



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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NATO chief urges de-escalation amid Russian-Ukraine crisis

Detailed News On Page-06

Vladimir Norov gets awarded by Russia

Detailed News On Page-06



British High Commissioner visits Chaman

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

US, Pakistan 'strategic' partners

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States values its relationship with Pakistan, the US State Department reaffirmed Wednesday, while emphasizing that there was no requirement, as far as Washington was concerned, for other countries to choose between the US and China. "We've made the point all along that it is not a requirement for any country around the world to choose between the United States and China," Spokesman Ned Price told reporters when asked if Pakistan and China have become closer because "they feel abandoned" by the US.

JI to hold sit-ins from Feb 06

DNA

PESHAWAR: Jamaat-e-Islami has announced to stage protest sit-ins against government from February 06. JI chief Sirajul Haq has said that the protest campaign of 101 sit-ins will begin from the first protest in Gujrat. He demanded an action against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government from the election commission over violation of the election laws. JI leader held the provincial chief minister responsible for the breach of the electoral rules. "The people of KP vehemently hate the PTI government," JI Ameer claimed.

Nawaz submitted no medical report

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farukh Habib on Thursday said that Nawaz Sharif has not submitted any medical report in Lahore High Court, rather it was just an opinion of Dr Shauk, residing in the United States. Responding to a question here, he questioned as to how an American doctor who was not even registered in UK issued such a report.

Plots to govt officials are illegal: IHC

A two-member bench announced the verdict in the case related to the allotment of plots to judges, bureaucrats, and govt officials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday declared the plot allotments to judges, bureaucrats and government employees in special sectors of the federal capital as unconstitutional. A two-member bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani announced the verdict in the case related to the allotment of plots to judges, bureaucrats, and government officials in special sectors of the federal capital. The IHC declared the schemes that were intended to be launched in Sectors F-12, F-14, F-15, and G-12 illegal, unconstitutional, and against the public interest. The court, in the judgment, also mentioned that the draw for allotting plots in sectors F-14 and F-15 held on August 17, 2021, was not transparent. The judgment said that the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) nor the federal government had the jurisdiction to launch the

Continued on Page 06

IHC disposes of case against forced labor

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday disposed of a case against forced labor at 'bricks kilns' in Federal capital after the statement of district administration. The court was told that Chief Commissioner ICT had issued orders for the bricks kilns. Amicus curiae Adnan Randhawa Advocate informed the court that the two points had been raised in a report prepared by chief commissioner. First it proposed to declare an affidavit from the brick kiln as compulsory for not taking forced labor while the second was for legislation. The court said that the case would be restored automatically if any complaint regarding the forced labor was received in capital.

Saudi envoy, minister discuss cooperation

During the meeting, it was agreed to operationalize the Saudi Oil Facility at the earliest



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malkiy calls on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan. - DNA

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malkiy called on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan, both the sides discussed ongoing development projects and new initiatives. The Minister for Economic

Affairs appreciated the Saudi support in the priority development areas, said a press release issued here.

During the meeting, it was agreed to operationalize the Saudi Oil Facility at the earliest. The Financing Agreement worth US\$ 1.2 billion for import for petroleum products was signed on

Continued on Page 06



BEIJING: Assistant Foreign Minister of China Wu Jianghao is receiving Prime Minister Imran Khan on his arrival at Beijing Capital International Airport. - DNA

PM Imran arrives in Beijing

The Premier is accompanied by a high level delegation

AGENCIES

BEIJING: Prime Minister Imran Khan Thursday arrived here on a four-day official visit where he would join other world leaders, attending the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics, scheduled to be held Friday. Accompanied by a high-level delegation including federal cabinet members, the prime minister would also meet the Chinese

Continued on Page 06

Economy to grow by 5% this year: Tarin

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin said here on Thursday that despite commodity price shocks in the international market, the economy of the country would grow by 4.5 to 5 percent during the current fiscal year and by 6 percent next year. "I am still hoping that it (growth rate) could be 5 percent. It could be between 4.5 to 5 percent," the Finance Minister said in an interview with Bloomberg, adding that next year (2022-23) it would go up to 6 percent of GDP.

Armed forces kill thirteen terrorists

The security forces had thwarted terror attacks on their camps in Balochistan

STAFF REPORT / DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Thursday that intelligence agencies had intercepted communications between the terrorists who carried out attacks in Balochistan a day earlier and their handlers in Afghanistan and India. Terrorists had attempted to attack security forces' camps in Balochistan's Panjgur and Naushki in two separate attacks late on Wednesday evening. The attacks had been "successfully repulsed" while dealing heavy damage to the terrorists, although one soldier was martyred in the Panjgur incident, the military's media wing had reported. In an update issued Thursday, the ISPR said

Continued on Page 06

PM salutes brave soldiers

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday hailed the security forces on thwarting two separate terrorist attacks in the cities of Balochistan. "We salute our brave security forces who repulsed terrorist attacks against security forces' camps in Panjgur and Naushki, Balochistan," he said in a tweet. Prime Minister Imran Khan said the nation stood united with the security forces for protecting them. "The nation stands united behind our security forces who continue to give great sacrifices to protect us," he said. - APP

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Azerbaijan, Hungary ink bilateral co-op accords - Page 07

Traders seek extension in cash on counter facility - Page 08

Erdogan visits Kiev to ease Ukraine-Russia tensions

Ahead of his departure, Erdogan said: "We hope to stop any form of confrontation between Russia and Ukraine"

NEWS DESK

KIEV: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is visiting Kiev at the invitation of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as Ankara makes diplomatic efforts to ease a standoff between Russia and Ukraine. Erdogan's Thursday visit comes in the backdrop of Turkey offering to play mediator in the ongoing crisis. Ahead of his departure from Ankara, Erdogan said: "We hope to stop any form of confrontation between Russia and Ukraine." In Kiev, Erdogan and Zelenskyy will attend the 10th meeting of the High-Level Strategic Council between their countries. The two sides will exchange views on regional and international issues and discuss possibilities for further



deepening bilateral cooperation. They are also expected to sign various agreements and memoranda of understanding, including a historic free trade agreement. "Our relations with Ukraine have registered remarkable progress in recent years on the basis of mutual understanding, trust and common interests," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Thursday, marking the 30th year of

diplomatic ties. The statement added that the relations, which are currently at the level of strategic partnership, contribute "to the peace, stability and prosperity of our region". It underlined Turkey's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, while reiterating that Ankara does not recognise the "illegal annexation of Crimea". Ahead of Erdogan's visit, Turkish Presidential Spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin and US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan discussed the crisis in Ukraine. The White House said in a statement on Tuesday that the two officials spoke about their commitment to "deter further Russian aggression against Ukraine". Turkey offered in November to mediate in the crisis, and diplomatic sources said last month both Russia and Ukraine were open to the idea of Ankara helping.

Estd. 1860

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Briefs

Kazakhstan
keen to
develop
trade ties
with Pakistan

SIALKOT: Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin Thursday urged the Sialkot exporters to come forward and tap the international trade markets of his country to promote and strengthen bilateral trade between the two countries. He was speaking at a meeting he held with members of Sialkot Surgical Instrument Manufacturers Association (SIMAP).

The meeting was attended by Pakistan surgical industry leader Muhammad Jehangir Bajwa, Chairman Sialkot Surgical Instrument Manufacturers Association (SIMAP) Waqas Ashraf, Vice Chairman SIMAP Wasim Yousaf and exporters. The ambassador said that both the countries enjoyed cordial trade relations.

Jehangir Bajwa said that Sialkot-made surgical instruments could find a good market in Kazakhstan. He said Sialkot exporters had great potential to explore and capture the international trade markets of Kazakhstan by exporting their world class traditional and non-traditional products. — APP

BISE keeping
mobiles
banned in
Exam Hall

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board has decided to take stern action against the use of mobile phones in examinations.

According to a notification issued by the Secretary Chairman Board Committee after a meeting of all the Chairmen of the BISE Khyber Pakhtunkhwa attended. The decision was taken in a meeting of the All Chairmen BISEs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that mobile phones found with the candidates or invigilation staff in examination centers, apart from superintendent, should be punished accordingly. Moreover, the case shall be treated as an instance of smuggling of paper if the mobile phone was found being used for the purpose. The punishment in case of students should be cancellation of four (04) exams and in case of invigilation his or her bill and other disciplinary action would be taken under R&D rules. Students will be deemed ineligible for 4 examinations if mobile is recovered in the examination hall, the Chairman Boards Committee decided. If the examination staff uses mobile then action will also be taken against it. Staff providing copies to students will be permanently deprived of duty, the notification said. — APP

OPD
restricted in
Hayatabad
Medical
Complex

PESHAWAR: The number of daily patients in OPD has been reduced from 2,800 to 1960, spokesperson of the hospital said here Thursday. The decision has been taken in view of the increase in Corona cases, spokesperson of the hospital said, adding, "A large number of Peshawar hospital staff members have been infected with the virus." A special OPD has also been set up at the entrance of the hospital for Corona patients, the hospital official said. — APP

67
shopkeepers
fined on
profiteering

FAISALABAD: Price control magistrates have imposed fine of Rs.97,000 on 67 shopkeepers on charge of profiteering in the district during past 24 hours. A spokesman of local administration said on Thursday that price control magistrates inspected various shops in different markets and bazaars of the city and found 67 shopkeepers involved in profiteering and overcharging. Therefore, the magistrates imposed a total fine of Rs.97,000 on them and warned that they would be sent behind bars if they did not mend their way of profiteering, he added. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan, Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdul Rahman Al Thani called on advisor to the PM on overseas Pakistanis and HR development, Ayub Afridi. — DNA

Higher education among top
priorities of KP govt: CM

Mahmood Khan said that work on a number of projects for establishing new colleges and universities is in progress in the province including Swat and Malakand Division

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has said that promotion of the higher education sector on modern lines was one of the top priorities of the incumbent government. He said that higher educational institutions were being established in all the districts of the province including newly merged areas whereas steps were also being taken to strengthen the existing institutions across the province. He expressed these views while addressing the second convocation of the University of Swat on Thursday.

The Chief Minister said that work on a number of projects for establishing new colleges and universi-

ties is in progress in the province including Swat and Malakand Division. He added that Special Technology Zones were also being established in order to impart higher education in accordance with the needs of the modern era as well as to impart modern skills to students to ensure their employment opportunities in the market.

He further said that a Special Technology Zone of international standard has been established in Hazara Division whereas such special technology zones would also be established in south region, Malakand and Mardan regions. He said that strengthening the University of Swat was his long standing desire which is now being fulfilled adding that the first phase of the construction work of the project has been completed



and work would soon be started on the second phase as well. The Chief Minister said that unfortunately, the pace of construction work on the project had been very slow but now due to his per-

sonal interest and efforts, work has been geared up and the first phase has been completed. Besides, he added that progress was underway on other projects including Campuses of Agriculture University, Engineering University, Women University and Veterinary University. He said that these projects on completion will open a new era of educational development in Malakand Division. He urged upon the graduates to excel in practical life and play their role in national development. While paying tributes to the parents of graduates, the Chief Minister said that real credit of the completion of educational career goes to the parents of graduates who have gone all out to provide a conducive environment of learning to their children.

The Chief Minister on the occasion, also congratulated the Vice Chancellor and his entire team and said that the University has achieved a lot in the shortest time period under the dynamic leadership of the incumbent administration. He urged the University's administration to pay special attention to have liaison between the University and relevant industries with special focus on capacity building by utilizing information technology in an effective manner. Earlier, the Chief Minister awarded degrees and gold medals to the graduates who have completed BS, MS, MA, MSc, M.Phil and PHD. In the convocation, a total of 221 graduates were awarded with degrees whereas 109 graduates got gold medals.



PESHAWAR: Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan Irena Gancheva calls on Governor KPK Shah Farman at Governor House. — DNA

6.56m people vaccinated
against Covid in Faisalabad

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Over 6.56 million people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im said on Thursday 3,981,171 citizens were injected first dose while 2,512,982 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He further said that 38,518 health workers were also given first dose while 34,413 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. As of now 229,944 first doses and 153,296 second doses were in the stock in Faisalabad. He said that 37 vaccination centers

and 20 mobile vaccination camps were operational in Faisalabad where registered people were being vaccinated.

In order to facilitate the people these centers had been established in various areas of the city including Allied Hospital, District Head Quarters Hospital, Government General Hospital G.M Abad, Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology, Government General Hospital Samanabad, Children Hospital, sports Complex Samanabad, Tehsil Head Quarters Hospital Jaranwala, Samundri, Tandlianwala, Chak Jhumra, Sports Complex Chak Jhumrah, Sports Complex Jaranwala, he added. He further said that timing of these vaccination centers was 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Over 80k tests
conducted
in a week

PESHAWAR: The weekly report of Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response System of Health Department released here on Thursday according to which more than 80,000 corona tests were conducted in the last week of January. The overall coronavirus positive case rate in the province was 15%, the report said. Outbreaks of leishmaniasis in Kohistan and Karak in the last week of January with 72 cases were examined in Karak and 25 in Kohistan. — APP

754 new Covid
cases reported
in capital

ISLAMABAD: Health officials on Thursday said that 754 new coronavirus cases were reported in the federal capital during the last 24 hours. According to an official of the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), as many as 575 cases were reported on Wednesday while 932 cases were reported on Tuesday. He said so far 129,758 cases were reported from the federal capital and 982 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) while 114,174 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, the government has waived off the booster shorts fee for those visiting abroad, and now they can get free booster while showing their documents. This booster was already free for the general public.

On the direction of the Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued surveillance of different areas of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. They also started taking action on a violation of standard operating procedures

(SOPs) related to the coronavirus while visiting marriage halls, markets, and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration had been asked to take action on the violation of SOPs at shops, workshops, and restaurants. The inspection teams had been directed to issue notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops in case of violation of SOPs. Commenting on the situation, an official of the Ministry of National Health Services said that several local-level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. He advised the citizens to continue to follow the social distancing, use of masks, and other precautionary measures to stop the increasing transmission of COVID-19 in the city. — APP

GRSC, IoBM
holds webinar
on global
political and
security crisis

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: "The focus for global security will be on Russia for nuclear matters and on China for energy," said Ambassador Najmuddin A. Shaikh. He was speaking at a webinar on "The Russia-USA Ukrainian Face-off." It was organized by the Global and Regional Studies Centre (GRSC), IoBM, Karachi on Thursday. Among the panelists were Ambassador Javid Hussain and Major General (Rtd) Ghulam Mustafa. The moderator was Ambassador Ghulam Rasool Baluch. The experts discussed the implications of this face-off for global security.

Commenting on the crisis, Amb. Shaikh said that war is unlikely to occur to resolve the US-Ukrainian crisis. He said that the US claims Ukraine is far from becoming a part of NATO. He added that negotiations between Russia and the USA depend on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Russia will be looking to Pakistan for opportunities for trade and advancing its economic interests. Ambassador Javid Hussain shared that the diplomatic way out is to respect the legitimate security concerns of Russia. The US-Ukrainian crisis has geopolitical consequences as the conflict relieves Western pressure from China as the Russia-NATO conflict will be in focus. The US does not have the diplomatic configuration to engage with Russia and China at the same time.

He added that US withdrawal from Afghanistan reduced its self-confidence and proved that the US is not invincible. Major General (Rtd) Ghulam Mustafa was of the view that Putin invaded Crimea and allowed the world to accept it. Putin is in a position to make a military move towards Ukraine.

GCWUF self
assessment
meetings
2021-22

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: QEC successfully conducted Self-Assessment Meetings for 2021-22 during the month of January 2022. The Data regarding Self-Assessment Reports were compiled by the concerned departments and submitted to QEC on templates of the Quality Assurance Agency, HEC. Three Internal and One External Evaluator were nominated, and they had questions answer sessions with the concerned Chairperson of the Departments along with their Programs Coordinators. The evaluators submitted their findings and recommendations related to the Self-Assessment of GCWUF programs based on which the Implementation Plan was developed by the QEC for 2021-22.

Pakistan Air Force conducts
national air defence exercise

The aim of this exercise was to enhance operational preparedness

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force conducted a National Air Defence exercise focusing on integrated and synergistic employment of offensive and defensive forces.

The aim of this exercise was to enhance operational preparedness and combat readiness of Pakistan Air Defence in near-realistic threat environment.

Apart from PAF Operational assets including Fighter aircraft, Surface to Air Missile Systems, Sensors, Force Multipliers and Battle Management Centers; elements of Army Air Defence



were also integrated in the exercise.

PAF Air Defence Command exercised overall command and

control over all participating Air Defence assets.

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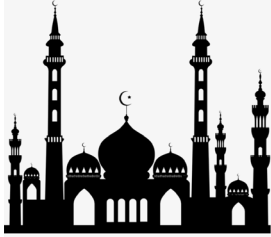
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Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:38 am
Zohr.....	12:22 pm
Asr.....	04:02 pm
Maghrib.....	05:41 pm
Isha.....	07:06 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

Rescue (Police).....	15
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Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
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Complaints

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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PM Khan as ambassador of Kashmir, raising issue at all forums: Farrukh

Speaks at the photographic exhibition held in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day, organised by the Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said on Thursday that Prime Minister Imran Khan had played the role of an advocate and courageous ambassador of the hapless Kashmiri people by highlighting the issue at various international forums.

He said these words while addressing the inaugural ceremony of a digital photographic exhibition being held in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day, organised by the Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications. The minister said that Imran Khan presented the Kashmir case at every international forum including the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Countries and bilateral meetings with world leaders. Farrukh said after the PM Imran Khan exposed the tyrannical atrocities of the Modi government in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the western media also started highlighting the issue.

The international community should also keep its eyes and ears open, Farrukh Habib said, adding that the Kashmir issue



should be resolved in accordance with UN resolutions which promised to give Kashmiri people the right to self-determination.

"We feel the plight of Kashmiri mothers and sisters, Pakistan has always raised its voice against human rights violations being committed by Indian occupation forces" he said.

He said over 8 million Kashmiris had become prisoners after Indian step on August 5 and ensuing

lock down. He said that neither media was free nor social media functional in the occupied territory. Farrukh said that Modi's RSS mindset could be judged by the form of oppression and barbarism going on in Kashmir.

He said that tens of thousands of Kashmiris have been martyred by trigger happy Indian occupation forces. They martyred the young icon of freedom struggle Burhan Wani but they could not

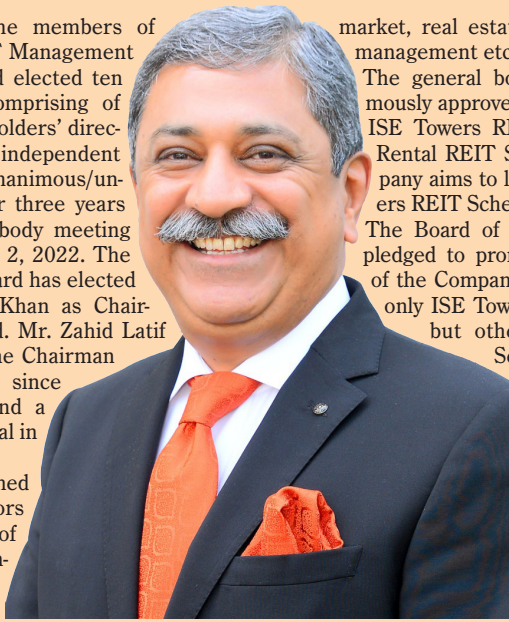
suppress Kashmiris voice as every Kashmiri youth was struggling for freedom. "Kashmir lives in the hearts of Pakistanis all over Pakistan and around the world and we stand with them", he remarked. He said that Pakistan has highlighted Kashmir issue at every forum, it would also be discussed during PM Imran Khan's visit to China as well. The minister appreciated DEMP for holding a splendid exhibition

in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day. He said that the students have exposed atrocities in Kashmir through paintings being exhibited in the exhibition. Additional Secretary Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Mubashir Tauqeer and other senior officials from the ministry were also present on the occasion. Farrukh Habib visited the photographic exhibition and evinced keen interest in the pho-

tographs. The participants were also shown a documentary on Indian atrocities and barbarism titled "Kashmir's Story". Minister of State Farrukh Habib distributed prizes among those who took prominent positions in painting competitions among the students. The Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications organizes a photo exhibition every year on Solidarity Day to highlight Indian atrocities.

Zahid Latif Khan elected ISE Towers REIT MCL Chairman of Board

ISLAMABAD: The members of ISE Towers REIT Management Company Limited elected ten (10) directors comprising of the six (6) shareholders' directors and four (4) independent directors on unanimous/unopposed basis for three years term in general body meeting held on February 2, 2022. The newly formed Board has elected Mr. Zahid Latif Khan as Chairman of the Board. Mr. Zahid Latif Khan has been the Chairman of the Company since the year 2016 and a known professional in this industry. The newly formed Board of Directors have diversity of experience including finance, taxation, capital



market, real estate, legal, business management etc.

The general body has also unanimously approved the launch of the ISE Towers REIT Scheme, as a Rental REIT Scheme. The Company aims to launch the ISE Towers REIT Scheme on top priority. The Board of Directors strongly pledged to promote the business of the Company by launching not only ISE Towers REIT Scheme but other multiple REIT Schemes in line with the vision of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan and Government of Pakistan to document and regulate the real estate industry. - DNA

FBR freezes ex-bank manager accounts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major action, the Offshore Tax Directorate of Federal Board of Revenue on Thursday froze all bank accounts of a former president of a commercial bank on account of non-payment of taxes amounting to Rs1 billion. According to the FBR, the action was taken against former president of a commercial bank Farooq Bengali for not disclosing his assets. He was defaulter of Rs1 billion, the FBR said adding that the action was taken against him on hiding the offshore assets. The FBR sources revealed that the board's Offshore Directorate imposed tax on Mr Bengali's hidden offshore assets.

AIOU strives to promote ELT research

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has organized launching ceremony of Pak TESOL (Islamabad chapter) in collaboration with Regional English Language Office, US Embassy, Pakistan. Prof Dr Samina Awan, Ex Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, AIOU presided over the session. Pak TESOL is a project of AIOU which is aimed at developing, sustaining, strengthening and promoting ELT research and pedagogical practices in the country. The project serves the purpose of a central platform to empower Pakistani ELT community by providing financial and technical support. It offers multiple opportunities to ELT practitioners across the country to share and exchange their ideas and to collaborate with each other for the collective benefit of the entire community. The project is expected to bring Pakistani ELT situation at par with the international standards by arranging various conferences, webinars, seminars and training sessions on the monthly basis. While addressing the participants of the launching ceremony, Dr Muhammad Kamal Khan highlighted the primary objectives and goals of the project. He emphasized that the project is exclusively focusing on capacity building of schools, colleges and university teachers of English language. Therefore, ELT practitioners should seek its membership for enhancing their teaching skills. The project team has already inaugurated its KPK, Sindh and Baluchistan chapters.

HEC completes selection process for ED

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) completed the selection process for the position of Executive Director, and selected the finalists. However, it has sealed the decision until the legal process in the Lahore High Court (LHC) is completed. The HEC Selection Board conducted the final interviews for the position on Thursday. The Selection Board has finalized the top-scoring contender for the post of Executive Director HEC, as it conducted interviews of the candidates against the post at the Commission Secretariat here on Thursday. Five, out of 11 shortlisted candidates, appeared before the Board. As a petition regarding the selection board is pending in the Lahore High Court (LHC), HEC will announce the appointment of its Executive Director after LHC's decision.

CPO directs to beef up security in Murree

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Omar Saeed Malik Thursday directed concerned officials to ensure security of tourists coming to Murree to enjoy the weather at the hill station. He also directed to maintain law and order to avoid any untoward incident and mishandling with families during visit. The CPO advised to strictly follow the advisories to avoid traffic jams on roads as the town had a limited parking capacity. He said that a large number of vehicles illegally parked on either side of the roads further had reduced the space available for vehicles to move forward. He said the tourists should get weather updates and traffic-related information by calling on 051-9269200 prior to travelling to Murree, adding, the tourists should keep the air pressure in their vehicle's tyres low and always avoid stopping their vehicles in the middle of the road for taking selfies. He said the number of traffic wardens under the supervision of inspectors had been deployed at all important points of the area. Earlier, the Murree police held 4 members gang for stealing batteries and tires from tourist vehicles. The police recovered stolen money of Rs 50,000, four batteries, three vehicle tires from their possession. The gang includes Jahanzeb, Amir Javed, Sajid Hussain and Rashid Ali. - APP

PAC told circular debt risen by Rs 1,600bn

ISLAMABAD: During the present Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) tenure, the circular debt has been increased by Rs1,600 billion swelling the total debt to Rs2,700 billion whereas the circular debt of both the gas companies has risen by Rs100 billion. This was revealed by Petroleum Secretary Syed Tariq Hussain during a meeting of Public Accounts Committee held in Islamabad on Thursday under the chair of Rana Tanveer Hussain. The secretary told the accounts committee that in 2018, the circular debt was Rs1,100 billion which now has risen to Rs2,700 billion. The circular debt of Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) has mounted to Rs1,300 billion, the secretary further informed the National Assembly's panel. PAC Chairman Tanveer Hussain said that salary of the SNGPL Managing Director is extremely hefty but his performance is zero. Likewise, authorities appointed Shabbir Zaidi who reimbursed money to his cronies and bid adieu. The NA committee demanded a list of salary packages of the SNGPL MD and other officers. The petroleum secretary said that in order to overcome the shortage of local gas production, the government is importing gas to cater to the rising demand. The PAC chairman expressed his indignation over petroleum division for not replying to his three letters. He was of the view that the petroleum division was unable to realize that factory workers and common people would come on roads if there would be shortage of gas. He lamented that though the government is charging high gas price from consumers, but it is not providing gas to them. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Canadian High Commissioner, Wendy Gilmour called on Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on youth affairs Usman Dar. - DNA

ICCI urges for learning from Chinese model

Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that Chinese annual imports were around USD 246 billion in Dec 2021, but Pakistan's share in them was less than USD 3 billion, which was quite negligible and stressed that the Pakistan business community should fully capitalize on the revised FTA with China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China has reportedly uplifted over 700 million poor people from poverty since its reform and opening up in late 1970s and has become the second largest economy in the world in a short span of time. Therefore, Pakistan should learn from the Chinese model to cope with poverty and improve its economy. This was said by Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry while addressing as chief guest an event organized by prominent businessman Muhammad Saleem Mughal to celebrate Chinese New Year. Jamsaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President

ICCI, Muhammad Naveed Malik former Senior Vice President, Ashfaq Chatha and many Pakistani and Chinese nationals were present at the occasion. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that Chinese annual imports were around USD 246 billion in December 2021, but Pakistan's share in

them was less than USD 3 billion, which was quite negligible and stressed that the Pakistan business community should fully capitalize on the revised FTA with China to promote exports to this huge market of over 1.4 billion people. ICCI President said that the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran

Khan was leaving for China on a four-day visit, during which he will attend the Winter Olympics 2022 in Beijing besides holding bilateral meetings with President Xi Jinping and premier Li Keqiang. He said that the Pakistan Prime Minister will also meet with prominent business leaders

of China and hoped that this visit would contribute towards further strengthening the bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries. Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year 2022 or Spring Festival fell on February 1st, 2022, starting a year of the Tiger. The date of Chinese New Year changes every year, but it always falls between January 21st and February 20th. The date is decided by the Chinese Lunar Calendar, which is based on cycles of the moon and sun and is generally 21-51 days behind the Gregorian (internationally-used) calendar. In addition to China, many countries around the world issue zodiac stamps during the Spring Festival to express their blessings for the Chinese New Year.



Briefs

Nawaz not following constitution of country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gull on Wednesday said former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was not following the constitution of the country in which he was elected prime minister three times. Talking to a private news channel, she said Nawaz Sharif went abroad on medical grounds but did not admitted in any hospital in London for the purpose till date. She said Nawaz Sharif himself was making fun of his illness as he looks fresh and healthy but when someone ask him to return to the country he starts showing himself as an ailing person. The minister said Nawaz Sharif was trying to prove himself as a revolutionary leader but people were well aware about the reality. Everyone is equal before the law as no one was above the law, she added.

Sethi lands at the prestigious Festival

ISLAMABAD: The exciting young talent of Pakistan, Mira Sethi will be participating in three different panels at the International Festival of Literature on the 5th and 6th of February taking place in Dubai. She will be sharing one of the panels with some of the well-known and award-winning writers. The three panels where Mira Sethi will be speaking are 'the strongly worded letters' alongside Annabel Kantaria, Ben Miller, and Marina Wheeler, 'peeling the onion' with Amni Doshi, Farah Ali, and Selma Dabagh and one panel is called 'are you enjoying?' where Mira Sethi will be the only one speaking. These renowned writers will be talking about their literary journey and discussing the craft and inspiration behind their stories. Mira Sethi was the former books editor at The Wall Street Journal with op-ed pieces in The New York Times, a well-known actress with regular appearances on Pakistani television and is now the author of a debut short story collection 'Are You Enjoying?'. - APP

NBF takes various initiative to promote book reading

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF) has taken various initiatives to launch a series of innovative projects to promote book reading culture. According to NBF, these initiatives included the formation of Village Book Clubs, City Book Clubs, Children's Book Clubs, Prisoners' Free Minds Book Clubs, Senior Citizens Book Clubs, Travelers' Book Clubs (Books on Wheels), Flying Book Clubs, and Hospital Book Clubs. NBF has come up with another novel idea to appoint book-loving celebrities of the country as Book Ambassadors to play their role in promoting book-reading habits. The book ambassadors use the honor, respect, and influence they enjoy in society to nurture the love of books and promote reading habits in society. - APP

IESCO spends Rs 1.36 bln to secure dangerous points

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has spent an amount of Rs 1.36 billion to secure dangerous points so far. Sources told APP here Thursday that IESCO field formations and consumers had identified 8823 points. Out of the total 8823 dangerous points, 7958 have been secured so far. "An amount of Rs 1.36 billion has been spent on clearing of these points," they said. IESCO management has always ensured the issuance and implementation of 100% customer friendly policies and has proved itself to be a truly customer friendly company. - APP

HEDP Project to bring about change in society: Banuri

48 grants worth PKR 1.59 billion have already been awarded

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) project held its fifth Steering Committee meeting at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Secretariat. The committee members reviewed the progress made so far on the project. Chairman HEC Tariq Banuri chaired the meeting, attended by the committee members from across the country, comprising senior officials from key federal ministries and provincial higher education departments, Vice Chancellors, and industrial representatives. In his remarks in the meeting, the Chairman HEC said the project is focused on all critical areas of Higher Education in Pakistan. "The project is close to my heart as I was involved from initial planning discussions to finalization of its granular details." Highlighting the challenges facing the higher education sector, he expressed a hope that that this project will bring about



the much-needed change in the society and the system. "Whenever you try something new there is a lot of resistance, but I am sure, together we will make it a success," said Banuri. He requested the senior provincial government officials to extend their support for the project roll-out in their respective regions.

Project Coordinator Maryam Riaz shared an overview of the HEDP project, its progress, future plans, and recently approved PC-1. She briefed the committee on the key project initiatives, including the physical and financial progress of all the 11 project activities called as Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs). In addition,

it was apprised of the launch of 123 national collaborative research grants, of which 48 grants worth PKR 1.59 billion have already been awarded. She informed the committee that HEDP has developed Higher Education Data Repository (HEDR) system with piloting in 10 universities. It continues to receive data from more HEI in close

coordination with HEC statistical division to expand upon it. Many of the awarded research grants under the project are addressing scientific as well as social issues of national interest. These include bringing innovative solutions in medical, industrial, agricultural, and economic arenas of country. She highlighted the launch of Innovator Seed

Fund (ISF) and Center of Excellence (CoE) grants (for the very first time in HEC), informing the committee members that the second round of Grand Challenge Fund (GCF), Local Challenge Fund (LCF), LCF2 and Technology Transfer Support Fund (TTSF) grants has also been launched. It was underlined that HEDP is in the process of finalizing MOUs for establishment of Quality Enhancement Cells in affiliated colleges of 22 universities. In addition, seed money is given to 16 universities for establishment of Internships units, which is an integral part of new Undergraduate Education Policy (UEP). Other salient features of the project highlighted in the meeting included the start of a cascade model of training faculty on UEP, capacity building through National Academy of Higher Education - NAHE (trained 990 PhD scholars of IPPF, two cohorts of women leadership program and several senior officials of HEC), procurement process for several national IT initiatives.

Farrukh condemns terrorist attack in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Thursday strongly condemned terrorist attacks on army camps in Panjgur and Noshki areas of Balochistan. The minister appreciated the security forces for repulsing the terrorist attacks on security on forces' camps, said a statement issued here. The cowardly acts of terrorists would be thwarted as the armed forces and the security forces were fully alert, Minister of State said. The whole nation, he said, saluted those who sacrificed their lives for the protection of motherland. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the martyred army soldier in eternal peace. - APP

Kashmir Solidarity day aims to realizing unity

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly (MNA) Munaza Hassan Thursday said nation would observe 'Kashmir Solidarity Day' on Saturday (February 5) to make Kashmiris realize that Pakistani nation is with them until their independence. Talking to APP, she said people belonging to different strata of society would express solidarity with their oppressed Kashmiri brethren on February 5. She said in the Federal capital one minute silence will be observed to pay homage to the martyrs of the liberation struggle of occupied Kashmir. She added that a large number of rallies, public meetings and seminars will also be held across the country including Azad Kashmir to draw the attention of the world community towards grave human rights violations and brutalities against innocent Kashmiris by the Indian security forces. - APP

Rs 114,500 fine imposed on 214 profiteers

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration on Thursday imposed fines amounting to Rs 114,500 on 214 profiteers. According to a district administration spokesman, the administration on the directives of Deputy Commissioner, Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq had launched operations in seven tehsils of the district and took action in accordance with the law against the rules violators. He informed that 1988 raids were conducted in seven tehsils of Rawalpindi district to check prices of daily use items. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Jan Muhammad Jamali, the speaker of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly called on the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and discussed development matters of common interest. He also took time to convey his condolences on the unfortunate incident that took place on a Sri Lankan at Sialkot. - DNA

COMSTECH announces award winners 2021

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH announced biennial award winners of year 2021 in nine categories. This year COMSTECH awarded two lifetime achievement awards in the fields of biology and chemistry. Lifetime achievement award in biology won Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Pro Rector, Professor, Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, The University of Lahore, and COMSTECH lifetime achievement award in chemistry won by Ali A. Mosavi-Movahadi, Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics, University of Tehran, Shiraz, Iran. Shah Fahd of department of agronomy, The University of Haripur, Kyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

won COMSTECH young researcher award. The COMSTECH award for best scientific book won by Esmael Ghavanloo, Associate Professor, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran, and the COMSTECH award for best patent won by Azrullah Hamzah, Institute of Microengineering and Nanoelectronics, Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia. Fahad Alshimeh, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia won COMSTECH award for best research paper in biology, whereas the COMSTECH award for best research paper in chemistry won by Mustafa Kemal Beyazit, Sabanci University, Nanotechnology Research & Application Centre, Tuzla, Istanbul, Turkey. COMSTECH award for best research paper in math-

ematics received by two scientists, Hala El Saka, Damietta University, New Damietta, Egypt, and Khondoker Nazmoon Nabi, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh. COMSTECH award for best research paper in physics won by Mohd Kmar Nizam Bin Hj. Mohamad Isa, Faculty of Science & Technology, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. COMSTECH awards are conferred biennially in 'Basic Sciences' and in 'Excellence in Science and Technology' to recognize the outstanding research work carried out by scientists who are citizens of, and working in, OIC member states. Each award carries a certificate, shield of honour and a cash prize.

POL products' sale up 15% in 7 months

ISLAMABAD: The sale of petroleum products in Pakistan recorded an increase of 15% during first seven months (Jul-Jan) of current fiscal year as the sale rose from 11.27 million tons in Jul-Jan, 2020-21 to 12.9 million tons in same period of current fiscal year. On Year-on-Year basis, the sale of petroleum products witnessed an increase of 19% in January 2022 as compared to same month of last year. During the month, the sale was recorded at 1.8 million tons while during same month of last year the sale was recorded at 1.51 million tons. On Month on Month (MOM) basis, the sale of petroleum products also rose by 20% in January this year as compared to the sale of 1.5 million tons in December 2021. - APP

PNCA displays Rabia Zuberi art collection

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Visual Art Division on Thursday organized an art exhibition, titled "Forms of Existence" to pay tribute to a legendary master artist Rabia Zuberi. The show is an amalgamation of drawings, sculptures and paintings from National Art Gallery's permanent collection. The senior officials of the show will be on display till 10th February 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 Dupatta, 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. In 2010, the government awarded her the Pride of Performance in recognition of her paintings, depicting an orphan with visage. Her life is covered in a book titled Rabia Zuberi: Life and Work which was published in 2009. Her career was covered in a book titled Unveiling the Visible: Lives and Works of Women Artists of Pakistan which was published in 2002. - APP

CDA decides to install wireless systems in field vehicles

ISLAMABAD: In order to improve performance of field staff and field vehicles the management of Capital Development Authority is has decided to utilize modern technology and automation system. The initiative taken by the CDA administration will help monitor ongoing work in the field in addition to ensure check and balance system. The system will help stop wastage of resources. Furthermore, the performance of the field staff will be improved. The initiative is continuation of measures being taken self-accountability in the organization. In this regard, CDA management has installed tracker system on initially in 40 tractors and 2 water tankers of the environment department while this modern tracker system will be installed in all CDA vehicles in a month. This tracker system will be monitored with the help of a single dashboard. Later, the scope of this advanced technology and automation system will be extended to vehicles of other formations including MPO, street lights. - APP

H-9 College holds inter collegiate English debate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Department of English Language and Literature, Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) H-9 organised an intercollegiate English debate on the topic "Social Media - A Boon or A Bane?" on February 3, 2022. The students of various colleges participated in debate competition. This ceremony aimed at reviving co-curricular activities and providing an opportunity to the budding debaters and speakers of public sector educational institutions in Islamabad. Professor Salman Basit Rana, a renowned literary figure, author and educationist, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The function was presided over by Prof. Javaid Iqbal

Mughal, Principal of the college. Mr. Muhammad Tahir Abbasi, Vice Principal of IMCB G-7/2 and Professor Nosheen Kanwal, Islamabad Model College for Girls (Postgraduate) F-7/2 dignified the function as judges for the debate contestants. The contestants from various boys and girls colleges participated in debate competition argued in favor of as

well as against social media and expressed their presentation, argumentation and communication skills in a dynamic way. The first and second positions were grabbed by Syed Muhammad Hassan Askari and Mr. Mansoor Afzal of Islamabad College for Boys G-6/3. Ms. Inaya Salik from Islamabad College for Girls F-6/2 bore away the third position. The

contestants were given Certificates of Participation and the position holders were presented shields. The Chief Guest appreciated the college administration and faculty members of English Department on taking this much-needed initiative in the capital. He recalled his memories of Govt. College Lahore and expressed his faith that such language activities are essential for the training and grooming of youth. He added that social media has become a part and parcel of modern world but it requires certain restraints for the smooth growth of society. In his presidential address, the Principal of the college Professor Javaid Iqbal Mughal reiterated his commitment to provide learning-friendly and convenient environment for students.



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Indian disinformation campaign

NEW Delhi is once again peddling misinformation regarding Pakistan, however this time around the attempt is desperate even beyond the low standards India has set for itself. On Tuesday, Pakistan had to reject baseless Indian media reports about a delay in the appointment of its envoy to the US.

The foreign office sent the nomination of Ambassador Masood Khan—who served as the AJK president until August 2021—to Washington in November last year. Though the approval procedure usually takes around eight weeks, this time around the US State Department has sought some more time for the clearance.

Eager to pounce on an opportunity even when there is none, New Delhi sought to exploit this delay and give it a ridiculous spin with the help of its lobby in Washington DC and support from controversial Republican Congressman Scott Perry.

The Indian news agency ANI reported that in a letter to Joe Biden, Congressman Scott Perry urged the US president to reject Khan's appointment as it would undermine US interests in the region. In the letter penned by the Congressman, it was falsely mentioned that the State Department had placed a "pause" on the approval of the new ambassador and also referred to Mr Khan as "jihadist".

Some sources placed in DC have played down the delay as a mere procedural matter probably due to the State Department operating on maximum telework because of Omicron. Also, the approval request was sent in at the cusp of the holiday season which was the slowest period of the year. In fact, the State Department has now stated that the approval is under process and it should be completed in the next two to three weeks.

It is quite evident that this is a part of the wider Indian disinformation campaign to malign Pakistan and those who represent Pakistan, by using fake news to make scandalous claims and baseless allegations. The fact is that the Indian lobby is using this procedural delay as an opening to scuttle Mr Khan's appointment on the pretext of his advocacy for the Kashmiri freedom struggle. The Pakistan Foreign Office has done well to dispel such rumours promptly, but the false claims in the letter by Scott Perry must be exposed and taken up with the US as there can be no tolerance for such attempts at spreading disinformation.

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For Ukraine, NATO needs to recognise Turkiye's role

Harun Karcic



Turkiye stepped up its cooperation with Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, seeing these countries as instrumental in balancing Russian military presence in the Black Sea region

REINTEGRATING military relations with Turkiye will help thwart Moscow's expansionism, hinder its Black Sea strategy, safeguard NATO allies, and boost deterrence.

As fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine grow, the military buildup shows no sign of dissipating, and diplomatic talks between the United States and Russia remain at an impasse, there is one country in particular that is closely watching events unfold. That country is Turkiye, which has nurtured close relations with both Moscow and Kiev over the past decade and one that will feel most of the economic and diplomatic fallout should a full scale military conflict take place.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who backs Ukraine's NATO aspirations, recently warned Russia against invading Ukraine, referring to it as a "powerful" country with international friends.

Ankara is aware of the conundrums it could find itself in should war materialise on the other side of the Black Sea. Russia and Turkiye are longtime frenemies.

Historically, the Ottoman Empire fought against Tsarist Russia at least twelve times between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, losing much of the Balkans, Crimea and Caucasus to Tsarist Russia. However, following Russia's military occupation and annexation of Crimea, as well as its support for pro-Russian rebels in Donetsk and Luhansk, Turkiye and Ukraine were drawn closer together. Turkiye denounced the annexation and voiced its support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, despite stopping short of slapping sanctions on Russia. Parallel to that, Turkiye stepped up its cooperation with Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, seeing these countries as instrumental in balancing Russian military presence in the Black Sea region.

Faced with growing animosity in Western capitals, Ankara and Kiev partnered in developing military technology, including diesel engines for its fifth-generation fighter jets, drones and Altay battle tanks. Ukraine has also purchased nearly 20 Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 armed drones which have already proven to be a game-changer in Karabakh and has already used them to strike pro-Russian separatist forces in Donbas. In 2020, Turkiye inked a contract with Ukraine's engine developer company Icvhenko-Progress to deliver AI-35 engines that are expected to be used in Turkiye's new cruise missile—Gezgin. Such cooperation, using reliable Ukrainian engines and advanced Turkish technology, allows Turkiye to export its own military hardware without the worry of securing export licences from the United States or Europe.

Turkiye provides access to advanced technological military know-how and is a new partner for cooperation with Kiev, which has been cut off from the Russian defence market. In an attempt to boost its naval defence capabilities, Ukraine also agreed to buy four of Turkiye's MILGEM Ada-class corvettes, famed for their manoeuvrability. Trade between the two, as well as investments, have also been on the rise. As of 2021, Turkiye was the largest foreign investor in Ukraine, totaling nearly \$4.5 billion, with more than 700 Turkish companies operating in Ukraine.

Finally, Turkiye's unstinting diplomatic support for Crimean Tatars is seen as another bond that binds Ankara and Kiev. In the early twentieth century, millions of Crimean Tatars were ethnically cleansed—either massacred or forced aboard death trains to Central Asia—with most survivors fleeing to the safety of Turkiye. This sizable Crimean Tatar minority today is vocal, active, and influential in Turkiye and a major lobbying force for greater Turkish involvement vis-a-vis Ukraine and the entire Black Sea. The United States and Turkiye have been on opposing ends over a number of regional issues lately. However, if the United States – and NATO – are serious about containing Russia, they will need Turkiye's exponentially expanded geopolitical and military clout.

In the crucible of conflict, neither NATO nor Russia will appreciate Turkish ambiguity. This crisis is a perfect opportunity for Ankara to demonstrate its undisputed geostrategic significance to the Western alliance, while at the same time compelling NATO to appreciate Ankara's unique position and value to the Alliance.

Security analysts and defence experts have come to realise that reinvigorating military relations with Turkiye will contribute to NATO interests by thwarting Russian territorial expansionism, foiling its designs in the Black Sea region, safeguarding NATO allies in the Balkans such as Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, and boosting deterrence in a region that has become a springboard for Russian military power projection in the Middle East. Constraining Moscow's expansionist policies in the Black Sea needs to involve practical steps, such as establishing a permanent Black Sea NATO maritime policing mission where Turkiye – having by far the largest navy of all NATO Black Sea member states – will undoubtedly play an instrumental role. Instead of having a perpetual punitive approach toward the second-largest NATO member, the Alliance and - United States in particular - needs a better understanding of Ankara's national interests and legitimate security concerns.

—Courtesy: TRT World

Digital invoicing

THE Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) instructed all businesses to incorporate digital invoicing at the Point of Sale (PoS) to improve the documentation of economic transactions and collect data pertaining to business activities. Alongside this, it has also launched the Automated Currency Declaration System that is going to target non-filers by weaving them out through the new technology being utilised for such digital ventures. This could have many benefits for Pakistan but the prime focus should be on what all this information is going to be used towards.

Collecting real-time information from businesses will not only allow for the FBR to keep a track of revenue collected through taxes but will give the financial body insight into consumer patterns. Vital information like spending patterns, highest frequency of sales and which months are the most active for businesses will give it a host of information through which important fiscal policies can be introduced.

It may also expose the impact of economic instability upon the people, thereby enabling the government to make smarter decisions. The system will also allow for the authorities to enhance the tax bracket of the country by targeting non-filers. The possibilities are endless.

Despite the benefits that the FBR promises, no clarification has been given on what this data will be used for. On top of this, no reassurances have been made that clarify whether we have the necessary experts to understand, interpret and analyse the data being collected. Even the installation process is rather complex and requires either a team of professionals to aid businesses or for an educational programme to be taught so that business owners are equipped enough to undertake the task themselves. The application also lacks the protective barriers that will prevent it from being hacked or misused by businesses.

There is no denying that this new initiative comes with a host of problems of its own but, given the utility that it might offer in the future—once it is fully developed and improved—this was an important step for the authorities to take. The objective moving forward should be to use it for good.

US defers to Israel on issue of Palestinian prisoners

Ramzy Baroud



Indeed, the Biden White House has pledged not to reverse any of the illegal steps taken by Trump, which, among other concessions, legitimized the Israeli occupation of Palestinian East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights

A scheme is underway to withhold or reduce payments made by the Palestinian Authority to the families of Palestinian prisoners. According to Israeli media, the US Biden administration has requested that the PA overhaul its support system for Palestinian prisoners. The Palestinian leadership had previously expressed willingness to engage the US in a "discussion." According to Israel's Channel 12, the Biden administration has called on President Mahmoud Abbas to stop paying stipends to Palestinian prisoners' families and to instead consider a "welfare" system. For example, prisoners aged over 60 would receive payments as "retired PA employees," while those under 60 would be paid as "PA employees."

This is meant as some kind of compromise. Unlike previous American and Israeli attempts to cut off support to the families of Palestinian prisoners, this time the PA seems willing to consider alternatives to the existing systems. Last November, Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh stated that, "if anyone has reservations about this or that section of the law, we can discuss it." Shtayyeh was referring to the Palestinian law that allows the PA to support Palestinian prisoners and their families as a pact of solidarity. After all, these prisoners are facing horrific circumstances due to their acts of resistance to the Israeli occupation. Of course, Israel doesn't see it this way. For Tel Aviv, any act of Palestinian resistance is unlawful and every resister is a "terrorist." This should hardly be surprising, as Israel does not see itself as an occupier or the Palestinians as a people deserving of justice and freedom.

Also unsurprising is the American position. Washington agrees with the Israeli depiction of Palestinian resistance as being terrorist in nature and has, for years, attempted to block any aid from reaching the families of Palestinian prisoners. In 2018, then-President Donald Trump withheld funding from the PA and the UN refugee agency for Palestinians, citing the PA's financial support for Palestinian prisoners and their families.

Israel subsequently followed suit, as it unlawfully withheld tax payments collected on behalf of the PA – a most unfair system instituted by the 1994 Paris Protocol. The money withheld

by Israel constituted nearly half of the entire PA budget. This outright theft was carried out as a form of pressure, under various guises and with no international monitoring.

Eventually, in November 2020, Israel once more began transferring funds to PA coffers, but while keeping a portion of the money that, according to Israeli estimates, was equivalent to the payments made to prisoners' families.

To cope with the resulting financial crisis, the PA instituted various budget cuts that mostly affected PA employees and prisoners, many of whom belonged to rival groups, whether in the West Bank or the besieged Gaza Strip. The disproportionately massive spending on the PA security apparatus, especially the branches involved in the security coordination with Israel, was left untouched. Since the start of Joe Biden's presidential term last year, the PA has promoted the unfounded notion that he is better for the Palestinians, simply because the new administration gave partial political validation to Abbas – who was completely shunned by Trump – and restored US aid. Aside from that, there has been no evidence of the supposed pro-Palestinian agenda of Biden and his administration.

Indeed, the Biden White House has pledged not to reverse any of the illegal steps taken by Trump, which, among other concessions, legitimized the Israeli occupation of Palestinian East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights. The US is also yet to reopen its consulate in East Jerusalem, which served as a de facto American diplomatic presence in the Occupied Territories. Even the promised restoration of the Palestinian Liberation Organization office in Washington is yet to be fulfilled due to strong opposition from Israel and its allies on Capitol Hill.

More than a year has passed since the start of Biden's presidency, yet there is still no political horizon, no meaningful American engagement and not even a coherent American outlook. On the contrary, all we have seen is Israel's insistence on entrenching its occupation, widening the circle of violence and expanding its illegal settlements, either with an American nod or total disinterest.

Not only is Israel not held accountable for its continued detention of thousands of Palestinian men, women and children, it is actually dictating US foreign policy, compelling Washington to accept and accommodate its own definitions, priorities and agendas.

The issue of prisoners is a very sensitive one in Palestine. Palestinians consider their prisoners to be heroes of the resistance and their families the collective responsibility of Palestinian communities everywhere. In fact, support for prisoners' families is the last hold on legitimacy in the hands of the PA. If it loses that, the consequences are sure to be dire.

Perhaps American diplomats could consider an alternative path to fairly address the issue of financial support received by Palestinian prisoners and their families; namely freeing all Palestinian prisoners from Israeli dungeons. Maybe the discussion should also be expanded to include the freedom of all Palestinians who are experiencing various forms of imprisonment by Israel. Such demands may seem outrageous in view of the current political balances of power, but they are undoubtedly the proper discussion to be had morally and legally.

—Courtesy: Arab News

NIHCR in dire financial straits

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
Ahmad Hussain

THROUGH your esteemed newspaper I venture to draw attention of the honourable President of Pakistan; Ministry of Education and Professional Training and the Higher Education Commission towards the financial crunch that the National Institute of Historical & Cultural Research, a Centre of Excellence under the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad has been facing for the last three years. The NIHCR, a venerable institution of research in history and culture, is in dire financial straits and in need of both a short-term infusion of funds to keep it operational and a long-term solution to keep it financially sound so it can continue to grow in conducting world-class research. Quarterly grants released by the HEC are squeezing over the last three years so much so that the NIHCR authorities have stopped paying house rent ceiling and granting medical reimbursements to its staff thus putting all the blame on the HEC for not allocating and releasing the sufficient funds.

Ironically, adding fuel to fire, all the Toms, Dicks and Harries are playing their roles in further ruining the already

perturbed NIHCR staff over non-holding of the departmental promotion committee meeting for ten years and grant of time scale to senior employees besides non-placing of staff welfare schemes before the Board of Governors, which has now become a get together exercise. The end-line of the prevailing situation is that salaries and retirement benefits of pensioners for the month of January 2022 have not been paid as yet.

The efficiency of the NIHCR administration can be gauged from the fact that in a reshuffling bid, charge of the incumbent Administrative Officer has been assigned to the Librarian; Administrative Officer has been assigned the charge of Private Secretary to (acting) Director whereas a Cataloguer has been asked to work as English Composer. All the vested interests are busy in settling their scores by calling the shots in the absence of a permanent Director.

A senior research fellow divulged that the HEC authorities are bent upon pressurizing the NIHCR authorities for generating funds without taking into account the fact that the NIHCR is a research institute and capacity building of a research institute and promotion of research are prime responsibilities of the government.

Moreover, out of four NIHCR staffers who had retired in 2020 and 2021, one

could manage to receive his full retirement and other pensionary benefits owing to his well placed connections in the Accounts Section the rest are still awaiting payment of their dues due to non-allocation and non-releasing of sufficient funds. As many as four staffers each are going to retire in 2022 and 2023.

The reality is that for its smooth functioning, the NIHCR coffers need an adequate supply of funds which has been deficient for a while and woefully lacking at the present time. Paucity of funds has pushed NIHCR employees to resort to frequently visiting Director office to register their grievances but to no avail.

It is unfortunate that the HEC has been wreaking havoc on the NIHCR by starving it of funds; humiliating for the Ministry of Education and Professional Training the way required funds are not being released to the NIHCR and shameful for the President House that it has not been taking cognizance of the situation of the financial crunch being faced by the State institutions in general and the NIHCR in particular.

Through these lines, the NIHCR faculty and the staff beseech the all the authorities concerned for their intervention to save the NIHCR from financial collapse and restoration of its financial viability. Thank you.

Briefs

Mane, Senegal reach AFCON final

SPORTS DESK

YAOUNDE: Senegal are through to a second consecutive Africa Cup of Nations final after breaking Burkina Faso hearts in their last-four tie in Yaounde on Wednesday, Abdou Diallo, Idrissa Gana Gueye and Sadio Mane scoring second-half goals to secure a 3-1 victory. "We dedicate this win to our people," said Senegal coach Aliou Cisse. "We are really satisfied this evening. Our objective is to win the trophy because that is what the boys deserve given everything they have put into this." Cisse's side had two penalties awarded in the first half only for the Ethiopian referee to change his mind both times following a VAR review. However, they went ahead just after the midway point in the second period when Paris Saint-Germain defender Diallo popped up in the box to produce a striker's finish. The second arrived on 76 minutes as Mane provided a superb assist for Gueye, also of PSG, to score, and Mane completed the win late on after Blati Toure had pulled a goal back. Senegal's two possible final opponents are the most successful sides in AFCON history with 12 titles between them, while the Lions of Teranga are still searching for their first continental crown, two and a half years after losing to Algeria in the final in Cairo.

Polish, Czech governments sign deal on lignite mine

WARSAW: The prime ministers of Poland and the Czech Republic said on Thursday they have signed an agreement settling a long-running dispute over a lignite mine on the border of the two countries. Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki said the agreement means that the Turów open-pit mine and the adjacent Turów power plant, which is fueled by the mine, will continue to operate without obstacles. Last year the Czech Republic took the dispute to the European Court of Justice, arguing that Poland had ignored its protests and the mine was draining water from Czech villages and causing other environmental harm. The European Court of Justice ordered Poland to close the colliery pending its ruling and in September imposed a fine of 500,000 euros for each day the mine continues to operate. Poland refused to pay the fine and said it could not close the mine, which supplies a power plant that generates almost 9% of the nation's energy. The fine has grown to over 68 million euros. — Agencies

Saudi envoy...

FROM PAGE 01
November 29, 2021 between the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) and Economic Affairs Division (EAD), Pakistan. As per Financing Agreement, the SFD will extend financing facility up to US\$ 100 million per month for one-year for purchase of petroleum products on deferred payment basis. They also discussed the remaining work of development projects in the earthquake affected areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) is providing financial assistance for various development projects in the areas of Energy, Health, Education and Infrastructure. Most recently, the SFD has committed to provide financing for Mohmand Dam Project, Shounter Hydropower Project, Jagran-IV Hydropower Project, Gravity Flow Water Scheme Manshera, and Abbottabad-Muzaffarabad Road Project. The Saudi Ambassador assured of continued support at all level to further strengthen the bilateral economic cooperation between the two brotherly countries. The Saudi Ambassador expressed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to play a much stronger role in the socioeconomic development of Pakistan.

NATO urges de-escalation amid Russian-Ukraine crisis

"NATO continues to call on Russia to de-escalate. Any further Russian aggression would have severe consequences and carry a heavy price"

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: NATO on Thursday voiced concern over Russia's recent military deployment in Belarus, urging Moscow to take steps to de-escalate tensions. "NATO continues to call on Russia to de-escalate. Any further Russian aggression would have severe consequences and carry a heavy price," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said during a joint news conference with North Macedonia's Prime Minister Dimitar Kovacevski in Brussels. "We remain ready to engage in meaningful dialogue and have conveyed a written proposal to Russia," Stoltenberg said. NATO is also ready to discuss "how to reduce risks," he further stated. "But NATO will not compromise on core principles, the right of every nation to choose his own path and NATO's ability to protect and defend all allies," Stoltenberg added. "We are committed to finding a political solution to the crisis," he said, but cautioned: "We have to be prepared for the worst." Stoltenberg also said he discussed with Kovacevski Russia's continued military buildup in and around Ukraine. "Over the last days we have seen a significant movement of Russian military forces



into Belarus. This is the biggest Russian deployment there since the Cold War," the NATO chief said. "A wide range of modern military capabilities" was deployed to Belarus, he continued. "All this will be combined with Russia's annual nuclear forces exercise expected to take place this month." The military deployment included an expected 30,000 combat troops, Spetsnaz special operation forces, fighter jets including SU-35, Iskander dual-capable missiles, and S-400 air defense systems, Stoltenberg detailed. On the US announcement of additional troop deployment to Eastern Europe, he said: "This is a powerful signal of US commitment." The Pentagon announced Wednesday that 1,000 US troops will be moved from Germany to Romania, while another 2,000 soldiers will be sent from the US state of North Carolina to Germany and Poland. "We have already increased readiness of the

NATO Response Force and we are considering the deployment of additional NATO battalions to the southeastern part of the Alliance," Stoltenberg added. For his part, Kovacevski said that the recent tension is "a threat to European and international security". "As a NATO ally, we join calls to Russia to de-escalate and pursue diplomatic dialogue," he said. The US, with its European allies, has accused Russia of setting the stage for an invasion of Ukraine after concentrating more than 120,000 troops, significant artillery and tanks on the border. Moscow has denied it is preparing to invade and said its troops are there for exercises. A similar buildup has taken place in Belarus. The US said Monday that Russia is seeking to increase its troop presence in Belarus six-fold by early February to 30,000 armed forces. Addressing the UN Security Council session on simmering Ukraine tensions, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Washington's UN envoy, said Russia has already deployed 5,000 troops to Belarus alongside short-range ballistic missiles, special forces, and anti-aircraft batteries, and has stationed well over 100,000 troops inside its border near Ukraine.

UN 'horrified' at migrants' deaths on Turkiye-Greece border

GENEVA: The UN migration agency said Wednesday that it is "horrified" by news of the reported deaths of 12 irregular migrants on the Turkiye-Greece border after they were pushed back from Greece. "We are following up with relevant authorities about the circumstances of this tragedy," International Organization for Migration (IOM) spokeswoman Safa Msheli said in response to a query by Anadolu Agency. Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu on Wednesday announced the deaths of 12 irregular migrants pushed by the Greek authorities. Twelve of 22 migrants "pushed back" by Greek border forces and stripped of their clothes and shoes "have frozen to death," Soylu said on Twitter. "As stated previously by IOM on numerous occasions, mounting reports of pushbacks against people on the move at some European borders and many parts of the world are extremely concerning and should be investigated, and action taken," said Msheli on behalf of the UN organization. "We reiterate that such practices are prohibited under international law and should not happen under any circumstances." The IOM spokeswoman said that the obligation and primacy of saving lives and prioritizing the well-being and human rights of migrants are vital to the integrity of any border. Soylu said the EU "is remediless, weak and void of humane feelings." He added that while Greek forces acted as a "thug" against people made "victims," they were tolerant toward members of the Fetullah Terrorist Organization, which was behind a 2016 defeated coup in Turkiye. Soylu shared several photos of the site where the irregular migrants were found, with the victims blurred. — News Desk

Meheq /Sarah clinches Subh-e- Nau doubles title

SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Top national women tennis players Meheq Khokhar and Sarah Mehboob clinches the Subh-e-Nau Ladies National Ranking Tennis Tournament doubles title in easy win of 2-0 against Noor Malik and Anna Qayum here at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Thursday. The experienced duo of Meheq and Sarah were too strong against Noor Malik and Anna Qayum as the losing pair failed to resist against the attacking game and lost the ladies doubles final by 1-6, 1-6. In the Ladies Singles semifinal round, Sarah Mehboob and Noor Malik reached the final against Meheq Khokhar and Sheeza Sajid. Sarah Mehboob won the first semifinal by 6-1, 6-0 while Noor Malik won the second semi final by 6-0, 6-1. The final of Subh-e- Nau Ladies National Ranking Tennis Tournament



single category will be played between Sarah Mehboob and Noor Malik on Friday (today).
Results:
Ladies Singles Semi-Final: Sarah Mehboob bt Meheq Khokhar 6-1, 6-0; Noor Malik (Wapda) bt Sheeza

Sajid 6-0, 6-1.
Ladies Doubles Final: Meheq Khokhar / Sarah Mahboob bt Noor Malik (Wapda) / Anna Ali Qayum 6-1, 6-1.
Girls 14 & Under Final: Anna Ali Qayum bt Zunaisha Noor 6-0, 6-3.

Uzbek Dy FM awarded badge "For contribution to int'l co-op"

DNA

TASHKENT: Russian Ambassador Oleg Malginov presented a badge "For contribution to international cooperation" to Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Vladimir Norov. The badge is awarded to citizens of Russia, foreign citizens and stateless persons for active joint work with the Russian Foreign Ministry on the development of bilateral cooperation, contribution to the popularization of the Russian language and culture, and other specific merits. Presenting the badge, the Russian Ambassador highly appreciated the activities of Vladimir Norov as the SCO Secretary General in 2019-2021, as well as his efforts to develop Russian-Uzbek relations, Duno news agency reported. Expressing gratitude to the Russian



Foreign Ministry, Vladimir Norov noted that close partnership between the foreign ministries of the two countries would continue to make a significant contribution to the development and deepening of bilateral relations.

Federer, Nadal to play Laver Cup

LONDON: Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal both say they will play in the next edition of the Laver Cup. Federer, who has been sidelined since July because of an injured knee, and Nadal, fresh off earning his men's-record 21st Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, said in a statement Thursday they will represent Team Europe in London from Sept. 23-25. "I'm really looking forward to getting back into competition later this year, and Laver Cup is very much part of my plan," said Federer, whose management company founded the competition. Federer said Nadal messaged him last year suggesting they play doubles together again in the Laver Cup. They teamed up to win a doubles match during the first Laver Cup in 2017. "If we're able to possibly share the court one more time as a doubles pairing, then this would be a truly special experience for us both at this stage in our careers," Nadal said. This will be the fifth Laver Cup. Neither Federer nor Nadal took part in 2021. — Agencies



Plots illegal to govt...

FROM PAGE 01
scheme. "The FGEHA nor the federal government is vested with power or jurisdiction under the FGEHA Act or the CDA Ordinance, as the case may be, to launch a scheme or frame a policy which is contrary to the public interest and violative of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the people at large," it said. "The assets of the state acquired through the inherent intrusive power of eminent domain can only be used for the benefit of the people at large and in public interest," it read. The federal government is expected to formulate and frame policies for the development of sectors F-12, G-12, F-14 and F-15 solely for the benefit of the general public and in the public interest, rather than enriching a few elites at the expense of the exchequer, it added. The IHC said that the federal cabinet might have been kept in the dark about the repercussions of allotting the plots. "In the records presented before the cabinet, the process of allotting plots was not mentioned."

Armed forces kill...

FROM PAGE 01
that security forces had killed 13 terrorists in the province's Panjgur and Naushki areas. "After successfully repulsing terrorist attacks at Panjgur and Naushki yesterday night, security forces carried out clearance operation to hunt down terrorists hiding in the area," the statement said. In Naushki, security forces encountered and killed five more terrorists, bringing the number of total killings to nine, the ISPR said, adding that four soldiers, including an officer, embraced martyrdom while repulsing the attack. Meanwhile, in Panjgur, four terrorists were killed while at least four to five were "encircled by security forces", the statement said. The ISPR said the operation in Panjgur to eliminate fleeing terrorists "is continuing". "As per initial investigation, intelligence agencies have intercepted communications between terrorists and their handlers in Afghanistan and India," the statement concluded. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad also issued a statement to hail the services of the security forces. The minister, in a video statement released on Twitter, said that the terrorists made a major attack in Naushki and Panjgur late on Wednesday night, which the "great forces" of Pakistan thwarted. He went on to say that the terrorists have been thrown out of both Naushki and Panjgur as the forces "kept their tradition alive". "This is a great victory that the Pakistan Army has achieved against terror as per routine," he said. Rasheed revealed said that "Pakistan army will soon defeat terrorists surrounded in Panjgur."

PM arrives...

FROM PAGE 01
leadership. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin, Planning Minister Asad Umar, Information Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf, Commerce Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood and Special Assistant on China Pakistan Economic Corridor Khalid Mansoor are part of the prime minister's delegation. On his arrival, the prime minister was welcomed by the Chinese Ambassador in Islamabad Wu Jie and Pakistan's Ambassador in Beijing Moeenul Haq. Besides attending the ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics, Imran Khan will also meet President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. During the meeting, the two leaderships would discuss the ways to further promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation, particularly under CPEC framework, besides the regional and international affairs. Besides the virtual interactions with the prominent Chinese business leaders, top think tanks, intellectuals and media, other bilateral meetings are also on the prime minister's agenda of the visit. This is the prime minister's fourth visit to China as he paid last visit in October 2019.

Brilliant Islamabad thrash Quetta Gladiators

Shahid Afridi, the star all-rounder, could not bowl up to mark as he set a new record of conceding the most runs in the Pakistan Super League's (PSL) history

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Islamabad United beat Quetta Gladiators by 43 runs. Some hard-hitting batting from Islamabad United had helped them hand a massive 230-run target to Quetta Gladiators in the 10th match of the Pakistan Super League's (PSL) seventh edition at the National Stadium Karachi. Paul Stirling (58), Colin Munro, and Azam Khan's half tons helped the team boost their score despite Alex Hales being sent back to the pavilion earlier in the game. Gladiators skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed put United into bat after winning the toss, but the decision turned out to be a daunting one for his team as United batters went all guns blazing from the beginning. United's opener Colin Munro played a sheer entertaining knock of 72 runs with the help of five sixes, while Azam Khan scored 65 with six huge sixes as they both smashed Shahid Afridi to all parts of the park in his first match. Apart from spinner Mohammad Nawaz who took two wickets for 32 runs in four overs, all the Gladiators bowlers were smashed. Shahid Afridi, the star all-rounder, could not bowl up to mark as he set a new record of conceding the most runs in the Pakistan Super League's (PSL) history. The former Pakistan skipper bowled a total of four overs, where he conceded 67 runs and managed to take only a wicket. His most expensive over was the last over (20th), where he conceded 20 runs. Just like Afridi, Quetta's bowlers were unable to restrict the United's batters, allowing them to put up a massive 230-run target on the board. Earlier, Islamabad United's Zafar Gohar held the record of conceding the most runs — 65.



Briefs

Russia bans
Germany's
Deutsche
Welle

MOSCOW: Russia on Thursday banned Germany's Deutsche Welle from broadcasting in the country, in a retaliatory move against Germany's decision to block Russia's RT DE television channel. In a written statement on its website, the Russian Foreign Ministry said it ordered closure of Deutsche Welle's office in Moscow, cancellation of accreditations of all its correspondents, and stop of any kind of broadcasting in Russia. In addition, the ministry said, the relevant bodies will initiate the procedure of recognizing Deutsche Welle as a media "carrying out functions of a foreign agent in Russia." The ministry said this is the first stage of Russia's response, noting that it started drafting a list of individuals and organizations involved in barring of RT DE from broadcasting in Germany. - Agencies

Italy eases
anti-Covid
rules for
schools

ROME: The Italian government on Wednesday relaxed anti-COVID rules for schools, as the infection surge linked to the Omicron variant seemed to be gradually falling under control. A key change was to cut the mandatory quarantine - from 10 days to 5 days - required to unvaccinated pupils who had a direct contact with a person positive for COVID-19. Their vaccinated peers would not be subjected to quarantine, but only be asked to put in place a "self surveillance," meaning to use FFP2 face masks for 5 days and undergo a swab test. The same rule would apply to students who recovered from the disease within 120 days. A second measure made unlimited the validity of the so-called "super green pass," the certificate showing proof of vaccination or recovery from COVID-19, for people who got the vaccine booster. "School is at the heart of our country and we wanted to reduce distant learning as much as possible," Health Minister Roberto Speranza told a press conference. - APP

5 climate
activists in
UK sentenced
to prison

LONDON: Five environmental activists from Insulate Britain were sentenced to prison on Wednesday over not complying with the court order against road-blocking. Climate activists, who closed the M25 highway surrounding the capital London to traffic last September, were given prison sentences ranging from 24 to 42 days. Meanwhile, the sentence of 11 activists from the same group was suspended. "I'll continue doing all I can to protect road-users from those who put lives in danger & cause misery to thousands of people," British Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said on Twitter. In November, the court also sentenced the group's nine members to prison for blocking roads. Insulate Britain is demanding a national program to ensure all homes are insulated to conserve energy. - APP

State Bank
introduces
instant
payments
under Raast

DNA
KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan has issued instructions that will enable Person-to-Person (P2P) fund transfers in the country through Raast, Pakistan's Instant Payment System developed by the State Bank. Raast - an Urdu word which means correct and direct - offers an instant, reliable and zero-cost digital payment system to the people of Pakistan. SBP believes that the launch of Raast P2P service will not only provide a convenient and hassle free digital fund transfer service to customers but will also provide an efficient and enabling payments infrastructure that would pave the way for digitization of the economy and promotion of digital financial services in country.

Azerbaijan, Hungary ink
bilateral co-op accords

The Hungarian minister and the Azerbaijan University of Languages rector, Kamal Abdullayev, signed a document on teaching of Hungarian language at the university

WEB DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijan and Hungary signed a number of bilateral cooperation agreements on February 3 during the 8th meeting of the joint commission on economic cooperation between the governments of Azerbaijan and Hungary in Baku. Azerbaijan's Ecology and Natural Resources Minister Mukhtar Babayev and Hungarian FM Peter Szijarto signed a memorandum of understanding. Peter Szijarto and Azerbaijan's Food Security Agency Chairman Goshgar Tahmazli signed a memorandum of understanding on food security. The Hungarian minister and the Azerbaijan University of Languages rector, Kamal Abdullayev, signed a document on the teaching of the Hungarian language at the university. Furthermore, Peter Szijarto and Labour and Social Security Minister Sahil Babayev



signed the protocol of the commission's 8th meeting. Sahil Babayev stated during the meeting that Azerbaijan and Hungary are strategic partners. The minister stressed that significant steps are being taken to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. He said that the private sector plays an important role in the development of Azerbaijan-Hungary cooperation. Babayev also thanked Hungary for taking a fair stance

in the second Karabakh war. In turn, Peter Szijarto stated that Hungary has always supported Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, recognized at the international level. He emphasized that the relations between the two countries are constantly developing, bilateral trade ties are being strengthened. "Many Hungarian companies work in Azerbaijan. There is a great potential for developing relations between the two countries," he said.

Goshgar Tahmazli, chairman of the Food Safety Agency, stated that the agency, along with other state structures, is taking appropriate steps to increase Azerbaijani product exports to Hungary. "I believe that this document [the cooperation agreement signed today] will make an important contribution to the process of simplifying import and export procedures and expanding agricultural trade between the two countries," he said.

Hungary, Azerbaijan
poised to boost ties

BAKU: Hungary and Azerbaijan are in a position to expand their economic cooperation, as part of which the Hungarian government aims to bring Azerbaijani natural gas to Hungary, Peter Szijarto, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said in Baku on Thursday. Hungary having access to Azeri gas from the end of next year will be important in terms of the country's energy security, the foreign ministry cited Szijarto as saying at a press conference after a meeting of the Hungarian-Azeri economic mixed committee. Hungarian and Azeri businesses have started talks on the gas supply he said. Szijarto said his visit to Baku also served to help boost Hungarian-Azeri economic cooperation, which he said was supported by last year's 28 percent growth in bilateral trade turnover. Hungarian oil and gas company MOL and drugmaker Richter have also invested heavily in the country, he added. The Hungarian gov is also supporting the participation of Hungarian companies in reconstruction efforts in the Karabakh region, including the upgrade of urban infrastructure, the construction of energy supply infrastructure and the restart of farming activities, Szijarto said. Hungary's Eximbank is supporting the reconstruction with a 120 million dollar credit line, he added. The co-heads of the economic mixed committee on Thursday also signed a declaration of intent on cooperation in water management and food security and agreed on the instruction of Hungarian language and culture in Azerbaijan. - APP

Malaysian envoy presents
certificate to Dr. Ayesha

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Malaysia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mr. Dedy Faisal Ahmad Salleh presented MTCP certificate to Dr. Ayesha Parvez at the High Commission of Malaysia, Islamabad. Immigration Attaché Mr. Sharmanrizal Rustam was also present during the ceremony. Dr. Ayesha Parvez has successfully participated in The Third Country Training Programme for the course on Occupational Safety and Health Management for Asian Countries on 25-29 October 2021. The High Commission of Malaysia Mr. Dedy Faisal Ahmad Salleh welcomes Dr. Ayesha Parvez to the network of MTCP Alumni. - DNA

Spyware used on key figure
in Netanyahu trial: reports

JERUSALEM: Reports that police may have used spyware on a key witness in the trial of former premier Benjamin Netanyahu dominated Israeli headlines Thursday amid global scrutiny of Israeli-made surveillance technology. In a recording aired by Channel 12 news, police are heard allegedly discussing tapping a phone belonging to Shlomo Filber, a former Netanyahu ally turned state witness. "It's as if it's illegal" a police officer says, continuing "to install the application". Police declined to comment on the recordings that emerged late Wednesday. But a spokesperson told AFP "the Israeli police will cooperate fully and transparently" with an investigation team appointed by the attorney general, which is probing potential police misuse of spyware. Netanyahu, who served as premier from 2009 until last year, faces charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust, allegations he has denied. His trial is expected to last for several more months and appeals could take years. Israel-

li media reported last month that he was negotiating a plea deal with the attorney general that would include admission of "moral turpitude", an offence which carries a seven-year ban from politics. Netanyahu has denied the deal. The allegation that police spied on Filber surfaced amid a broader probe into unauthorised police surveillance of Israeli phones. Israel's justice minister had pledged to investigate after a report in the business daily Calcalist found police had used NSO Group's Pegasus spyware on protesters against Netanyahu. Police had initially denied the allegations, but on Tuesday appeared to backpedal, saying "new elements changed certain aspects of the matter". Pegasus is a surveillance programme that can switch on a phone's camera or microphone and harvest its data. It sparked controversy worldwide following revelations last year it was used to spy on journalists and dissidents in countries including Hungary, Poland, Saudi Arabia and Mexico. - APP



BAKU: Ambassador of Pakistan to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee visited Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts and met with Rector Ceyran Mahmudova. Views were exchanged about the potential cooperation between National College of Arts, Lahore and Azerbaijan State University of Culture & Arts. - DNA

President stresses upon healthy environment

TASHKENT: President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a videoconference on improving the waste management system and the environmental situation, and urgent tasks for implementing the Yashil Makon national project. At the beginning of the meeting, the head of state addressed the public: From a young age, our parents taught us to keep the yard and the environment clean. Since ancient times, our people have treated the soil, water, and nature with care. It is no accident that there is a proverb "Cut down one tree - plant ten." The person who planted the tree was considered blessed. When a child was born in the family, a tree was planted in his honor. In the 21st century, when industry is rapidly developing in the world, the environmental agenda comes to the fore. We must leave a healthy environment for posterity. To do this, you need to carefully treat nature, act, thinking not only about today, but also about the

near and distant future. The most important issue is to increase the ecological culture of the population. Look at the streets today and every other place. Everywhere you will see discarded waste. Our sacred country, we say. Why don't we keep it clean then? After all, our sacred books say: "Cleanliness is half of faith." Why do the media, mahalla activists not sound the alarm? Representatives of the older generation, our public? Of course, this problem cannot be solved only by administrative methods. It is necessary to educate the young generation to love nature. We should create such an environment when in the mahalla, on the street, someone who has thrown garbage on the street is pointed out to the wrongness of his act. This is our common cause and human duty, - said Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Topical issues of the sphere were discussed at the meeting. According to the analysis, in al-

most all countries, the amount of municipal solid waste per capita is growing by 1 percent per year. Due to socio-economic growth in our country, the accumulation of waste is growing by 2 percent per year, the annual volume has reached 7 million tons.



However, the state of affairs in the system of their collection, sorting, processing and disposal is unsatisfactory. For example, only 10 percent of waste is recycled in Karakalpakstan, while only 20 percent is recycled in Ferghana and Kashkadarya regions. In 781 mahalla,

the issue of waste disposal has not yet been resolved. The population has large receivables for waste collection services. Medical, educational institutions and markets require 19,000 waste containers. There are no landfills for construction waste, it is dumped along roads, on the side of fields or into rivers. Last year, 4,000 cases of construction waste dumping in unauthorized places were discovered. There is no clear system for collecting leaves and tree branches in neighborhoods, arrays and alleys, a unified system for the storage, transportation and disposal of medical waste. In general, none of the 197 landfills across the country meet sanitary and environmental requirements, and 24 landfills are full. The State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection, khokims of the regions were instructed to streamline the landfills and eliminate those that have exhausted their resources. The

importance of developing a draft law establishing the procedure for organizing and closing such landfills is indicated. The possibility of increasing the coverage of services for the collection of household waste up to 95 percent and the volume of their processing up to 40 percent was indicated. For this, equipment, components and spare parts imported from abroad will be exempted from customs payments for a period of 3 years. For the purchase of sorting and processing equipment, preferential loans for up to 5 years will be allocated to cover a part of the loans that exceeds the refinancing rate. For these purposes, within 5 years, it is planned to allocate 500 billion soums in stages at the expense of concessional funds from international financial institutions. The need to support entrepreneurs operating in the field was emphasized. Land, property and social tax rates for clusters with processing facilities will be set at 1 percent.

At least
17 dead in
Argentina

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: At least 17 people have died and 50 others have been hospitalized in Argentina after consuming adulterated cocaine, authorities said Wednesday. Buenos Aires Province Security Minister Sergio Berni has called on anyone who has bought the substance to throw it away immediately. The first of the dead to be identified were Hernán Castro, 45, Martín López, 36, Dino Melgarejo, 33, and Fernando Yacante, whose age was not revealed, according to local newspaper Pagina 12. Local authorities have since issued a warning to the general public of "a substance marketed as cocaine" which they describe as having "high toxicity" and is in circulation. Pagina 12 reported that both the sick and the dead have been transferred to hospitals across the Buenos Aires districts of Hurlingham, Tres de Febrero and San Martín. Provincial security forces have carried out arrests in the aftermath, suspecting that the cocaine may have been mixed with toxic substances amid a war between rival street gangs, reported the local daily La Nación. Ten people were arrested this afternoon during raids carried out in the Puerta 8 shanty town. As details continue to emerge, authorities suspect that the victims may have purchased the cocaine from the same dealer. According to La Nación, doctors asked some of those who were hospitalized what they had taken, with some reportedly admitting to consuming cocaine. - APP

PLO to choose
top negotiator
after Erekat's
death

RAMALLAH: The Palestine Liberation Organization meets Sunday to elect key leadership figures tasked with keeping up the struggle for statehood, at a gathering which may hint at a potential successor for president Mahmud Abbas. The most important post up for grabs is that of the late chief negotiator Saeb Erekat, who was PLO secretary-general and had been deeply involved for decades in the now moribund peace talks with Israel. He died in 2020 from coronavirus complications. Once the undisputed champion of the Palestinian cause, the PLO has lost much of its relevance since the 1994 establishment of the Palestinian Authority. - APP

Afghan
library holds
competition
to promote
book reading

KABUL: A private library Fayazi Library, located in the western edge of Afghan capital Kabul, has launched a book reading competition recently. "With reading book, we increase knowledge, social and scientific information, and thus I want to inspire others to study," Shukiba Sahadati, a 18-year-old girl, told Xinhua. As an attendee of the book reading competition, Sahadati believes that no country can develop without education and knowledge. "By launching the competition of reading books, we youngsters want to encourage the people of the country, especially the young population, to study and increase knowledge as much as possible," said Sahadati. Mohammad Nasim Amiri, head of the Fayazi Library, said, "Those who secure the first and second positions would receive cash prizes and the earner of the third position would receive a smart cellular phone as an award." In Afghanistan, the majority of its population are illiterate, according to Amiri. "I am optimistic about the future of Afghanistan as the young generation of the country is love to get education and knowledge," said Amiri. A total of 400 teenagers including 250 girls and 150 boys contested in the book reading competition, titled "You can if you want." "We should not give up our hope and should dream about a better future," said Shukria Yaqubi. A 12-grade student, Yaqubi won the first place at the book reading contest. - APP

Briefs

Indian propaganda against Masood falls flat: FO

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Malicious propaganda by Indian media targeting Ambassador Masood Khan suffered a major blow as Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has exposed Indian lies and also shared details of the career of Masood Khan as a decorated and seasoned diplomat. Foreign Office spokesperson Asim Iftikhar rubbished the malicious propaganda by Indian media regarding a delay in the appointment of Sardar Masood Khan as the country's envoy to the US, saying the "agreement [of Masood] is being processed in the US system". Referring to Indian media claims, the spokesperson said that India's malicious propaganda "is a part of the wider Indian disinformation campaign to malign Pakistan and those who represent Pakistan, by using fake news to make scandalous claims and baseless allegations". Speaking about Masood, who also served as the former president of Azad Jammu Kashmir, Iftikhar noted that Ambassador Masood Khan "is a highly accomplished diplomat with 40 years of experience in both multilateral and bilateral diplomacy". After his retirement, Masood became the AJK president and has been advancing Pakistan's case for the longstanding Kashmir dispute with India. Masood has vast experience in multilateral diplomacy and has been a frequent negotiator for Pakistan. Masood Khan has served in various diplomatic positions at the Pakistan missions in Beijing, The Hague, and Washington DC. Masood during his service served as the ambassador to China as well as a permanent representative to the United Nations. He also remained a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

6 journalists killed, 108 attacked in India

MONITORING DESK

NEW DELHI: At least six journalists were killed, another 108 attacked while 13 media houses were targeted in India in 2021 while the spotlight on the denial of media freedom continued to be on occupied Jammu and Kashmir where journalists often found themselves summoned to police stations, FIRs registered against them, their houses raided, being manhandled and beaten by security forces, according to a new report. The India Press Freedom Report 2021 by the Rights and Risks Analysis Group (RRAG) said that occupied Kashmir and Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Tripura topped the list of areas across the country where journalists and media houses were targeted last year. Of the six journalists killed, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reported two deaths each, while Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra reported the death of one journalist each. Eight female journalists faced arrest, summons and registration of First Information Reports (FIRs). "The highest number of journalists/media organisations targeted was in [occupied] Jammu and Kashmir (25), followed by Uttar Pradesh (23); Madhya Pradesh (16); Tripura (15); Delhi (eight); Bihar (six); Assam (five); Haryana and Maharashtra (four each); Goa and Manipur (three each); Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (two each); and Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Kerala (one each)," read the report.

UK approves fifth Covid-19 vaccine

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The UK has approved a fifth Covid-19 vaccine, developed by US company Novavax, which offers up to 89% protection against Covid illness. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has said it is safe as a first and second dose in adults. Millions of doses are being manufactured at a plant on Teesside. Health Secretary Sajid Javid says independent scientists on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation will now consider its use. The vaccine could then be used immediately as part of the UK vaccination programme. "It's a testament to the country's first-rate research and development capabilities for vaccines," Mr Javid said, "with tens of thousands of people taking part in clinical trials here in the UK, contributing to the invaluable research that shows our vaccines are safe and effective."

Traders seek extension in cash on counter facility

Extending the facility for next six months will be helpful in carrying out smooth bilateral trade with Afghanistan and onward regional countries

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Traders here on Thursday urged the government to give extension in cash-on-counter facility for next six months to carry out smooth bilateral trade with Afghanistan and onward regional countries. Declaration policy should be implemented in true letter and spirit at borders in light of the decision of State Bank of Pakistan, they demanded. Traders were annoyed that the government's decision regarding increasing the number of export items to Afghanistan from four to 16 in Pakistani currency to enhance the quantum of trade with the neighbouring Afghanistan was yet not materialized that have been causing major irritants to carry out smooth mutual trade with the neighbouring country. The Businessmen called the banking channels should be made fully functional between Pakistan and Afghanistan.



The issues were raised during a joint meeting of Dry-port, Pakistan Railways and Land Route Export Standing Committees of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, held here at the Chamber's House. Besides, the SCCI's President Hasnain Khurshid Ahmad, senior vice president Imran Khan Mohmand, Chairman the Chamber's Standing Committee on Dry-port and Pakistan Railways and former SVP Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, and Chairman the SCCI's Standing Committee on Land Route

Export Intiaz Ahmad Ali, Divisional Transportation Officer Pakistan Railways, Marina Ateeq, CMI PR Muhammad Saddiq, Additional Collector Customs Dr Wajid Ali, Deputy Director State Bank Peshawar, Amir Muntaz, members of the standing committees, a large number of traders, mainly importers, exporters were present during the meeting. Hasnain Khurshid urged the government to give extension in cash-on-counter facility for next six months to carry out smooth trade with Afghani-

Bilawal condemns terrorist attacks

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while condemning terror attacks on security forces in Noshki and Pajngur expressed grief over the martyrdom of several soldiers including an officer. The PPP Chairman expressed his heartfelt sympathy and solidarity with the families of the martyrs. He also prayed for speedy recovery of the soldiers wounded in the incident and said that terrorism in any form is a killer of civilization and humanity and those challenging the state administration should be dealt with iron hands. Bilawal went on to say that the sacrifices of the security forces are proof of our commitment to safeguard our national sovereignty and the entire nation is united against terrorists. He said that the sacrifices of the security forces will not go in vain.

Pakistan, China collaboration crucial, says Dr Moeed

ISLAMABAD: National Security Adviser (NSA) Dr Moeed Yusuf on Thursday said Pakistan and China collaboration on Afghanistan would play key role in averting a serious humanitarian crisis after the withdrawal of US forces. In his video message on the recent visit of the Prime Minister to China where the NSA will also join the visiting delegation, he said it was a very important visit of the Prime Minister to China as both the dignitaries did not have any interaction since COVID-19 outbreak. Dr Moeed said, "There will also be a broader discussion between the Pakistani and Chinese leadership on Afghanistan." He added it was not important rather imperative for Pakistan to ensure stabilisation in Afghanistan. "Peaceful and stable Afghanistan is of utmost importance to Pakistan after withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan," Dr Moeed Yusuf. The NSA mentioned that China intended to expand China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) outreach to Afghanistan and the interim Afghan government also wanted to benefit from it. "Regional connectivity through CPEC project is a great opportunity and will be an important element of dialogue during the China visit, he said. During the visit to China, important regional issues would also be discussed between the Pak-China delegations, said Dr Moeed Yusuf. - APP

Facebook loses 1 million daily users

WEB DESK

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook's parent firm Meta on Wednesday delivered a gloomy mix of a sharper-than-expected drop in profit, a decrease in users and threats to its ad business that plunged shares some 22% in after-hours trading. Already jittery markets have punished pandemic-era darlings including Netflix for disappointing results, with Meta getting a taste of that after its \$10.3-billion quarterly profit and daily user-growth fell short of expectations. Yet the signature Facebook platform also reported losing roughly one million daily users globally between the last two quarters of 2021 - a tiny number on an app with nearly two billion daily users, but a potentially worrying signal of stagnation. CFO Dave Weiner told analysts that user growth was impacted by "headwinds" including disproportionate growth in the Asia-Pacific during the pandemic that has slowed and an increase in mobile data prices in India. "In addition to these factors, we believe competitive services are negatively impacting growth, particularly with younger audiences," Weiner added. The company's executives have repeatedly referred to competition from TikTok but also from other networks, while they face numerous probes and complaints of abuse of dominance. Analysts expected 1.95 billion daily active users on Facebook, but Meta reported 1.93 billion - a key indicator of the growth trajectory for a company fueled by the people who choose to interact with its platforms.

EU to rule on boosters for teens

AMSTERDAM: The EU's medicines regulator said Thursday it would soon rule on an application to approve Pfizer/BionTech's Covid-19 booster shots for teens aged 16 and 17, with younger ages expected to follow. The European Medicines Agency in October approved Comirnaty booster jabs for all people aged 18 and older, followed by a similar decision to back Moderna's Spikevax shortly afterwards. "The EMA is currently evaluating an application to extend the use of the booster dose of Comirnaty to adolescents aged 16 and 17," said Marco Cavaleri, the EMA's head of vaccines strategy. - APP

PIA announces 10 percent pension raise

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced a 10 per cent increase in the monthly pensions of its retired employees. The management of the national carrier issued directives to raise the monthly pensions of retired employees. The pension raise will be taken into effect from January 1 this year. The retired employees will be given pensions with a 10 per cent hike in accordance with their pensions disbursed in December 2021. The approval of pension raise was given in the PIA board of directors session. Earlier on February 1, a new business plan aimed to take PIA out of financial crisis had been submitted to the Ministry of Finance for approval. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) had worked out the business strategy for the loss-making national flag carrier to turn it into a profitable entity. The government had decided last year to hire international consultants to devise a completely new business strategy to take the national airline out of the financial crisis. The comprehensive plan devised by the IATA envisages the national flag carrier turning into a profit-making organisation by 2024. Under the new strategy, the number of planes in the airline's fleet will be increased from 29 to 49 while the number of passengers travelling on PIA flights from 5.2 million to 9 million.

Jan Jamali meets Azerbaijan ambassador



ISLAMABAD: Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan met with Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali, Speaker of Provincial Assembly of Balochistan. The Ambassador also presented the guest a souvenir. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest and agreed to expand cooperation in various fields. - DNA

Biden says 'major terrorist' blew himself up in US raid

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden said Thursday a global "terrorist threat" was removed when the head of the Islamic State group blew himself up after US special forces swooped on his Syrian hideout in an "incredibly challenging" nighttime helicopter raid. "The United States military forces successfully removed a major terrorist threat to the world, the global leader of ISIS," Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, Biden said in nationally televised remarks. The operation dealt the biggest setback to the jihadist IS organization since Qurashi's predecessor, the better-known Abu

Bakr al-Baghdadi, was killed in a US commando raid in the same Syrian region of Idlib in 2019. In brief, somber remarks delivered in the White House's Roosevelt Room, Biden said he ordered an assault by troops, rather than merely bombing the house where the IS leader was located, in order to minimize civilian casualties, even though this meant "much greater risk to our own people." The house contained "families, including children" and "as our troops approached to capture the terrorist, in a final act of desperate cowardice, with no regard to the lives of his own family or others in the building, he chose to blow himself up," Biden said. Qurashi did not merely set off a suicide

vest to kill himself, but detonated the entire "third floor" of the residence in the town of Atme, Biden said, "taking several members of his family with him." An Iraqi from the Turkmen-majority city of Tal Afar, Qurashi was also known as Amir Mohammed Said Abd al-Rahman al-Mawla. He replaced Baghdadi after his death in a US raid in October 2019, which also ended when Baghdadi blew himself up. The US government had offered a \$10 million reward for information leading to Qurashi, one of the world's most wanted fugitives. The head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Rami Abdel Rahman, told AFP that "13 people at least were killed, among them four children and three women, during the operation."

High ranking officials visit North Waziristan

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr Shehzad Khan Bangush visited Bannu Division on Thursday. He was received by Commissioner Bannu Shaukat Akib-Yousafzai and DIG Bannu Syed Ashfaq Anwar. The Chief Secretary inaugurated the newly rehabilitated historical Nicholson House at Commissioner house Bannu. He visited various parts of the house and appreciated the the rehabilitation work of this historical heritage. Later Chief Secretary visited North Waziristan and was honored with guard of honor by the police. He also met with General Officer Commanding 7division Major General Naem Akhtar at miran shah and discussed law order issues with him.

British HC visits Chaman Border

British High Commissioner, Dr Christian Turner, CMG said, It's very important for the UK to understand the issues facing Balochistan

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: British High Commissioner, Dr Christian Turner CMG, has visited the Chaman Border to see at first hand how the UK and Pakistan are working together to help the people of Afghanistan. During his visit he was briefed by Pakistani officials on border processes, and how authorities are working with the UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency. It was part of a wider visit to Balochistan, during which he met the Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, and discussed how the issues in Afghanistan are affecting Balochistan, as well as the wider security situation in the area, and the protection of human rights. During his two day trip the High Commissioner also met Comd 12 Corps, Lieutenant General Sarfraz, and gave a keynote speech at the Quetta Staff and Command College. British High Commissioner, Dr Christian Turner, CMG said, "It's very important for the UK to understand



stand the issues facing Balochistan. During my visit to the Chaman Border I saw how the UK is working to help the people of Afghanistan, and that this is vital for the stability of the whole region." Last week, the UK's Foreign Secretary Liz Truss pledged £97m of additional funds to help Afghanistan this winter.