazlewood said Cricket Australia's reassurances had eased his concern. "There's a lot of things in place and there's been a lot of work in the background ... so the trust is quite high there from the players," Hazlewood told cricket.com.au. "But there'd certainly be some concerns from the players and I wouldn't be surprised if some of them don't make the tour. And that's very fair. People will discuss it with their families ... and come up with an answer and everyone respects that."

Hazlewood, 31, part of a 16-man Australian squad for the five-match Twenty20 home series against Sri Lanka starting on Feb. 11, is raring to go after missing all but the first test in the recent Ashes series. Sidelined by a side strain after the first test in Brisbane, he was forced to watch on as his team mates celebrated a 4-0 series shellacking.

It was a puzzling injury. "I've certainly had a typical side strain, where you tear your oblique (muscle), you can't bowl another ball and are out for at least six or seven weeks," he said. "This one was different ... the strength came back really quickly, and I could do a lot of things in the gym. It was just bowling, that dynamic movement, that caused a bit of grief. It was an unusual one."

Long part of Australia's three-pronged pace attack with Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc, Hazlewood has taken 215 test wickets at an average of 25 runs per wicket. — APP

## Beijing says COVID-19 situation 'controllable,' 'safe'

BEIJING: Beijing reported three new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday as officials said the virus situation was under control with the Olympic Games set to open later in the week. The three cases reported in the 24-hour period from Tuesday to Wednesday all involved people under some sort of quarantine. "The current pandemic situation in the capital is overall controllable and it's headed in a good direction," said Xu Hejian, a spokesman for the city government, at a daily press briefing. "Beijing is safe."

The Chinese capital has been on high-alert as it prepares to host the Winter Olympics starting Friday.

Since Jan. 15, Beijing has reported a total of 115 locally transmitted cases of COVID-19, including six cases of the highly contagious omicron variant. In response, the city has mass tested millions of people and sealed off several neighborhoods in different parts of the city while avoiding a strict lockdown for the entire capital. The restrictions meant that many families had to spend their Lunar New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, which were celebrated on Monday and Tuesday, cooped up in their homes. Local government officials and volunteers sent families packages of fruit, milk and nuts, according to Beijing News, a city-backed newspaper.

China has been able to keep the virus from transmitting widely within its borders through a costly and strict strategy that relies on lockdowns and mass testing. — Web Desk

## Emma Raducanu leads UK Laureus Awards nominees

NEWS DESK

LONDON: US Open champion Emma Raducanu is one of six British sports stars nominated for the 2022 Laureus World Sports Awards.

Diver Tom Daley and BMX racer Bethany Shriever, who both won gold at last year's Tokyo Olympics, are also nominated along with 13-year-old Sky Brown, who won skateboarding bronze. Britain's most successful Paralympian Sarah Storey is also recognised. Cyclist Mark Cavendish completes the UK nominees.

The 36-year-old took his tally of Tour de France stage wins to 34 last July to equal the record set by cycling great Eddie Merckx.

He is up for the Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award, along with Daley and Brown. Raducanu, who was named the 2021 BBC Sports Personality of the Year in December, is among the nominees for the Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award.

The 19-year-old became the first tennis player to win a Grand Slam title as a qualifier when she beat Leylah Fernandez in New York

in September.

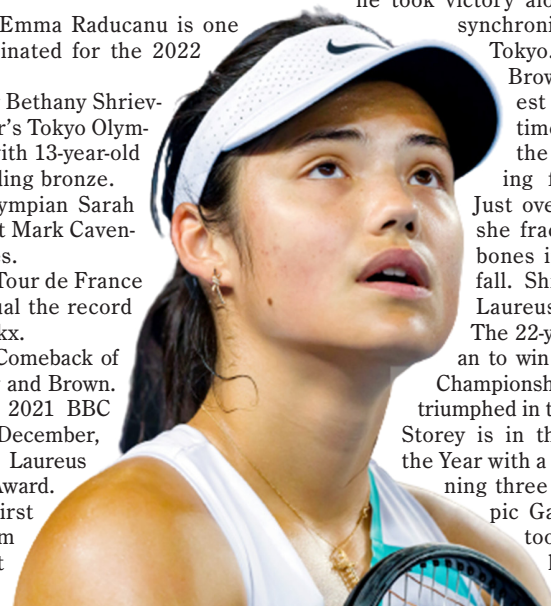
Daley ended his long wait for an Olympic gold medal as he took victory alongside Matty Lee in men's synchronised 10m platform event in Tokyo. At 13 years and 28 days,

Brown became Britain's youngest Olympic medal winner of all time when she finished third in the women's park skateboarding final at the Tokyo Games.

Just over a year before the Games, she fractured her skull and broken bones in her arm during a training fall. Shriever is nominated for the Laureus World Action Sports Award.

The 22-year-old became the first woman to win gold at both the BMX World Championship and the Olympics when she triumphed in the women's BMX racing final.

Storey is in the Laureus Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability category after winning three golds at last year's Paralympic Games. Her success in Tokyo took her overall gold medal tally to 17 - more than any other British Paralympian.



## US and Russia escalate war of words over Ukraine

Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov slammed White House press secretary Jen Psaki's characterization of Russian President Vladimir Putin as a leader who has used chemical weapons and "invaded multiple countries in the past several years"

AGENCIES

KYIV: US and Russian officials sharpened their verbal attacks on each other as Moscow's ambassador in Washington accused the White House of "demonizing" Russia and lying about the Kremlin's history of aggression. Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov slammed White House press secretary Jen Psaki's characterization of Russian President Vladimir Putin as a leader who has used chemical weapons and "invaded multiple countries in the past several years."

Instead, he claimed Moscow had a better record of compliance with international chemical weapons treaties, according to comments posted on the embassy's Facebook page late Tuesday. He also criticized Washington's "bloody experiments" to bring democracy to the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. Those interventions brought the world "nothing but chaos, instability and loss of lives," Antonov said. "We encourage our colleagues to look in the mirror more often before blaming or lecturing others."

The sharp rhetoric followed the White House's dismissal of Putin's claim that Moscow would be forced into conflict with NATO if Ukraine joins the Western military alliance and attempts to seize back Crimea, which the Kremlin annexed in 2014. That assertion was Putin's latest effort to paint Ukraine and its partners in the West as the aggressors in the current crisis, even as Moscow masses more than 100,000 troops around the borders of its smaller

neighbor. The Russian leader also accused the United States and NATO of using Ukraine to hem in Russia and ignoring Moscow's security concerns.

"When the fox is screaming from the top of the henhouse that he's scared of the chickens, which is essentially what they're doing, that fear isn't reported as a statement of fact," Psaki said Tuesday, as Western officials continued diplomatic efforts to defuse a potential further Russian invasion of Ukraine. "We know who the fox is in this case." Joining the back-and-forth, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov retorted Wednesday that Russia was a bear, not a fox, and "too big and heavy to climb on a henhouse." Moscow has long taken issue with NATO granting mem-



bership to countries in the former Soviet sphere, and it has demanded that the organization roll back its forces in Eastern Europe and promise that Ukraine will never join the alliance. NATO has refused to change its open door policy allowing countries to seek entry into the bloc, whose members are bound to defend each other against attack.

"Let's imagine that Ukraine is a member of NATO, is stuffed with weapons — there are modern offensive systems, like in Poland and Romania — and begins an operation in the Crimea," Putin said Tuesday. "Do we have to fight with the NATO bloc? Has anyone thought anything about it? It seems not." Prime Minister Kaja Kallas of Estonia, which joined NATO in 2004, blamed Russia for starting the crisis. "First of all, it is that Russia is creating this military buildup around Ukraine and then presenting ultimatums," she said Tuesday on Washington Post Live.

European nations continued to shore up support for Ukraine. The Netherlands will ramp up cybersecurity assistance to Ukraine and extend a program to provide rehabilitation services to injured soldiers, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Wednesday in a joint statement with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, following their meeting in Kyiv Wednesday.

The same day that Putin accused the West of making Ukraine a pawn in a great-power showdown, Russia's top diplomat at the United Nations indicated Moscow would use its rotating presidency of the Security Council this month to shine a spotlight on contentious issues, such as the use of sanctions as a foreign policy tool.

## Barcelona signs striker Aubameyang

NEWS DESK

BARCELONA: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was released by Arsenal for nothing but now has a buyout clause of 100 million euros (\$113 million) after joining Barcelona.

The 32-year-old Gabon striker's Arsenal contract, that ran through June 2023, was terminated this week after the north London club decided to cut ties with the player. It follows a series of disciplinary issues with one of the club's highest earners, who was stripped of the captaincy in December. Barcelona said Wednesday that Aubameyang would be signing a contract until June 30, 2025 with an out-clause option in 2023.

## China visit to boost...

FROM PAGE 01

leadership, is visiting China from February 3 to 6, the Foreign Office said Wednesday. "Prime Minister Imran Khan will visit China from February 3-6 to attend the Opening Ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games," the Foreign Office said in a statement issued ahead of the visit. The prime minister will be accompanied by a high-level delegation including members of the cabinet and senior government officials. As a global event, the Olympic Games foster mutual understanding, inclusivity and friendship among the peoples of the world.

Beijing will soon become the first city to host both summer and winter editions of the Olympic Games. "It is highly admirable that the Chinese government has made meticulous arrangements for holding the Winter Olympic Games despite the COVID-19 pandemic," according to the statement.

The FO said during the visit, the prime minister would hold bilateral meetings with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. "The leaders will review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, with a particular focus on stronger trade and economic cooperation including CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor)," it said. A number of Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements will be concluded during the visit. In Beijing, the prime minister will also meet prominent business leaders of China and representatives of leading Chinese think-tanks, academia and the media.

He will also have other bilateral interactions on the sidelines. The two sides will also hold wide-ranging exchange of views on major regional and international issues. The prime minister's visit will mark the culmination of celebrations commemorating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, with more than 140 events organized to showcase the resilience of the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and the unfolding international situation.

"It would thus renew the bilateral commitment to taking the iron-clad partnership between Pakistan and China to new heights and add impetus to cooperation across multiple domains," the FO statement said.

## Afghanistan's varsities...

FROM PAGE 01

women would again be barred from education — as happened during the Taliban's first rule, from 1996-2001. "It's a moment of joy for us that our classes have started," Zarlasha Haqmal, who studies law and political science at Nangarhar University, told AFP news agency. "But we are still worried that the Taliban might stop them."

An AFP correspondent saw one small group of women, wearing the all-covering burqa, enter Laghman University early on Wednesday.

The men who attended — ferried to the campus in local taxis and buses — were dressed in traditional tunics known as shalwar kameez. Attendance was very light and Taliban forces guarded the entrance, a tripod-mounted machine gun resting on a boom gate.

The reopenings come a week after a Taliban delegation held talks with Western officials in Norway, where they were pressed on improving the rights of women to unlock billions of dollars in seized assets and frozen foreign aid.



## Briefs

## Sisi seeking trade boost with Kuwait

## NEWS DESK

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said that he hopes to increase trade and joint investment projects between Egypt and Kuwait. During a reception on Wednesday with Mohamed Jassem Al-Saqr, chairman of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, El-Sisi said that the Egyptian government is keen to communicate with Kuwaiti investors in order to support their activities in Egypt and overcome any obstacles they face.

Presidential spokesman Ambassador Bassam Radi said that El-Sisi believes that "the historical relations between Egypt and Kuwait are firm on all levels," and that support for the stability of Kuwait and the entire Gulf region is part of Egypt's national security.

The spokesman added that the meeting included discussions on ways to support the Egyptian-Kuwaiti Business Council in its efforts to increase communication and interaction between business leaders in the two countries, reviewing available investment opportunities and discussing joint projects, especially in the fields of infrastructure, clean energy and water desalination. - APP

## Turkiye, Ukraine set to sign free trade agreement

ANKARA: Turkiye and Ukraine are set to sign a historic free trade agreement on Thursday, the Turkish trade minister said on Wednesday. "Tomorrow, hopefully, we will sign a New Generation Free Trade Agreement with Ukraine as the fruit of more than a decade of negotiations," Mehmet Mus said during a press conference held in the capital Ankara.

Pointing to the strong ties between Turkiye and Ukraine, including trade, Mus said the bilateral trade volume jumped 59% to \$7.4 billion in 2021.

"Especially the diversification of the products subject to our bilateral trade is pleasing," Mus added.

The deal is an important step to reach the \$10 billion bilateral trade volume target set by the two countries' presidents, he underlined.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will visit Kyiv on Feb. 3, when Kyiv will be hosting the 10th High-Level Strategic Council between Turkiye and Ukraine. The leaders of the two states are expected to attend the event, which will also mark the 30th anniversary of their countries' relations. Dating back to 1991, when Ukraine declared its independence, Turkiye was the first to recognize its new status. - APP

## Sweden boosts Ukraine aid by \$5 million

STOCKHOLM: Sweden said it would give Ukraine 50 million Swedish crowns (\$5.4 million) over three years to support economic development, dialogue and general resilience in south and east Ukraine.

The money will go into the Partnership Fund for Resilient Ukraine, launched with the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the United States.

"This fund is going to contribute to strengthen Ukraine's resilience," Foreign Minister Ann Linde said in a statement.

"It will be able to answer quickly and flexibly the needs that develop and which have materialised as a result of Russian aggression since 2014." The money is an addition to the 240 million crowns Ukraine receives annually from Sweden for the reform of civil society.

Tensions between Russia and Ukraine have been escalating with Moscow amassing more than 100,000 troops on the Ukrainian border. Western countries say they fear Russia may be planning to invade. - APP

## Baku, Ankara eye prospects of military cooperation

The Azerbaijani Defence Minister stressed the exceptional impact of the cordial relations between the heads of state of the two brotherly countries on military cooperation, as well as in other areas

## NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Azerbaijani Defence Minister Zakir Hasanov and his Turkish counterpart Hulusi Akar have discussed the prospects of military cooperation between the two nations, the ministry reported.

"Prospects for the development of regional security, as well as cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey in military, military-technical, military education and other fields, were discussed at the business meetings," the ministry said.

During the meeting of two delegations, Hasanov expressed gratitude for the moral and political support provided by brotherly Turkey in the 44-day war with Armenia in 2020. The Azerbaijani Defence Minister stressed the exceptional impact of the cordial relations between the heads of state of the two brotherly countries on military cooperation, as well as in other areas.

Welcoming the guests, the Turkish Minister stressed that the strategic alliance between Azerbaijan and Turkey is based on friendly



and fraternal relations. Akar expressed confidence that cooperation based on mutual trust, confidence and support will continue to develop successfully.

Highlighting the experience gained by the servicemen of two countries in joint drills, the parties noted the importance of holding such events on a regular basis.

It was stressed that Azerbaijan is expanding military cooperation with Turkey to increase its defence capabilities, which is one of the main factors ensuring stability in the region. Following the solemn welcoming ceremony at the Turkish National Defence Ministry, Hasanov signed the book of memory. Afterwards, the top officials answered the questions of media representatives.

As a part of his working visit to Turkey, Hasanov was received by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Defence Ministry reported in a different report. The Turkish National Defence Minister Hulusi Akar also attended the meeting. Later, Hasanov visited the park named after the national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev in Ankara and paid tribute to his memory.

## Germany reports record 208,000 new Covid-19 cases

BERLIN: Germany reported 208,498 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, its highest-ever daily rise since the pandemic started. According to the country's disease control agency, the highly infectious omicron variant has been the main reason behind the surge, and it accounts for nearly 95% of the new infections. The Robert Koch Institute said it estimates that 2,278,900 people are currently sick with COVID-19, which is also an all-time high for the country. Despite the surge in new cases, hospital admissions for COVID-19 remained relatively low, and authorities reported an average of 4.77 hospitalizations per 100,000 residents. As of Wednesday, 2,307 patients were receiving treatment in intensive care units, and nearly 3,000 beds were free. Public health officials are warning that while the majority of omicron cases have been mild so far, the variant is spreading rapidly, and could still overwhelm the healthcare system if cases continue to climb dramatically. German Hospital Federation Chairman Gerald Gass warned against relaxing anti-coronavirus measures too soon, although neighboring countries such as Denmark, Netherlands and Austria announced more steps toward easing COVID-19 restrictions. In my view, we can talk about relaxing some of the measures only after we pass the (peak of the) omicron wave," he told the Rheinische Post daily. Experts say new infections are likely to increase in the coming days and expected to reach a peak around mid-February. - APP

## The Bosnian crisis from the isolationist perspective

BOSNIA and Herzegovina is facing "the greatest existential threat of the post-war period," were words uttered by current High Representative Christian Schmidt late last year and this precise description of the situation should echo in the international community on a daily basis. Mr. Schmidt as an experienced politician and someone who has significant executive powers (most efficient are Bonn Powers given to the Office of the High Representative in 1997), probably attempted to alarm European leaders and its global allies to undertake serious political action before it can be too late. Indeed, so many reasons could be presented to ad-

vocate that state of urgency. Yet, historical reminiscences should be enough; the Serb terrorist Gavrilo Princip, who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo (1914), was a spark that ignited Great War; the fall of communism in Eastern Europe at the end of the 20th Century had deadly consequences in former Yugoslavia with mass atrocities (and genocide) committed by mostly Serb forces in Bosnia. The somewhat small state of Bosnia and Herzegovina marked the beginning and the end of the previous century in a very negative way, and it is sufficient reason to take a recent crisis seriously. In addition to these, there are other reasons for con-

cern. European security, endangered by Russia's firm stand towards Ukraine and its possible NATO enlargement, is balancing the whole continent at the "Thucydidean Brink." The entire context resembles a new conflict between the West and its liberal, democratic order against the East and its autocracy. Moreover, it has a dangerous impact in former communist states in a broad belt from the Baltic to Central, Eastern and Southeastern European countries because of growing Chinese influence by investment policy. The Eurasian block, foremost Russia and China conduct tactical moves to disorient the EU, also using energy as a po-

litical tool in that struggle. In that sense, political tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have the capacity to become a global crisis. This "European hotspot" has so many potential explanatory patterns that any researcher might count on their opinion, which would be shared with the public. Awareness about the significance of narrative contextualization on and vis a vis fragile society is a must. From the cultural and religious point of view, for example, Bosnia represents the meeting point of monotheistic faiths and traditions, indeed that any hostility will influence relations between Islam and Christianity. - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Admir Mulaosmanovic

## Russian envoy downplays Japan's warning

TOKYO: Any action by Japan against Moscow would be "counterproductive," a Russian diplomat in Tokyo said on Wednesday, responding to a recent warning by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. "I think that these remarks about so-called strong actions against Russia are counterproductive," Russian Ambassador to Japan Mikhail Galuzin said, referring to comments by Kishida last month that Tokyo would take "strong action in response to any attack on Ukraine by Russia." After Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, Tokyo had imposed sanctions on Moscow. "They would not contribute to the creation of a good atmosphere, positive atmosphere in a dialogue between Russia and Japan," Galuzin said at a news conference at Tokyo's Foreign Correspondents' Club. He spoke about the security situation in Eastern Europe and how NATO was expanding towards Russian borders, terming it a "deep and systematic crisis." Tensions in Ukraine have been increasing for months after Russia amassed tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's border, which the West says is preparation for war. Both NATO and the EU have warned of severe consequences if Moscow invades its neighbor. - APP

## Migrants freeze to death after Greece pushback

ANKARA: The asylum seekers had been stripped of their clothes and shoes by Greek authorities and froze to death, the Turkish Interior minister said. Turkiye has frequently held neighbouring Greece accountable of illegally pushing back migrants and asylum seekers wanting to make their way into Europe. (AA)

Turkish authorities have recovered 12 bodies believed to be those of asylum seekers who were pushed back by Greece. The bodies were found near the Ipsala border crossing between Turkiye and Greece, Turkiye's Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said on Wednesday.

They were found frozen to death "without shoes and stripped of their clothes," by Greek border guards at their land border. The 12 were among 22 asylum seekers who were pushed back into Turkiye by Greek border guards, Soylu said via Twitter. The tweet showed blurred photographs of bodies lying by the side of a road.

The minister did not provide further details but accused Greek border units of acting "cruelly" and the European Union of being soft on Greece. Turkish teams continue to conduct search and rescue missions in the area for asylum seekers who may need medical assistance, it added.

An investigation has been launched in to the incident, it said. Turkiye has been a key transit point for migrants and asylum seekers aiming to cross into Europe to start new lives, especially those fleeing war and persecution. - APP

## Landslides kill at least 18 in Ecuador

QUITO: A rain-weakened hillside collapsed in Ecuador's capital, sweeping over homes and a sports field and killing at least 18 people, rescue officials said Tuesday. The government's emergency agency said at least three homes were destroyed and that neighbors had joined rescue workers in hunting through the ruins for survivors.

The rescue agency initially reported 14 known dead, but Metropolitan District police Commander César Zapata later told Ecuavisa television that four more victims had been found. Images from the collapse showed waves of mud, some 3 meters (10-feet) high, carrying vehicles, trash bins and other debris under a heavy rain Monday night in the neighborhoods of La Gasca and Armero on the slopes of the Rucu Pinchincha mountain. As the rescue began, police called for silence so that the cries of those trapped could be heard. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi chairing councilors meeting at foreign office Islamabad. - DNA

## Pakistan urges UNPBC to address root causes of unresolved disputes

## DNA

NEW YORK: Pakistan has urged the UN Peace Building Commission (PBC), a 31-member advisory body that supports peace efforts in conflict-affected countries, to play a larger role in contributing to the resolution of underlying causes of conflicts and disputes.

"Priority should be given to addressing the root causes of conflict: Poverty, inequality, competition over scarce resources, environmental degradation and unresolved conflicts and disputes," Ambassador Munir Akram told the opening of the Commission's sixteenth session. "All of these are causes of strife among and within

nations," he said, adding that the Commission could expend more time on contribution to the resolution of these underlying causes. Ambassador Akram added that PBC's advisory role allows it to submit substantive inputs and recommendations on peace building, conflict resolution and thematic issues to the Security Council.

Noting that the very nature of conflict has changed, he cited growing foreign intervention in local conflicts and added that even internal conflicts now have cross-border impacts. "We have to see the fact that there are financial interests which are involved in the scramble for natural resources," the Pakistani envoy pointed out.

## Azerbaijan developing relations with int'l organizations

BAKU: "We bring to the attention of the Armenian Foreign Minister that the activity of any international organization in the sovereign lands of our country is a bilateral issue between Azerbaijan and the related international organization. The comment of the representative of the third side on this issue is inappropriate and baseless. The Armenian Foreign Minister should rather comment on the issues related to the implementation of his country's commitments and the peace building in the region," said spokesperson for Azerbaijan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Leyla Abdullayeva as she responded to media's question regarding the Armenian Foreign Minister's statement on "Azerbaijan's obstruction of the activities of international organizations in Karabakh". "First of all, we would like to emphasize that Azerbaijan has mutually beneficial and successfully developing relations with international organizations. The active participation of our country in multilateral platforms, as well as the successful experience of chairmanship in a number of organizations are well-known. As for the activities of international organizations in Azerbaijan, we would like to remind you that in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution on the coordination of humanitarian aid dated December 19, 1991, such activities must be based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the host country. - Agencies



## Pak-UK partnership deepening in diverse fields: Envoy

PM's Trade Envoy to Pakistan, MP Mark Eastwood, showed strong desire to improve existing trade and investment relations between Pakistan and UK. He shared that he would be visiting Pakistan soon along with a business delegation to explore further opportunities to enhance bilateral trade

## DNA

MANCHESTER: The Consulate General of Pakistan in Manchester together with Pakistan Britain Business Council (PBBC), with the support of Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce hosted a Conference titled 'Pakistan: A Land of Opportunities' in Manchester on 27 January 2022. The event was attended among others by High Commissioner of Pakistan to the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan; Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Pakistan, Rt. Hon. Mark Eastwood; Chairman PBBC Julian Hamilton Barns; Senior Advisor Campbell Kier; noted British Pakistani entrepreneur Aneel Musarrat as well as officials and office bearers of the Business Council, the High Commission and the Consulate General. Addressing the Conference, the High Commissioner highlighted the reforms being undertaken by Pakistan to facilitate a business-friendly environment. He said that the United King-



MANCHESTER: Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan addressing an Investment Conference in Manchester. - DNA

dom was Pakistan's strategic partner. This partnership was deepening through growing linkages in diverse fields. UK, being the 3rd largest export market for Pakistani products, accounted for approximately 8% of Pakistan's global exports. The High Commissioner noted that in 2021, despite the pandemic, Pakistan's exports to UK increased by 33%, thus crossing the milestone of US\$ 2 billion for the first time. He said, Pakistan's GDP, despite the pandemic, grew by 5.37% in 2020-21, which was second highest growth in 14 years.

Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Pakistan, MP Mark Eastwood, showed strong desire to improve existing trade and investment relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. He shared that he would be visiting Pakistan soon along with a business delegation to explore further opportunities to enhance bilateral trade. He further said that he was a supporter of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and the United Kingdom and wanted to see strides taken in this direction.



**Briefs**

**Britain scrambles jets after detecting aircraft**

LONDON: Britain scrambled fighter jets on Wednesday after detecting unidentified aircraft approaching its airspace, the defence ministry said. "Quick reaction alert Typhoon fighters from RAF Lossiemouth, supported by a voyager tanker from RAF Brieze Norton, have been launched against unidentified aircraft approaching the UK area of interest," a Ministry of Defence spokesman said. "We will not be offering any additional detail on this ongoing operation until complete." Sky News reported that the aircraft had been detected north of Scotland. - APP

**Afghan journalists released after Taliban detention**

KABUL: Two Afghan journalists detained by the Taliban earlier this week have been released. Ariana TV reporters Waris Hasrat and Aslam Hijab were released Wednesday after they were detained by the Taliban on Monday, according to the Afghan Media Association, a newly founded journalists' rights group. Before their release, a Taliban spokesman said he did not have any information on the pair, but both the United Nations and Amnesty International blamed the group for their abduction. Ali Asghari, news editor of Ariana News said both had been released on Wednesday "after being found guiltless". He said no further details could be released for security reasons. Since returning to power in August the Taliban have increasingly cracked down on dissent and local journalists have been beaten and intimidated while covering protests. Their arrest came two weeks after a pair of female activists went missing after participating in a Kabul protest calling for women's rights. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed concern for them and four of their relatives, who all remain missing. The Taliban have denied any knowledge of their whereabouts and say they are investigating the matter. Last month a prominent university lecturer and regime critic was also detained, before being released days later following outrage in Afghanistan and abroad. Having ruled with an iron fist during their first stint in power from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban have promised a less repressive form of government this time around. But they have slowly ramped up restrictions, particularly against women. - Agencies

**Turkey strikes Kurd targets in Iraq, Syria**

BEIRUT: Turkey said Wednesday it launched deadly strikes against Kurdish targets in Iraq and Syria, where Kurd forces have been left reeling from the largest Islamic State group attack in nearly three years.

The raids on Tuesday night targeted shelters, tunnels, caves, ammunition depots, bases and training camps operated by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the People's Protection Units (YPG) which Ankara views as terrorist groups, the Turkish defence ministry said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said the Syria strikes hit a Kurdish-run power station near the town of Al-Malikiyah in Hasakeh province, where a brazen jailbreak attempt by IS militants last month sparked days of clashes that have left hundreds dead. "At least four people were killed in the strike targeting a power station near Al-Malikiyah," the Britain-based Observatory said. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Kurdish administration's de facto army, said four of its fighters died in the attack. Later on Wednesday, shelling on the Turkish-held city of Al-Bab in northern Syria killed eight people, including five civilians, according to the Observatory. The war monitor didn't specify who was responsible but Kurdish forces and Syrian regime troops are both deployed in the region. In northern Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, Turkish strikes on Tuesday hit PKK positions in the Makhmur and Sinjar regions, where bombardment caused "human and material losses", Kurdish authorities said, without specifying a casualty toll. As part of the attack, which drew condemnation from Baghdad, Turkish "military aircraft bombarded six PKK positions in the Karjokh mountains", which overlook a camp for Kurdish refugees from Turkey, Kurdish counter-terrorism services said in a statement.

**US willing to discuss troop limits with Russia**

The United States and its NATO allies are also ready to discuss reciprocal measures to avoid dangerous incidents in air or at sea

AGENCIES

MADRID: Washington is willing to discuss promising not to deploy ground-launched missiles or combat forces in Ukraine if Russia agrees to do the same, according to confidential documents that the Spanish newspaper El Pais said were Washington's and NATO's written replies to Russian security demands. El Pais did not say how it obtained the documents. "The United States is willing to discuss conditions-based reciprocal transparency measures and reciprocal commitments by both the United States and Russia to refrain from deploying offensive ground-launched missile systems and permanent forces with a combat mission in the territory of Ukraine," the U.S. document said, according to a copy on the El Pais website. The United States and its NATO allies are also ready to discuss reciprocal measures to avoid dangerous incidents in the

**Dutch PM Rutte urges dialogue in Ukraine crisis**

KYIV: Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte urged dialogue to defuse a crisis with Russia on Wednesday during a trip to Kyiv in which he also reaffirmed his resolve to secure justice for families of the victims of an airliner downed over eastern Ukraine in 2014. Rutte is the latest leader - following in the tracks of the British and Polish premiers - to visit Kyiv in a show of solidarity after Russia massed tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's borders in a standoff that has alarmed the West. The Ukraine crisis is closely watched in the Netherlands, where Dutch prosecutors have sought the convictions of four men charged with murder over the shooting down of the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17. The prosecutors say the defendants, who are all at large, helped supply a missile system that Russian-backed separatists battling Kyiv's forces used to fire a rocket at the plane. All 298 people on board - mostly Dutch nationals - were killed. "The Netherlands' priorities are establishing the truth (of what happened), achieving justice, and holding those responsible to account," Rutte told reporters, speaking alongside Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "It's not an easy process but giving up is not an option for both of us," he said. The Dutch government holds Russia responsible in the case. Moscow, which backs the separatists in their war with Kyiv's forces, denies any involvement. - Agencies

air or at sea, and to reassure Moscow that there are no Tomahawk cruise missiles stationed in Romania and Poland, according to the documents published by the paper. NATO and the Kremlin told Reuters they would not comment. The positions set out in the two documents, which were officially handed to Moscow on Jan. 26, are consistent with public statements by Washington and its allies in the past, particularly in terms of offering military transparency. The United States has also long said that NATO's European missile shield in Romania, and a planned site in Poland, will not serve as a future defence against Russian rockets, but to defend against threats from Iran and the wider Middle East. In its written reply, the United States offered transparency over its Romanian and Polish missile sites if Moscow did the same at two sites in Russia. In the NATO document, the 30-member alliance said: "the reversal of Russia's military build-up in and around Ukraine will be essential for substantive progress."

**Swiss eye lifting all Covid curbs**

WEB DESK

GENEVA: Switzerland said Wednesday that the pandemic phase of Covid-19 could soon be over as it ditched some restrictions and mulled lifting all remaining curbs in mid-February. The government dropped its work-from-home order and scrapped the quarantine requirement for Covid contacts, despite case numbers soaring. "There are increasing signs that the acute crisis will soon be over and the endemic phase could begin," it said in a statement. "The moment has come to once again ease measures designed to contain the spread of the coronavirus." The upbeat tone came despite Switzerland seeing sustained record infection numbers. More than 40,000 new cases were registered in the past 24 hours, while nearly 2.3 million positive tests have been recorded overall in the wealthy Alpine nation of 8.6 million people. But the government stressed that hospitals were not over-burdened, likely due to broad immunity through vaccinations and natural infections. The government therefore downgraded the work-from-home order to a recommendation, although masks remain mandatory in the workplace. It also decided to drop quarantine requirements for contacts of Covid cases, though people who test positive for the disease still need to isolate.

**US to deploy troops in eastern Europe**

WASHINGTON: The United States plans to deploy troops to fortify NATO forces in eastern Europe amid fears that Russia could invade Ukraine, a senior official of President Joe Biden's administration said Wednesday. According to US media reports, around 2,000 troops will be sent from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to Poland and Germany, while another 1,000 already in Germany will be moved to Romania. "The Department of Defense will reposition certain Europe-based units further east, forward-deploy additional US-based units to Europe, and maintain the heightened state of readiness of response forces" to meet commitments to NATO, the administration official said. "These forces are not going to fight in Ukraine. They are not permanent moves. They respond to current conditions," the official said, referring to Russia's placement of more than 100,000 troops along with heavy offensive weapons along Ukraine's border. - APP

**German govt under fire over Russia and Ukraine**

NEWS DESK

BERLIN: A wave of criticism is pouring over Berlin - occasionally mixed with bitter mockery - especially after Germany responded to Kyiv's request for weapons deliveries by promising to provide 5,000 protective helmets. Then maps were published showing the flight path of British transport planes carrying weapons to Ukraine, which obviously had to steer clear of German airspace. In dealing with its first major foreign policy crisis, the new German coalition government finds itself also facing an image crisis. The head of the Warsaw office of the think tank European Council on Foreign Relations, Piotr Buras, for example told the national daily taz he was "baffled" at the chaotic communication in Berlin: "The German government has not been speaking with one voice. We have heard many opinions, but see no clear strategy." International newspapers, from The New York Times to the Deccan Herald in Bangalore, India, have run headlines asking: Where does Germany stand on the Ukraine conflict.

**Pakistan to get 40mln vaccine doses from COVAX**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will get 40 million more doses of COVID-19 vaccine in the first quarter of current year under the COVAX facility, said United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) Pakistan on Wednesday. UNICEF Pakistan told APP that since May 2021 Pakistan has already received over 91 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine under COVAX facility. It was half of the total 175 million doses which were administered in the country so far, added UNICEF Pakistan. Global donor agency told that UNICEF also delivered 41 ultra-cold chain equipment and huge quantity of personal protective equipment, syringes, laboratory equipment and other essential supplies. "Since the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency, more than 150 million people (60 per cent of the population) were reached with messages on COVID-19 prevention and access to services through national Media channels with UNICEF support. - APP

**Modern dispensary to be made at I-9/1**

ISLAMABAD: The management of Capital Development Authority (CDA) is taking all possible steps to provide improved medical facilities to the citizens of Islamabad. In this regard, the CDA administration has decided to construct a modern dispensary (health care center) in Sector I-9/1, Islamabad for which a budget of Rs. 66 million has been allocated. Tenders in this regard have also been published in newspapers. The management of the Capital Development Authority has directed the concerned departments in view of the growing number of patients and public needs to equip the newly constructed healthcare center with all modern facilities so that residents could be provided improved medical facilities. However, the establishment of the said dispensary (Healthcare Center) will be able to benefit the residents of Sector I-9, I-10 and adjoining population. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: European Union ambassador to Pakistan, Androulla Kaminara hosted a dinner in honour of Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Ambassadors of EU countries were also in attendance. - DNA

**US-led naval drill begins with Pakistan, Israel among others**

NEWS DESK

MANAMA: A US-led maritime exercise including 60 nations and organisations has kicked off in and around Gulf waters with Israel joining for the first time alongside Muslims nations such as Pakistan. The US navy said on Tuesday that the 18-day biennial International Maritime Exercise (IMX) since Monday includes 50 vessels and 9,000 personnel from more than 60 entities. It includes a number of

countries - among them Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Oman and Yemen - that do not have formal diplomatic relations with Israel. With more than 80 drones, it is also the world's largest unmanned drill, it added from Bahrain, where the 5th Fleet is headquartered. The exercise comes at a time of regional tensions over Iran's nuclear programme and Yemeni rebels' recent targeting of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates with missiles and drones. Saudi Arabia and Israel share the same desire to contain their common foe Iran. Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraea has tweeted that Israel would "for the first time take part" in the IMX drill. In November, the UAE and Bahrain launched joint naval exercises with Israel for the first time. Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels targeted the UAE three times in January with drones and missiles, killing three foreign workers in the first attack on January 17. Earlier in the month, the rebels seized a UAE-flagged ship in the Red Sea, saying it was carrying weapons - a claim denied by the Emirates. The US navy said in January it had stopped a ship carrying 40 tons of a fertiliser that can be used to make explosives as it travelled from Iran along a route previously used to smuggle weapons to the Houthis. In December, it had seized 1,400 AK-47 rifles and ammunition from a fishing boat it claimed was smuggling weapons from Iran to Yemen.

**Turkish-local firms' nexus behind sugar crisis: FIA**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Some startling disclosures have been made in the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) inquiry into the sugar crisis that had hit the country last year. It has emerged that a Turkish firm, in connivance with a local firm, had used fake documents to receive the tender for the supply of sugar, which ultimately resulted in its cancellation. Last year in April, the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) had issued tenders. The Turkish firm, Gemini Group, succeeded in receiving the tender by offering the lowest bid (\$447 per metric ton). The firm was to supply 50, 000 metric tonnes of sugar but the Bank of Punjab's (BoP) documents submitted by the Group to the TCP as guarantee were fake. According to the FIA officials, when the TCP learnt about the fake documents, it cancelled the tender and floated it for the second time, which resulted in colossal loss to the national exchequer. Second time, the rate was fixed at \$526 per metric ton. However, the Agency swung into action and arrested Muhammad Abbas, the local company representative, following the registration of a case against both the local as well as Turkish companies.

**Armenia, Turkey to resume first flights in two years**

DNA

ISTANBUL: Historic rivals Turkey and Armenia were due Wednesday to resume their first commercial flights in two years as part of cautious efforts to normalise strained ties. Armenia and Turkey have no diplomatic relations, a closed land border and a long history of hostility rooted in the mass killing of Armenians under the Ottoman Empire during World War I. But in December, the two countries appointed special envoys to normalise relations, spurred by support from regional power-broker Russia and Turkey's ally - and Armenia's arch-foe - Azerbaijan. The special envoys met

in Moscow last month for what they described as "constructive" talks. The first flight run by Moldova's low-cost carrier FlyOne, which has a branch in Armenia, was expected to land on Wednesday evening at Istanbul Airport from Yerevan. Another flight run by Turkey's Pegasus airline was due to take off from Istanbul's second airport, known as Sabiha Gokcen, late on Wednesday, for the Armenian capital. A Pegasus spokeswoman said the budget airline will fly three flights to and from Yerevan a week. Aram Ananyan, FlyOne chief in Armenia, told AFP there would be two weekly return flights between Yerevan and Istanbul.

**Rashid rules out possibility of presidential govt**

Addressing a press conference, the minister said that neither there was any possibility of imposition of emergency nor any move for no-confidence motion

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Wednesday ruled out any possibility of presidential form of government, rejecting all rumors being spread through different modes of media about 'presidential system or emergency' in the country. Addressing a press conference here, the minister said that neither there was any possibility of imposition of emergency nor any move for no-confidence motion and any possibility for long march. He said despite the opposition's tall claims, the government passed all important bills from National Assembly and Senate during the last three and half years. He said on his special invitation, Interior Minister Prince Abdul Aziz bin Saud bin Naif would visit Pakistan next week. The Saudi Interior Minister would meet President Dr Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Imran Khan, key government and security officials during his visit. Pak-Saudi relations were higher than Himalayas, he added. He said PM was going on an important visit to China from February 3-6. The PM visit would be a historical one, he added. He said China Pakistan Economic Corridor and other important issues would come under discussion during the PM's visit to China. Commenting on medical reports of PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif, Rashid said that Nawaz Sharif wanted to stay abroad on fake medical reports and he utilized fake medical



reports for going abroad. Regarding the long march of Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDM), the minister termed the opposition as ineffective and politically dysfunctional. About performance of the ministry, he said 87 new NADRA offices were set up during last year in the country. Out of total 87, 23 were set up in Punjab, 11 in Sindh, 18 in KPK, 13 each in Balochistan and AJK. As many as 13 new passport offices would be set up abroad during the current year, he added. The minister said the government wanted to open 13 new passport offices in Sindh and areas were being located for them. However, he said that they were waiting for the Sindh government's response in this regard. He said he had already directed the Chairman NADRA and officials of passport section to visit Sindh and finalize areas for setting up the said offices and centres. Regarding law and order, the minister said that all the four chief secretaries and IGP's were directed to remain alert and prepare an effective strategy to control any untoward situation. Responding to a question, he said no negotiation was being carried out with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). He also said all their demands were unacceptable. To another question, he said that he has issued directives to adopt rotation policy for transfer and posting in NADRA and FIA. To a separate question, he said Pakistan was not going to IMF for first time. Pakistan had already availed 23 IMF packages before, he added.